



Florin J.A.C.L. Newsletter

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
- Sacramento Valley

Andy Noguchi and Josh Kaizuka, Co-Presidents
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Summer/Fall 2023 Newsletter

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Road-trip to the 2023 JACL National Convention

By Josh Kaizuka

This year's delegates representing the Florin-Sacramento Valley Chapter were Michelle Huey and Krista Keplinger – I went as alternate delegate and transportation coordinator to Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles. It was great to get out of the Sacramento triple digit heat, but the main goal was to make sure that we had a say in the resolutions that were introduced this year, and maybe have some fun while we were at it.



The main resolution we wanted to make sure passed, was the resolution to support transgender and nonbinary equality. As often happens, Florin instigated the work to submit a timely and important resolution. Just in 2023 as of now, there are over 490 anti-LGBTQ+ bills that have been introduced across the United States and many of them specifically target the trans and nonbinary community. We didn't want a resolution just said we support, but one that required some actions.

We teamed up with the Berkeley and Twin Cities chapters to draft and submit the resolution and had San Jose chapter, NCWNP District Youth Board, and the National Youth/Student Council co-sponsor with us. As you will read in Naoko Fujii's article in this newsletter, the resolution passed overwhelmingly without any amendments!



One of the best parts of the convention was connecting with our LA Florin member couple, Mia Yamamoto and Kimberly Tellez!

Another of the best parts of the convention was the keynote speaker at the NY/SC Youth Luncheon –Miyako Noguchi accepted the Vison Award for Nikkei Progressives.

I also learned that driving my electric car to LA and back is not a big deal and if you have fun people to drive with, it makes the time go pretty fast although someone took a short nap on the way back – it wasn't me!

Our convention team all did a great job during the business portion, learned a lot at the great workshops, and had a lot of fun. We all met some amazing people, got reacquainted with old friends, and made some excellent new connections.



Follow Us on Facebook

The Florin JACL-SV is dedicated to providing the most current chapter news, list of upcoming events, and resources to help you stay informed on local and national news. Follow us on Facebook @florinjacl.



Reflections from the 2023 JACL National Convention

By Krista Keplinger

I was initially incredibly nervous leading up to convention—I had absolutely no idea what to expect. Thankfully, I met so many welcoming people that made my experience extremely enjoyable and invigorating, and it wasn't a budget year, so I didn't have to sit through people going through every single line item for my first convention!

It was interesting to see the standing rules and bureaucracy of the JACL in action while going through the resolutions—and I'm extremely glad that Resolution 1, which requires that National JACL includes trans and nonbinary people in their decision-making regarding the LGBTQIA+ community and that events have all-gender bathrooms, lodging, and accommodations, passed without amendment. Hopefully chapters across the nation will adopt Resolution 1 as part of their protocols as well. Josh Kaizuka, Michelle Huey, Vinicius Taguchi, and Tara Umemoto, among others, did an incredible and fastidious job authoring the resolution, and I'm incredibly grateful for their deeply intentional work and dedication to pushing National JACL to do the right thing and be a more inclusive organization.

The workshops were even more rewarding, particularly the plenary and subsequent workshop with Miya Iwataki, Ron Wakabayashi, and Don Tamaki about Japanese American support for African American reparations. Given the Japanese American community's unique perspective, with the redress and reparations movement having successfully fought tooth and nail to change the hearts and minds of the nation, resulting in the eventual passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, our support and solidarity is vital. Now more than ever is the time to rally our communities together in pursuit of equity and long-owed justice. I greatly look forward to working with the National Nikkei Reparations Coalition, and I'm excited to get my hands on a copy of the 1,100-page AB 1321 report and pore through it!

Aside from the bureaucracy, I thoroughly enjoyed the Cruisin' J-Town event (it's not every day you get to see a band of 70-to-80-something-year-olds sing and dance to "Love Train" by the O'Jays, much less lead an audience to do Tanko Bushi to it!)—there are pictures of me trying and failing to learn how to dance the cha-cha floating around in the ether. I was also so happy to meet so many wonderful JACL members from across the country and was honored to have been able to spend time both strategizing and simply chatting with former Congressman Mike Honda. All in all, it was an incredibly rewarding experience, and I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to serve as a delegate for the Florin-SV JACL. Hopefully, next year's convention in Philadelphia will be just as fulfilling!



JACL National Council Adopts Transgender and Nonbinary Equal Rights Resolution

By Naoko Fujii, San Jose JACL

At the 2023 JACL National Convention, the JACL National Council overwhelmingly passed a resolution supporting Transgender and Nonbinary equal rights. The resolution mandates all future meetings hosted by the National JACL to provide all-gender restroom and lodging options, offer pronoun sharing options, and involve transgender and nonbinary members in policy decisions that impact their communities.

