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Do you have a special announcements, recognitions, events, meetings, a project that you would like to share? Submit news you would like to include in future newsletters to boisevalleyjacl@gmail.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Maki Jackson

Looking back at the last president's message that I wrote in January of 2020, it seems from a different world. While I know deep down that time in 2020 passed at exactly the same rate as all other years, it seems both the longest and shortest year of my life.



In January, we hosted the annual Mochitsuki event, followed by a wonderful turnout at the annual Day of Remembrance event at the State House. We had a great all-chapter meeting in March and were in meetings with other members of the Japanese and Japanese American community in Idaho looking towards a possible event to coincide with the Tokyo Olympics in the summer. And then, everything went sideways.

I was looking at a 'dumpster fire 2020' Christmas ornament the other week and thought about how, if I explained everything that happened in 2020 to my past self, I would probably say that my movie screenplay would work better if it wasn't just one crisis after another. What will historians make of this time? Will they look at the racial unrest and Black Lives Matter, as we look at the Civil Rights movement from the 1960s, as a time when people came together to encourage large-scale policy and institutional changes? Will they look at the surge of voter suppression, followed by attacks in the courts debasing the very foundations of our democracy, and see the last gasps of institutional and systemic racism? Or will they see us as living in the dark ages of insulting expertise, denying facts, and giving more credence to youtube and twitter?

(continued)

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Janis Ogawa
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President's Message (continued)

If there is one thing that I have truly appreciated this year, it is just how much work it takes to expertise. I have gained a deep appreciation of teachers as I learn just how ill-equipped I am to win a battle of wills with a 7 year old. I have also had the unique opportunity to observe experts at work and see the scientific method unfold as epidemiologists, doctors, biologists, statisticians, health and public policy experts agree and disagree about the symptoms and spread of a novel disease.

Scientists fighting is truly nothing new; it just usually happens in the academic arena and not in public. I have also gained an appreciation for the journalists with integrity, striving to publicize facts over the voices of those who loudly complain that the facts don't fit with their worldview. The technological advances now in the modern era allow for information, both true and false, to travel around the world at the speed of light. The world is a smaller and more connected place than it has ever been before, and yet at the same time people are often more isolated in their information silos than ever before.

It has become easier than ever to live within our individual echo chambers where our pre-existing beliefs are validated. I don't deny that my own echo chamber spends most of the day reaffirming what I think I already know. My echo chamber right now is telling me that Idaho hospitals are in a bad position. That everything, from the number of cases to the number of deaths, is higher than when everything went sideways in March but that people are not being as careful. I'm sure there are many reasons that people aren't being as careful as they were early on in the pandemic and not all of the reasons are belief that covid is a hoax, but now, with several vaccines on the horizon, is not the time to throw caution to the wind. There is light at the end of the tunnel. Until I am sitting in the doctor's office getting vaccinated, I will use every opportunity to stress how important it is to mask up, keep distance, but most of all to not go out if not necessary. Please stick to curbside pick-up and delivery as much as possible, consider a home gym or an online exercise routine, and please please take care to wear a mask for smaller personal gatherings with those not in your household.

I truly look forward to seeing everyone in-person again after this ordeal is over.



Annual Nisei Ham Project and Membership Bento Box Project

By Janis Ogawa, Activities Chair



Our annual Nisei ham project was completed this past November 22nd. On the same day we offered prepared bento boxes for our membership for pickup. Due to COVID, Maki Jackson and myself had curbside pickup available for hams and bento boxes at the Coldwell Banker on Eagle Road. The weather was perfect for this event. Face masks were worn and we social distanced. A total of nine hams were delivered and/or picked up for the Nisei. The remaining Nisei members received gift cards. Forty two bento boxes were distributed to the Nisei and general membership. In addition, face masks with the Boise Valley JACL logo were given out to the entire membership. Thank you to Dean Hayashida, Jeannie Driscoll, Micki Kawakami, Jane Gunter, and Robert & Wendy Hirai for assistance in the delivery.



