Start Your Holiday Shopping at JAMsj Winter Boutique  by Barbara Kawamoto

The annual JAMsj Winter Boutique is set for Saturday, November 8, at the San Jose Buddhist Temple Betsuin, 640 North Fifth Street, in Japantown. Admission is free! Museum members and attendees interested in joining the museum will have early entrance privileges, starting at 9:00 a.m. The general public can enter at 10:00 a.m. The boutique will close at 4:00 p.m.

Culture and Creativity

Invite your friends to join you so you can have fun shopping together. It’s never too early to start shopping for Christmas. A percentage of every purchase goes toward the museum at this annual fundraising event. Come and enjoy browsing through the fascinating and beautiful Japanese-inspired artwork, crafts, clothing, accessories, hand-crafted jewelry, washi designs, and stationery. There is so much variety that you will be sure to find that special something for all the people on your Christmas shopping list!

Meet the Authors

Are you looking for a new book to give as a gift? The following authors will be there in person at the boutique’s main hall during the times listed below:

- Cynthia Kadohata, author of The Thing about Luck
  12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m.
- Lora Nakamura, author of Bonsai Babe
  10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Kim Oshiro, author, and Jean Yee, illustrator, of Simon the Skinny
  10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Tom Graves, author of Twice Heros
  2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

They will be pleased to autograph copies of their latest books for you, your family, and friends.

Refreshments and Silent Auction

Enjoy lunch and snacks while you’re at the boutique. Select from a delicious assortment of Japanese bento, sushi, cookies, and other tasty treats.

Finally, don’t miss this year’s silent auction, which will include a wide array of donated restaurant and merchant gift certificates, gift baskets, and merchandise—all perfect for holiday gift giving or for you! Everyone is welcome to participate in the drawings by purchasing tickets at the table near the refreshment stand. Drawings will take place periodically throughout the day.

The museum extends a special thank you to the volunteers, donors, local businesses, and artists, all of whom are contributing to the 2014 JAMsj Winter Boutique. Thanks to them, we know that the boutique will be a roaring success. It’s really just around the corner so mark it on your calendar. See you all there!
**Message From the President  by Aggie Idemoto**

Visitors share impressions about their JAMsj visits in a variety of ways: in person, entries in the Visitor Comment Album, electronically via email and website, and by sending cards and letters.

We listen carefully to the input from our visitors, because their impressions help guide our work. Nakayoshi Gakko’s middle school students come annually as part of their summer program to learn about Japanese American history, culture, and art. On returning to class at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple, they sent thank-you cards and cited highlights of their visit. The following are some examples of their lasting impressions:

- Some people lived in horse stalls while at the assembly centers.
- The barracks room was interesting and felt real.
- Some of our great-grandmothers came to this country as picture brides.
- San Jose Japantown has been around almost 125 years.
- There was nothing to do during internment so people played baseball and made jewelry.
- Never thought about hardships until coming to the museum

I assigned students to ask their parents, "Who was the first person in our family to come to America, and what was life like for them?" Their asking these questions and hearing the answers are both significant actions because they represent ways to preserve history.

Adult visitors also share perceptions about their visits, but most don’t differ that much from those shared by the Nakayoshi Gakko students. A European American woman expressed guilt over not being aware of the Japanese American experience and apologized: "I am so sorry about what happened to your people."

As a docent, I interpret a chapter of history as I’m guiding visitors through the museum. But interacting with visitors is also a learning experience for me. Tapping visitors for their personal stories has generated many "ah-ha" moments. For example, after I described the orphanage at Manzanar, a visitor shared her knowledge and experience as a nurse’s aide at Children’s Village. She noted that after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, some guardians gave up their adopted foster children because they no longer wanted a child with Japanese blood.

In summary, we come together to teach and learn. Won't you consider being a part of our JAMsj family as a docent? We welcome your skills, services, dedication, and stories.