This resolution is a great first step for National JACL, but in order to be meaningful for all JACL members, each JACL chapter should now adopt this resolution for themselves. Together, we can use our collective economic power to make change by urging meeting venues to provide all-gender restrooms to make JACL events more welcoming for our transgender colleagues.

This is a small act of kindness that we can all implement. For example, at a recent Okaeri event at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Los Angeles, an "All Gender" sign was affixed to both "Men" and "Women" restrooms because there was no all-gender or "family restroom" option. That's all it took to provide all-gender facilities where none existed.

There was a strong presence of NCWNP District members on the team. The resolution team was led by Michelle Huey of Florin-Sacramento Valley JACL, Vinicius Taguchi of Twin Cities JACL, and Tara Umemoto of Berkeley JACL with Josh Kaizuka of Florin-Sacramento Valley JACL advising the group. Resolution co-sponsors were Twin Cities, Florin-Sacramento Valley, Berkeley, San Jose, the National Student/Youth Council, and the NCWNP District Youth Board.

With an unwavering commitment to advancing LGBTQIA+ rights, several impassioned testimonies were made in support of this resolution, including those of Midwest District Young Professionals Caucus Representative Zara Espinoza, Eastern District Council National Youth/Student Council Representative Remy Kageyama, and San Jose Chapter member Mike Honda. As a Congressman, Mike Honda, started the LGBTQ Caucus in the House of Representatives with 3 members that has grown to over 100 members today.

It was highly rewarding to work as a team with our JACL colleagues and demonstrates that we can make social change together.



Top Row: Mike Honda, Michelle Huey, Josh Kaizuka, Vinicius Taguchi
Bottom Row: Zara Espinoza, Remy Kageyama, Naoko Fujii

California Attorney General Rob Bonta Issues Apology

On the 35th Anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which granted reparations to Japanese Americans who had been wrongly incarcerated by the United States Government during WWII and to "discourage the occurrence of similar injustices and violations of civil liberties in the future," California Attorney General Rob Bonta issued a formal apology.

The apology was on behalf of his office which during WWII, led by former Attorney General Earl Warren, "assailed the loyalty of Japanese Americans, using unfounded speculation" to support the incarceration of some 120,000 Japanese Americans and also used the California Alien Land Law to dispossess land owned by them even after the war until the Alien Land Law was found unconstitutional.

Attorney General Bonta's statements today as well as his commitment to defending the civil rights and liberties of all citizens and residents of California is even more relevant today as xenophobia, hate and intolerance is leading to a revival of the Alien Land Law in several states.

We thank Attorney General Bonta for recognizing the racist and unconstitutional actions of the Office the Japanese American community faced and for the sincere public apology, especially for the survivors of the incarceration, those deprived of property, as well as their descendants.

Membership Update

Thank you for being a member of our community! As you may know, active membership is an essential element in a strong JACL chapter. Thanks to your renewing membership, we can continue to defend civil liberties both locally and nationwide. We hope to see you at our events!

Welcome to our Newest Members!

Francisco Ciraulo

Lynne Goldsmith

Krista Keplinger

Susan Reiko Morioka-Bertram

Matthew Nishio

Jonathan Okamoto

Miyuki & Jay Ransi

Jordan Shimosaka

Alexandra & Tamaki

Annika Kimiko Tamaki

Yoshito & Frances Yamada

Marielle Meets with Visitors from Moldova



By Josh Kaizuka

A delegation from Moldova came to Sacramento to meet with people from various organizations on the subject of Multi-Ethnicity in a Democratic Society. The visit was sponsored by the United States Department of State and Global Ties Sacramento was the host.

Long time Florin friend Claudia Ramirez, who is now with Global Ties, invited us to participate and Marielle Tsukamoto went to represent us to shed light on our work in cross-cultural understanding, working with the Muslim community, and promoting civil rights.

Moldova, much like many others in that part of the world, has a diversifying population, especially since the attack on Ukraine. It was so nice to be a part of the conversation and sharing of cultural information.

Recent Donations

The Florin JACL-SV Chapter truly appreciates all the donations that are generously made to the Chapter's general and scholarship funds. Below are donations recently received:

Judy Fukuman
Family of Osamu "Sam" Kashiwagi
Titus and Donna Toyama
Aileen Nishio
Marielle Tsukamoto
Ruth Seo
Sachie Louie
Anonymous

Please report errors or omissions to Titus Toyama at titus.toyama@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

October 14:
Nikkei Dog Scholarship and Youth Program Fundraiser

December 2:
88th Anniversary and Awards Luncheon

Yuba County Detention Facility is Shut Down!

By Josh Kaizuka

There was a cause to celebrate on March 19 of this year and it was the end of a nightmare lasting almost 30 years for detained migrants and immigrants.