Maki Jackson & Janis Ogawa



Dean Hayashida & Fran Yamamoto





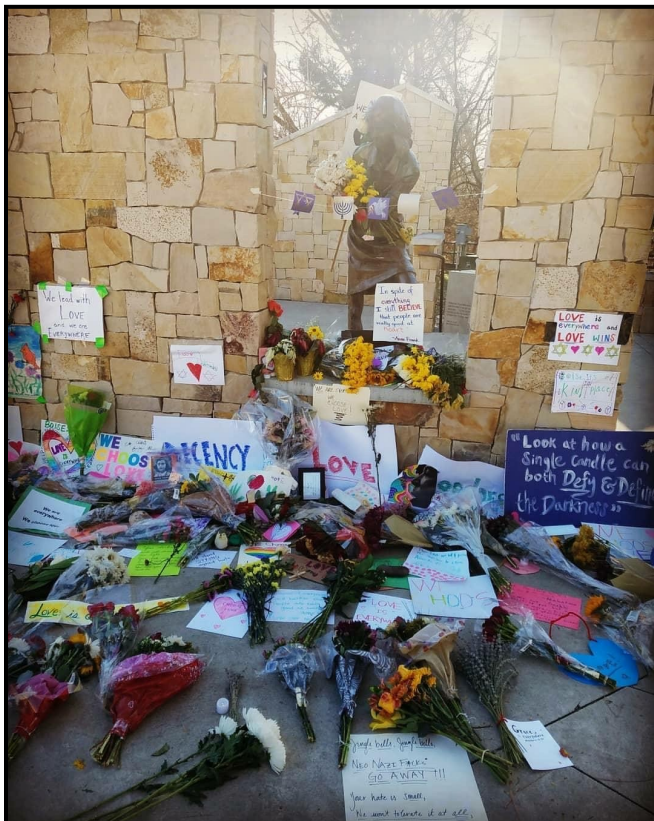
Outreach and Advocacy

By Alex Schloss, Outreach & Advocacy Chair



Within Idaho, and the greater Treasure Valley, there have been a dearth of events with a focus on outreach/advocacy, due in part to the impact of COVID-19.

That said, in response to the Anne Frank Memorial being vandalized with stickers showing swastikas bearing the phrase "we are everywhere" on December 7th, 2020 a number of vigils and advocacy events have taken place at the Anne Frank Memorial through organizations including the Wassmuth Center and Black Lives Matter Boise. After the removal of stickers, an outpouring of support from the greater Idaho community has been seen through a number of donations and a number of events including a vigil on Saturday December 12th attended by hundreds and a number of future physical and virtual events taking place at the Anne Frank Memorial.



If you are interested in supporting this memorial there is a GoFundMe for WE are everywhere: Protect the Anne Frank Memorial . Funds will be utilized in "protecting the Anne Frank Memorial with the addition of security cameras and through the provision of educational resources and programming to the community."

For more information on events and updates, you can follow the Wassmuth Center Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/wassmuthcenter> or on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IdaHumanRights?s=20>



Japanese American Citizens League 2021 National Scholarship Program

The 2020 National JACL Scholarship Program informational brochure and applications are now posted on the National JACL website (www.jacl.org). Click "Youth" on the menu bar to access the scholarship program webpage. The scholarship categories offered are Freshman, Undergraduate, Graduate, Law, Creative Arts, Performing Arts and Student Aid.



Welcome New Members

Daphne Achilles
Susan Endecott
Kendo Gunter
Ed Klopfenstein
Myka Nunez
Rika Torres
Cara Wade
Tricia & Chad Waters
Motoko West



Culture, Cuisine, and History

December

In the old Japanese calendar, December was known as “Shiwasu”, the month that is so busy even the monks are running around.