***JAMsj Holds Volunteer Happy Hour  by Michael Sera***

In an effort to thank the hard-working volunteer backbone of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) and to communicate the direction of the museum, JAMsj held a happy hour on Saturday, July 26. Thanks to Leslie Kim, volunteer coordinator, and Barbara Uchiyama, volunteer director, for organizing and getting the word out, we had a great time. I am always amazed at the amount of food that shows up even for a low-key potluck. If you read the JAMsj summer newsletter, you’ll find Yoko Kobashi’s chimaki (sticky rice) recipe. She brought this with her, and it was really good! It had real okasan no aji (mom’s flavor) and tasted like something my Mom would make.

Following the luncheon came a presentation, which covered the outcome of several board of directors retreats. At the most recent retreat, we held several interactive exercises to cover the roles and responsibilities of each board member, went over the goals and objectives of our public programs, and added quantitative measures to our overall goals. The presentation also covered the work that is being done with the NPS (National Parks Services) grant.

We also discussed the overall mission of JAMsj. In case you not familiar with it, here it is: The mission of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose is to collect, preserve, and share Japanese American history, culture, and art with a focus on the greater San Francisco Bay Area. You’ll see some changes in the months to come as the museum exhibits come equipped with additional display cases, as well as new interactive features.

As a working board, we have our retreats on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. At each retreat we try to focus on areas that are too time-consuming for our regular monthly board meetings. Food is one of the incentives to attend. In an effort to curb our waistlines, we recently opted for a healthy potluck of salads for lunch. The time prior, Barbara Kawamoto’s husband prepared lasagna for the group. Did I mention we like to eat?

JAMsj continues to be a 100 percent, volunteer-run organization. We have our challenges, but we all help and contribute to keep the story alive and to preserve Japanese American history. I encourage everyone to give a little time to the museum. You’d be amazed at how much you’ll gain in return. It might be in knowledge, or it might be a new friend. Either way, please get involved so you can benefit, contribute, and join in the fun, all at the same time!
As most of you have heard, the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) is publishing a book about our own Nihonmachi: San Jose Japantown: A Journey, written by Curt Fukuda and Ralph Pearce. The project was managed by Jim Nagareda, designed and produced by Janice Oda, and edited by June Hayashi. In collaboration with JAMsj, the presales were conducted as a fundraiser with nine other Japantown nonprofit organizations to insure that the entire community would benefit from the book’s publication.

The book includes personal stories and anecdotes from more than a hundred interviews conducted by the production team, as well as over five hundred photos, many of which came from newly-shared family collections. Each page includes memories and images integral to the development of this unique American community. This is not just a history of San Jose Japantown. It’s a recollection of the journeys experienced by many of our community’s families, journeys that built our Japantown and have brought us to this point in time, where we can pause and reflect with gratitude. In fact, at this point in time, we can proudly say that San Jose Japantown still thrives.

Watch for a book launch celebration and signing (supported by a generous grant from Union Bank) on Saturday, November 29, 1:00 pm in the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin annex. Mike Inouye is the MC. A museum exhibit tied to the book will also open around the same time.

With the holiday shopping season fast approaching, many shoppers are now looking for that unique gift carrying more thought and meaning than the commonplace, big retailer gift card. The new Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) online store offers a diverse set of products, including children’s books, educational DVDs, Japanese-themed artwork, gift memberships, and seasonal gifts. The popular hardbound book, San Jose Japantown: A Journey, by Curt Fukuda and Ralph Pearce, is also available for purchase on the site.

"Some of our supporters who live outside of the San Jose area were asking us about how they could obtain books, DVDs, and other merchandise that were associated with our events," said JAMsj Retail Director Eva Yamamoto. "Some others said that they could not regularly visit us at the museum store and were curious about our seasonal specials. We are very excited to announce that the new JAMsj online store will be able to meet their needs."

Existing museum members will be sent a postcard with a passcode so that they can take advantage of special member discounts. The site will initially host holiday specials and a major subset of the products sold at the museum store. More products and specials will be added throughout the year. Shoppers will be able to specify whether they would like in-store pickup or having merchandise shipped to them.