Back on January 11, 2020, Tsuru for Solidarity's Bay Area and Sacramento hubs organize the Oshogatsu New Year Protest to support the fight to shut down or end the ICE contract in Yuba County and end the inhumane treatment of detainees. The protest ended up shutting down the street in front of the Yuba County courthouse and jail with attendees and taiko performers in the street in solidarity with the detainees. It was an incredible collaboration of Japanese American advocacy organizations and numerous local and statewide organizations.

We didn't want to be a one and done organization, so we participated in a number of rallies even during the pandemic and also helping with efforts to end policies in California snatching away the chance for someone who made a mistake to take advantage of various legal reforms to lawfully stay, before being taken into custody by ICE.

The Yuba Liberation Coalition kept up the fight through the pandemic to free detainees and advocate for the closure of the facility and when it was announced that ICE was cancelling the contract as of February 8y of this year, we were invited to join in the celebration rally at the Yuba County Jail. It was so great to have Baku-hatsu Taiko Dan from UC Davis participate because they did an outstanding job three years earlier!

While there is reason to celebrate, the fight to end the detention and humane treatment of migrants and immigrants, especially families and children, is not over.



15th Annual Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage *Inspiring Understanding, Friendship, and Solidarity*

By Andy Noguchi

After a 3-year pandemic break, 55 diverse pilgrims journeyed together and built a community that grasped the importance of “No more backlash, injustice, or Manzanars!” From April 28-30, they traveled 320 miles from Sacramento on a 3-day bus pilgrimage to the former WWII concentration camp located in the shadows of the Sierras near Bishop. The Florin J.A.C.L.-Sacramento Valley and the Council on American Islamic Relations – Sacramento Valley/Central California (CAIR) jointly organized this amazing 15th annual trip.



2023 Florin Manzanar Pilgrims in front of Sentry Post Sign. (Photos by Josh Kaizuka)

The United States government created Manzanar, one of the 10 major concentration camps, to imprison 125,000 innocent Japanese Americans in desolate reaches of the country. It racially profiled them for Japan’s attack on America. It fabricated a scapegoat for racism, economic greed, and political opportunists. The government imprisoned 600 local Florin residents in Manzanar.

This year’s pilgrimage traveled to learn Manzanar’s history, injustices, and vital lessons for today. The 55 pilgrims toured the world class interpretive center housed in the former Manzanar high school gym. They hiked through reconstructed barracks, latrine, and mess hall enlightened along the way by five WWII camp survivors. They joined an educational program of 1,000 at the camp cemetery organized by the L.A. Manzanar Committee. Pilgrims participated in a massive interfaith ceremony of Buddhist, Christian, and Shinto religious leaders.

The travelers also enjoyed a fun BBQ social, fried rice breakfast, mess hall bento, origami paper crane folding project, ice breaker lunch discussion groups, and loads of camaraderie.

A big highlight of this year’s pilgrimage was the 5th annual Culture Exchange initiated by the local Native American AkaMya Culture Group and joined by pilgrimage Muslims, Japanese American, and others. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 9)**

15th Annual Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage

(FROM PAGE 8) To honor Native American culture, history, and solidarity, the pilgrimage also organized a commemorative T-shirt art contest won by local Native artist Charlene Redner (below).

The Mayor of Bishop, Inyo County Supervisors, and local community leaders joined in the Culture Exchange welcome, repudiated WWII era anti-Japanese American ordinances, and showed solidarity with the pilgrims.

The 55 pilgrims included camp survivors, Sam Shimada, Sachi Louie, Stan and Christine Umeda, and Judy Fukuman. Eleven Muslim Americans joined this year's CAIR contingent creating many eye-opening discussions about Islam, culture, and post 9/11 backlash. Twenty energetic young Next Generation folks joined in.

Allies participating this year included those from the Parkview Presbyterian Church, California Museum, Asian American Liberation Network, plus Koyasan/Bakuhatsu Taiko groups. An ABC 10 News crew of Rachel Kim and John Bartell also reported on the pilgrimage. See the video by googling: ABC 10 News - Manzanar

2023 Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage

**Honoring Native American
Culture, History & Solidarity**



Support the Manzanar Youth Leadership Program

Capable youth leaders of the Next Generation are vital for the success of the Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage, Florin JACL, and the community. This year, six outstanding youth helped coordinate the pilgrimage.

Would you like to support this Manzanar Youth Leadership program? The cost for sponsoring each youth leader on the pilgrimage runs over \$400. Please donate online at www.Florinjacl.com and note "Manzanar Youth Leadership" OR mail a check to "Florin JACL" at PO Box 292006, Sacramento, CA 95829

This year Youth Leaders helped plan the 3-day pilgrimage, coordinated, and led activities. These included inter-generational discussion groups, origami paper crane project, Obon dance lesson, taiko drumming culture exchange, youth activities, Japanese/ Arabic /English name cards, hosting the bus, media interviews, and more.