On December 31st, as the year is winding to a close, it is customary to eat “Toshikoshi Soba”, literally year-crossing soba. The earliest written reference to Toshikoshi Soba came in 1814, but there are written records as early as 1756 of soba being in great demand at the end of the year. The specific origin of the event is unknown, but it is thought to derive from a merchant class tradition where they ate soba at the end of every month to prevent the much feared “Edo disease”. The Edo disease actually turns out to be Thiamine (vitamin B1) deficiency, and soba is in fact rich in Thiamine so it was actually the correct self medication. With the expansion of water-milling technology in the 1700s, white rice became more and more affordable. As more of the population switched from brown rice to white rice, Thiamine deficiency changed from a rich-man’s disease to a widespread epidemic. This disease remained a mystery for over 100 years until the early 1900s when it was proven to be a nutrient deficiency.

Whatever its origins, modern soba is seen as a symbol of a long life and long friendship. In the pun department, ‘soba’ means ‘close’ so we have a wish to remain close to the people that you are eating soba with in the next year. The soba is often coupled with Negi (Green Onion) slices as well, as a play on the word ‘negirau’, to express appreciation for someone’s hard work. So we eat soba noodles to express our thanks to everyone for their hard work and great friendship and express our wish to stay close in the next year.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hakozen-soba_by_Yusuke_Kawasaki_in_Ginza,_Tokyo.jpg





Culture, Cuisine, and History (continued)

January

In the old Japanese calendar, January is “Mutsuki”. “Mu” means harmonious or friendly, and “tsuki” means month. A time to come together and face the new year.

While there are many New Year’s traditions, the biggest one is the food, Osechi. The word ‘osechi’ comes from the tradition of the five festival days (of which New Year’s is one) which came to Japan from China in the 600s. It was widely celebrated in the Imperial Court starting in the Heian era (794-1185 AD). During the Edo era, the tradition became popularized in its current form involving 3-5 layers of food in lacquered boxes. While the food in the boxes has changed over time (and there is a lot of regional variation), most of



the items are either boiled in soy sauce, vinegar, or otherwise prepared so they last for several days. This allows the ladies to take time off from cooking at the beginning of the year and also ensure there is food to eat while the stores are all closed for first three days of the New Year’s before household refrigeration was popular. Some of the most popular dishes are rife with puns: Black Beans (Kuro-mame) eaten to wish for health as ‘mame’ is an old reference to health. Herring Roe (Kazuno-ko) for fertility, ‘kazu’ meaning many, ‘ko’ meaning child. Cooked sardines (Tazukuri) for a great harvest, ‘ta’ meaning rice paddy and ‘zukuri’ for maker.

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_Osechi.jpg

Kuromame Recipe (4 servings):
Dried Black bean – 150g
Luke warm water (~120F) – 4 cups
Sugar – 110g
Soy Sauce – 2 Tablespoons
Salt – ½ teaspoons
Baking soda – ¼ teaspoons



- 1) Wash the beans and soak overnight with all of the listed ingredients (at least 8 hours).
- 2) Pour everything into a pot over high heat until everything the water starts boiling. Reduce heat and simmer, while skimming any scum that builds up on the surface.
- 3) Place a parchment paper over the beans, cover and continue to simmer for ~2-4 hours, add water as needed to keep the beans covered.
- 3) Once the beans are soft, remove from heat and let sit overnight to soak to absorb more flavor.
- 4) Serve chilled.

Some people swear that adding a rusty iron nail makes the color really pop. **Not an endorsement.**



DENSHO: PRESERVING STORIES OF THE PAST FOR GENERATIONS OF TOMORROW

Our mission: To preserve and share history of the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans to promote equity and justice today.

www.densho.org



Campu Returns on January 6

Densho's podcast Campu tells the story of Japanese American incarceration like you've never heard it before. Brother-sister duo Noah and Hana Maruyama weave together the voices of survivors to spin narratives out of the seemingly mundane things that gave shape to the incarceration experience: rocks, fences, food, paper. Follow along as they move far beyond the standard Japanese American incarceration 101 and into more intimate and lesser-known corners of this history. Episodes 1-3 are available now wherever you listen to podcasts. Make sure to subscribe to hear new episodes starting on January 6th.