The JAMsj online store is accessible from the JAMsj website (www.jamsj.org). It is tentatively scheduled to be unveiled by early October. Please check our website or the JAMsj E-News for more detailed information on the official opening date of the online store.
In recent years, there has been considerable analysis and study of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Much emphasis has been put on the unconstitutional nature of Executive Order 9066, signed by President Roosevelt. Many have criticized the order that authorized, in the spring of 1942, all people of Japanese ancestry in the mainland United States to be sent to temporary assembly centers and eventually to be transferred to ten relocation centers located away from the Pacific Coast. Scholars have focused on the injustice of this policy that incarcerated 120,000 Japanese Americans, but, for the most part, ignored those of German and Italian descent during the war. As a result of these efforts, there has been an increasing awareness of the racial profiling that drove the creation of the War Relocation Authority (WRA) centers.

Nonetheless, the examination of Japanese incarceration has often been focused too narrowly on experiences at the camps and the politics that surrounded imprisonment. For example, before being evacuated, people were forced to quickly sell their homes, businesses, and land. But what has received little attention is what happened to the Japanese Americans after they were allowed to leave the relocation centers and return to the West Coast in 1944. For example, many had lost their property or feared prejudice in their former communities so were forced to start a new life in places remote from their original homes.

For the past year, I have been working on my senior thesis with JAMsj Board Member Dr. Stephen Fugita, in researching the important role a handful of citizens from San Jose and the surrounding Bay Area played in supporting Japanese Americans during and after internment. These citizens are sometimes referred to as “white angels,” which is somewhat of a misnomer because support was not confined to a single group of people but was offered by citizens of many different ethnic backgrounds. The early post-war period was a time of great distress as individuals, families, and communities had to rebuild from one of the nation’s “most undemocratic deeds.” The support of those that recognized the injustice the United States government had committed was crucial in making certain parts of Santa Clara County more welcoming for returning Japanese.

Japanese Americans began to resettle in Santa Clara Valley starting in January 1945. Yet only two years earlier, the San Jose City Council and Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors had voted to oppose “the return of Japanese Americans to the West Coast during the duration of the war.” The support offered by certain members of the San Jose War Relocation Authority (WRA) and San Jose Council for Civic Unity, as well as that of individuals such as J.B. Peckham, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Duveneck, and Lee Mullins, was vital in aiding in the resettlement of Japanese Americans returning to the Bay Area and Santa Clara Valley.

Although some have claimed Santa Clara Valley was a “bright spot of tolerance in California’s treatment of exiles,” there were still many struggles in the region. For example, even though there were citizens who welcomed returnees, many still held anti-Japanese sentiments. But what made this place different from many other communities were the individuals who made valiant contributions to help their Japanese friends, neighbors, and fellow citizens come back to the area.

The San Jose Council for Civic Unity was an important multi-ethnic coalition of individuals that helped Japanese Americans return to the area. Its main purpose was to find housing and employment for returnees. One of the crucial projects they assisted in was gathering information to find the most suitable place for a hostel, which was decided to be the Japanese language school at the Buddhist Betsuin Church. Torahiko Kawakami would serve as the hostel’s first manager. The San Jose Civic Unity Hostel became the first hostel for returning Japanese Americans that was opened without financial backing from the WRA.

In 1942, after local Japanese Americans were given the news that they would be incarcerated, they looked to Peckham for assistance. During the war, he looked after a number of properties for a small legal fee. His involvement included collecting rent, paying taxes, and holding balances until the owners returned. One of his crucial roles was aiding in the protection of Japantown. He cared for the Buddhist church on North 5th Street, as well as countless Japanese stores and businesses, by shuttering and boarding them up to protect them from vandalism.

Two other significant individuals in the Japanese American resettlement to San Jose and Santa Clara County were Josephine and Frank Duveneck. Mrs. Duveneck was involved in getting college-aged returnees accepted into colleges for the first time or reenrolled after they had been forced out of their original schools. When the WRA began to allow Japanese Americans to return to the Bay Area, the Duvenecks also offered their home to early returnees.


Timothy J. Lukes and Gary Y. Okihiro, Japanese Legacy: Farming and Community Life in California’s Santa Clara Valley (Cupertino, CA: California History Center, De Anza College, 1985), 120.

Wendy Ng, “Chapter 6: Leaving the Camps,” Return to the Valley, (California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, 2008), 46.


See photos on page 5—Resettlement
JAMsj Hosts Go For Broke Focus Groups  

by Steve Fugita

On June 21, the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) hosted a group from the Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC), based in Torrance, California. The Go For Broke group is probably best known for its Go For Broke Monument adjacent to the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. The visit to San Jose was part of a larger effort to gather data and perspectives for a new, yet-to-be-designed interpretive center in the Nishi Hongwanji Building across from JANM.

This new interpretive center is an ambitious effort which will focus on linking the experiences of the Nisei soldier and the broader WWII Japanese American experience to today’s contemporary issues, such as immigration reform, racial profiling, and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender) rights. In an attempt to creatively approach this, the GFBNEC team is visiting seven cities to gather best practices. JAMsj’s community room was the spot where some 24 San Jose-area people grappled with these very issues in a focus-group setting.

Observing and culling information from the focus groups were five GFBNEC-affiliated people:

- Don Nose, president
- Chris Brusatte, exhibit manager
- Dr. Franklin Odo, consultant and former director of the Asian American and Pacific Islander Center at the Smithsonian Institute
- Abbie Chessler, from the firm that will actually design the learning center
- Michael Burns, also from the design firm

The free-flowing group exercises were enjoyable and very informative, as reflected by the enthusiastic response of the audience. JAMsj volunteer David Mishima commented, “I enjoyed meeting and speaking to all who were in the group and sharing ideas.” Hopefully, the many museum volunteers who participated will be able to apply the lessons learned to their JAMsj experience in the future.
Why do People Volunteer at JAMsj?  by Chika Minami

As an anthropology graduate student, I have always been interested in the preservation of local heritage. Obviously, JAMsj plays an important role in representing and preserving the local Japanese American heritage. In the hope of contributing to the continuity of JAMsj’s museum operation, I decided to research what makes people participate in JAMsj’s mission.

Through in-depth interviews with JAMsj volunteers, I found some interesting motivational factors that make people excited about being part of JAMsj. For example, one of the major motives for volunteering is learning something about the Japanese American experience. Volunteers enjoy hearing stories about Japanese American history and culture from other volunteers and visitors. Another motive for volunteering at JAMsj is that volunteers like belonging to the local Japanese American community. No matter what cultural and ethnic background each volunteer has, the museum can be a place for people to build networks and socialize with people in the community.

It was not surprising to unearth these motivational factors because JAMsj is an ethnic history museum. However, one motivational factor was unexpected for me: some JAMsj volunteers are motivated because they can obtain skill sets and develop their careers by volunteering at JAMsj. When first volunteering, they use their own professional expertise to accomplish tasks, but over time they gain new skills or knowledge in other fields. The skill sets they can obtain and develop differ depending on the working unit they belong to at JAMsj. I interviewed JAMsj volunteers from different working units (policy makers, construction team members, docents, receptionists, store clerks, and card makers) and discovered unique work procedures and behavioral patterns associated with each unit (see table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Working Unit</th>
<th>Skills, Techniques, Knowledge</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Policy makers</td>
<td>Leadership, meeting facilitation, rapport building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction team members</td>
<td>Construction, woodworking, teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Docents</td>
<td>Public speaking, communication, intensive education in Japanese American history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptionists</td>
<td>Communication, office work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Store clerks</td>
<td>Communication, use of cash register</td>
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<tr>
<td>Card makers</td>
<td>Craft making</td>
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These research findings might add shed some light on how to best recruit, train, and coordinate volunteers. For example, career or skill development might be particularly attractive to younger generations such as high school or college students. In any case, it might be good for JAMsj to highlight the different skill sets that could be learned in each of the working units. Recruiting volunteers might be easier if they knew in advance what skills they could learn and how to improve themselves in addition to helping JAMsj. Attracting volunteers, especially young ones, is the key for survival of the museum in the long run.
Rich Saito has volunteered at the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) since the new building opened in 2010. A Sansei, he expressed that he likes volunteering and learning about Japanese American history. He is currently a docent as well as a trainer for new docents. There are about 30 docents on the roster, but only about 10 are active. Rich stated that he allows docents to shadow more experienced ones and learn at their own pace. He likes to develop and foster mutual learning between docents and visitors to the museum. He supports having docents and visitors learn from each other so that they can “all have an opportunity to grow.”