Setsuko's Secret - Now available on YouTube

Shirley Ann Higuchi, author of the new book *Setsuko's Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration*, was joined by two legends of Congress and the history of Heart Mountain, Wyoming—Secretary Norman Mineta and Senator Alan Simpson—as they discussed the Japanese American incarceration during World War II and its impact on their lives. Led by David Ono, the evening anchor of ABC7 news in Los Angeles and an award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker, the panel discusses the history of the Japanese American experience, the strong bond created by Mineta and Simpson over the years and how it shows how people with differing viewpoints can work together to create a better America, a message that has renewed relevance and urgency today.

SETSUKO'S SECRET: FRIENDSHIPS FORGED IN TIMES OF TRIAL

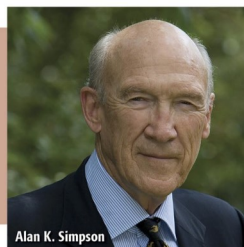
Saturday, December 5 • 2:00pm Pacific Time [REGISTER HERE](#) Pre-order a book from Kramers 



Shirley Ann Higuchi



Norman Y. Mineta



Alan K. Simpson



David Ono



In case you missed our wonderful webinar featuring author Shirley Ann Higuchi, Secretary Norman Mineta, Senator Alan Simpson, and hosted by ABC7 Anchor David Ono, you can now view the entire webinar on YouTube! Click the link below to watch and be sure to check out the video description for links to all of the programs, organizations, and articles mentioned!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-W8cRoRHutU&ab_channel=JACLNational



Free Online Rakugo Performance featuring Yanagiya Tozaburo - December 19, 2020

After canceling all of our in person events this year due to the pandemic, the **Idaho Japanese Association** is excited to bring you our first virtual event. A free Rakugo performance featuring rakugo master, Yanagiya Tozaburo. Master Yanagiya's plan to start on his dream of a 50 state tour this year was also side lined by the pandemic so he has decided to make the best of the situation by starting a 50 state virtual tour with the help of B-Bridge International. And we are excited to help bring you the Idaho virtual stop.

What is Rakugo

Rakugo is a solo storytelling performance where the storyteller will tell a tale involving a dialogue between multiple characters that ends with a punchline, often comical. Unlike other traditional Japanese art forms, Rakugo is the epitome of simplicity where the storyteller remains seated and only uses a paper fan and a small towel as props.

The history of Rakugo can be traced back to 9th and 10th century Buddhist monks making their teachings more interesting but over time has moved to an art form and has become organized to have a more formal apprentice system with regional groups and guilds who organize performances and venues.

Program

- How to Understand Rakugo's Movements (English)
- Using the fan and hand towel (English)
- Rakugo Performance (English & Japanese)
- Q & A

Time: December 19 2020 (Saturday) 3-4PM Mountain Time

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84487778426?pwd=cGdpQ2JWWHpZR2VjUWJYWmNhTE5pUT09>



Free! No registration necessary.



In Memory

Betty Uda (8-22-20)
George Watanabe (11-10-20)
May Matsui (11-14-20)



Nihongo-o Naraimashyou!

Let's Learn Japanese!

“yoi otoshi o omukae
kudasai”

Happy New Year!

Why JACL?

Founded in 1929, the JACL is the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. The JACL monitors and responds to issues that enhance or threaten the civil and human rights of all Americans and implements strategies to effect positive social change, particularly to the Asian Pacific American community.

Looking to our future, the JACL constantly assesses the effectiveness of its role in Japanese American, Asian Pacific American and civil rights communities, and what infrastructure is necessary to effectively support our mission and efficiently achieve our goals..

Vision

Aware of our responsibilities as the oldest and largest Asian Pacific American civil rights organization, JACL strives to promote a world that honors diversity by respecting values of fairness, equality and social justice.

Mission

The Japanese American Citizens League is a national organization whose ongoing mission is to secure and maintain the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others who are victimized by injustice and bigotry. The leaders and members of the JACL also work to promote cultural, educational and social values and preserve the heritage and legacy of the Japanese American community.

Consider joining a JACL chapter near you. Fairness, equality and social justice is important to everyone.

www.jacl.org