He discussed that he was inspired by Socrates Café, where people explore the concept of “discussion vs. dialogue.” This is where one converses with another person with the goal of mutual understanding instead of being adversarial or trying to “win” the discussion. He also shared that he uses Victor Frankl’s insights from *Man’s Search For Meaning*. Frankl stated that even though suffering is endured, we have an ability to choose our response. Further, what gives people dignity is that you “can choose” how you respond to an experience. Rich likes to weave this philosophy into his tours at the museum and applies it to the incarceration as well.

Saito encourages docents to ask visitors why they think the incarceration occurred and if they believe that it was justified. He tries to have docents paraphrase people’s responses, reflecting what they have heard, and encourages them to take the internees’ perspectives. He said that people are often able to be more insightful this way, making it more of a global experience rather than “just a Japanese problem.”

He stated that it’s been great to have the opportunity to meet interesting people who have played a part in the history of Japanese Americans. For example, he met Harry Fukuhara, who was an interpreter for the MIS in WWII. He was excited that he was able to speak to him and ask him questions. Saito stated that Harry needed a bodyguard to protect him during the war due to the fact that “both sides may have shot him.” Nonetheless, he served, even though it was a life-threatening situation. Rich stated that he has been able to build relationships with people who were interned and was able to support when they opened up to him, even when they felt they couldn’t with members of their own family. “If I could listen to them, it could be cathartic for them.”

On the Day of Remembrance, Rich learned about some of his own family history. He learned what his 99-year-old uncle went through during the war. It inspired him to consider how he could contribute to Japantown with disaster preparedness, public safety and mental health support.

When he is not volunteering at JAMsj, Saito is volunteering at other places. In addition to implementing disaster preparedness plans for Japantown, he volunteers as a marshall at professional golf tournaments. He also volunteers for the First Tee golf program, which teaches kids core values through the game of golf. He is also a proud grandfather and delighted with his role as “babysitter.”

Although Saito was born in Oakland, he has a long history of involvement in the San Jose Japanese American community. When his family members moved to the area when he was eleven, they immediately became active in the Wesley United Church. He was previously involved with the Japantown Run (formally the Banner Run) as a resource officer and also provided safety training for the staff of Yu-Ai Kai.

Rich became inspired to work as a police officer while working in an electronics company in Sunnyvale, when he accompanied a friend’s police husband on a night-shift ride along. He described the experience as “very exciting!” He decided that rather than go back to the office, he would be better off helping people in the community. He began in the police reserves in 1975 and was hired full time in 1977. He stated that while working for the San Jose Police Department, he was able to experience working in field training and gang intervention, as well as being a member of the SWAT team. When he was a lieutenant, he ran the crime prevention department, where he “worked with great staff.” Before his 30-year career with the San Jose Police Department, from which he only recently retired, Saito received his degree in business at San Jose State.

Rich appreciates being a volunteer at JAMsj and likes to serve the museum because he gets to work with “amazing people dedicated and devoted to Japantown history and community development.” He stated that he is inspired and proud to be a part of the organization and loves the interaction between staff and guests. He loves the constant change at the museum and encourages people interested in becoming a docent to contact him. He appreciates every opportunity to learn something new and “wants to be here indefinitely, to help carry out the JAMsj vision.”

Rich Saito keeping a watchful eye at Winter Boutique
Meet the Author: Naomi Hirahara  by Reiko Itamura

Edgar Award-winning author of the popular Mas Arai mystery series, Naomi Hirahara, returned to JAMsj on May 17 to introduce her new book, Murder on Bamboo Lane. This is the first book in her new mystery series featuring Officer Elle Rush, a 23-year old hapa bicycle cop for the LAPD. "Hirahara’s new series debut strikes just the right tone, neatly tuned into the twenty-something set. Her multi-ethnic cast promises a fascinating future for a cozy series tangling with serious topics." -- Library Journal

JAMsj President Aggie Idemoto introduced Hirahara, who was born in Pasadena and worked as a writer and editor for the Rafu Shimpo before starting to write nonfiction books in the late 1990s. Hirahara read an excerpt from her new book and explained, "I wrote this new series to present the real-world challenges of young people of color in an entertaining way. I also wanted to place downtown Los Angeles, my beloved city, on center stage." She pointed out how important it is for the writer to be emotionally involved with the setting. Hirahara did her research by taking a class in ATF (Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms) and actually going to a firing range.

For the past decade, Hirahara has written mysteries centered around Mas Arai, a Japanese American gardener and an amateur sleuth who likes to get involved in solving mysteries. Naomi said the Mas Arai series was more difficult to write from a third person’s viewpoint. In contrast, Elle Rush’s story is written from the first person viewpoint. Since Elle is a cop working for the LAPD, it’s only natural for her to be involved in solving mysteries.

During the Q&A session, Hirahara said her characters were developed or “knit” from various people she’s met throughout her life. That is, one character’s personality could be a combination of several people she has known. She also noted that one should not worry about names or dates when writing. The writer’s focus should be on the story line itself. If you’re interested in writing, it was suggested that you join a writing group.

We look forward to future Elle Rush mystery books and the two remaining books in the Mas Arai series. In addition, Hirahara’s upcoming nonfiction book about Terminal Island, which will cover the entire history of the island and not just the period during WWII, promises to be both fascinating and provocative.
Summer 2014 JA Film Series Closes  by Bob McKibben

As the 2014 summer film series comes to a close, it is good to reflect on the diversity and depth of filmmakers the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) public program was able to bring to its members and the public.

The series kicked off in May with Visioning of Asian America, a retrospective on the work of Duane Kubo. Duane is a retired dean of the Intercultural-International Studies Division at De Anza College and a co-founder of the Los Angeles-based Asian American media arts group, Visual Communications. He presented short scenes and clips from his many media productions. Included in his program were scenes from the first Asian American feature-length film, Hito Hata: Raise the Banner, and from Crusin' J-Town, an early documentary portrait of emerging Asian American culture, as well as the jazz fusion group, Hiroshima. Kubo also showed excerpts from the historic hearings, Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), held in Los Angeles in 1985. After the program food was enjoyed by one and all.

In June, JAMsj presented a panel discussion featuring three Japanese American documentary filmmakers from the San Francisco Bay Area:

Dianne Fukami, a San Francisco native and former news executive at KPIX-TV in San Francisco and producer of the films, Stories From Tohoku (2013), Separate Lives: Broken Dreams (1994), and The Spirit of Taiko (2005)

Emiko Omori, an-award winning cinematographer and director who has worked on more than 20 films, including Rabbit in the Moon (1999), Passion & Power: The Technology of Orgasm (2007), and Ed Hardy: Tattoo the World (2010)

Yuriko Gamo Romer is a graduate of Stanford University’s masters program in documentary filmmaking. Her documentaries include Mrs. Judo: Be Strong, Be Gentle, Be Beautiful (2012), Occidental Encounters (1998, award-winning film about mixed marriages), and Friend Ships (short historical animation about Manjiro, one of five Japanese fishermen found by an American whaling ship in 1841)

The panel discussion was followed by a special screening of the Emmy Award-winning documentary, Rabbit in the Moon.

Our 2014 summer film series finished in July as we featured three contemporary filmmakers who are known for non-documentary films:

- Koji Steven Sakai, who has written four feature films: Haunted Highway (2006), The People I’ve Slept With (2009), Monster & Me (2013), and Chink (2013)

- Kerwin Berk, known for his films, The Virtues of Corned Beef Hash (2010) and Infinity and Chasiu Ramen (2012)

- Kerry Yo Nakagama, associate producer of the award-winning independent film, American Pastime (2007), as well as a distinguished author and actor

All in all, it was a great summer of films. If you came, you know that. If you didn’t, know that the talent out there in the Japanese American community is vast: deep, diverse, and comprehensive. And make sure to join us next time!
Food is such an easy and important way to connect with people. I remember the excitement of big family holidays in my Mom’s family, with the meal coming together as people turned in circles around each other in my Nana’s kitchen. Who was going to sit at the kid table? Did we need to establish a “‘tween table”? Savoring the potato rolls with butter. Licking clean the creme de mint dessert cups. Cleaning up the floor with the Dust Buster after everyone else had gone home.

In contrast, there is more of an ethnic component in my husband’s family because of his strong Greek cultural identity. My in-laws moved from Athens, Greece, to rural Pennsylvania in 1972. I can’t image how difficult it was for my mother-in-law to leave her home and move to a new place, surrounded by families who had lived in the same county for generations, descended from the same German settlers.

With the help of Sesame Street and her kind Mennonite neighbors, my mother-in-law learned some of the language and customs of her new home. Along the way, she made up a few customs and traditions of her own. Photos of my husband’s childhood birthday parties show kids from the neighborhood crowded around the dining room table. Their mouths are watering as he prepares to blow out the candles on his Entenmann’s chocolate cake.

Learning to cook Mediterranean and Middle Eastern foods has been a way for me to learn the culture of my husband’s family. My mother-in-law doesn’t cook anymore, but I talk to her about food and what she used to make for my husband when he and his brother were young. One of my go-to Greek recipes is keftedes or meatballs. I came across a recipe when we were first married that I’ve modified through my own explorations in the kitchen:

**Ingredients**

- 1 lb. ground beef (or a mix of ground beef, lamb, pork, or veal)
- 1 c. crumbled Greek feta
  (Greek feta works well for baking and cooking. Save the French or Bulgarian feta to eat fresh with bread and olives)
- 1/2 c. finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tbs. chopped mint
- 2 tbs. chopped oregano
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 c. cooked rice

**Method**

Pre-heat oven to 350° F. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl until cheese crumbles are blended. Roll into 16 meatballs. Pan fry for a few minutes to partially cook. Transfer to a baking sheet, lined with parchment. Bake until cooked through, about 15 minutes.

Στην υγεία σας! (Cheers/good health!)
The Tag Project: A Cooperative Partnership  by Joe Yasutake

Several months ago, the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA), the Art Object Gallery, and the Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) collaborated to present a tri-venue exhibit headlining the compelling work of artist Wendy Maruyama. It was dubbed The Tag Project and was truly a cooperative partnership.

Maruyama created ten sculptures made up of a total of 120,000 name tags containing the names of every single Japanese American who was incarcerated during WWII. This monumental task was accomplished by recruiting hundreds of volunteers across the country. At the ICA exhibit gallery, the ten sculptures, each representing one of the ten War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps, were suspended from the ceiling. The display served as a stark reminder of the gross injustices resulting from Executive Order 9066. The exhibit area also included visual panels featuring former internees who could be heard, via mobile phone, telling their stories of how WWII affected their lives.

The moving symbolism of Wendy Maruyama’s creative work was in sharp contrast to the approach of the accompanying exhibit at JAMsj. The purpose of the JAMsj exhibit, entitled E.O. 9066: Memories and Artifacts, was to show through photos, visuals, and narratives, the soulful journey of the 120,000 internees. Displays range from a depiction of the struggles preparing to leave their homes, existence in the inadequate temporary detention centers, life in the desolate WRA camps, and the varied experiences of leaving camp to re-establish their lives. Numerous artifacts made by internees, never previously displayed in the museum, are also on display. This exhibit was created by JAMsj curator Jimi Yamaichi and installed by the talented Glenn Tsushima.

The third component of the The Tags Project was the display of Maruyama’s elegant art pieces at Ken Matsumoto’s Art Object Gallery. The exhibit included cabinet work and sculptures symbolizing camp life, using materials such as barbed wire and tar paper.

In addition to the exhibits, The Tags Project included a variety of interesting programs, including a panel discussion entitled “Social Justice: Progress or Regress.” The distinguished panel included Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren, playwright Luis Valdez, Maha Elgenaidi, founder of the Islamic Networks Group, and Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen. The concluding event featured a talented group performing an interpretive dance accompanied by narratives about the internment experience.

The exhibits at the ICA and the Art Object Galleries have ended. However, the JAMsj exhibit, E.O. 9066, Memories and Artifacts, is being retained for several more months. If you haven’t seen it yet, please visit JAMsj to enjoy this outstanding exhibit.
Scenes from Tag Project/EO 9066 Exhibit

Curators Jimi Yamaichi and Glenn Tsutsumi

EO9066 Exhibit

Shuttle bus to ride between ICA and JAMsj