The six youth leaders this year were Krista Keplinger (UCD grad and book publisher), Grace Matayoshi (3rd year CSUS Asian Studies/ Social Work majors), Koji Lo (4th year UCD business Econ major), Robin Dewis (3rd year UCD English and Medieval Studies majors), Michelle Huey (Women's rights activist and UCD grad), and Gregory Wada (taiko instructor and new PhD archeologist).

Remembering Osamu “Sam” Shimada Florin JACL Community Activist and Friend

By Andy Noguchi and Twila Tomita

We’ve lost too many precious friends, family, and Florin JACL members in recent years, including Sam Shimada on June 21, 2023 at the age of 90. He passed away peacefully at home cared for by his family: wife Fumie, children Warren (Liz), Howard, Cheryl, and grandchildren Jaclyn and Kevin. Over the past 25 years, we’ve gotten to know Sam and Fumie, work on meaningful community projects, and spend good times with them.

Though Sam had that gruff demeanor and a booming voice, it didn’t hide his love for his family, friends, and community. He always lit up around family and friends. Sam brought a lot of fun, humor, and happiness to others. He did a lot of good.

We first met Fumie and Sam about 25 years ago. They were leading redress efforts for the Japanese American railroad workers, like Fumie’s dad. During WWII, the railroad companies, on orders of the FBI, unjustly fired Japanese Americans from their jobs claiming a threat to national security.

For years, Fumie and Sam traveled across the Western states, outreaching to railroad families, researching the history, attending meetings, and advocating for justice. With Fumie as the “front person,” Sam was the quieter “behind the scenes guy.” He supported throughout and chauffeured the two of them thousands of miles. They were a great team, helping to finally win redress for railroad and mineworkers in 1998. We knew that they were an amazing couple and very special people.



Sam sharing his WWII camp experiences in the Manzanar barracks (April, 2023)

Following that victory, they immersed themselves in Florin JACL community issues, historical projects, and cultural activities. Over the decades, they built dozens of friendships.

Though Sam was the “behind the scenes guy,” we soon discovered that he was a great hidden talent for sharing the Japanese American experience. This happened during the annual Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage which began in 2006. One early Pilgrimage, we heard people talking and laughing in a side room at a hotel where we stayed. It was Sam having a great time telling stories to a Sacramento Bee reporter about himself as a 9-year-old boy being shipped off to the Amache camp. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 11)**

Remembering Osamu “Sam” Shimada

(FROM PAGE 10) Ever since, Sam has been a key camp resource, telling his stories, including to the news media and young people. This past April, at the age of 90, Sam was still sharing his adventures as we walked through the Manzanar barracks.

Sam was a big part of many community efforts. He often served ice cream at the Scholarship Ice Cream Social, ran the kids pumpkin decorating contest during the Nikkei Hot Dogs event, and produced the Chapter Newsletter with Fumie.

Sam was rightly proud of his Japanese American culture. Over the years, he and Fumie served Ozoni New Year’s Soup to hundreds of people at our Mochi Madness events. I can still picture Sam and Fumie on our driveway during the pandemic serving Ozoni soup to dozens of people as they drove up. At New Year’s, Fumie, Sam, and Howard would also kick off the year by hosting dozens of friends. It was a scrumptious Japanese treat.



Fumie and Sam running the Ozoni New Year’s soup tasting station.

Sam was always there standing up for what was right, too. He attended recent rallies in Davis against anti-Asian hate and a West Sacramento news conference honoring local WWII Japanese Americans.

In 2021, the Florin JACL-SV Chapter recognized Sam and Fumie with its Community Leadership Award. It was well-deserved.

Sam said he wouldn’t have any “social life” except for his many Florin JACL activities and socials.

the fun, laughter, and stories. I can still picture Fumie and Sam, as they would playfully bicker and tease each other. Fumie would get exasperated and say, “SAMI!” And Sam would raise his arms, smile in his cute way, and nod his head, as if to say “busted – you got me.”

Sam and Fumie would often meet up with us and other friends for potlucks, dinners out, or holidays together. Sam (and Fumie) always added a lot to

Fumie and Twila loved to cook and bake. Sam and I loved to eat. We would often exchange dishes. After Twila brought over one of her scrumptious desserts, Sam would quickly inhale it. He would then say with a little smile: “Twila, that was pretty good, but not quite up to your high standards. Make it again and bring it back next week.”

Three years ago, Sam got sick and mysteriously lost 60 pounds, Twila, who was recovering from her hospital stays, challenged Sam to a “Weight Gaining Contest.” She made a contest poster with their funny caricatures on it. Sam took up the challenge in good humor. The first person to gain 3 pounds would win. A month later, they both gained 3 pounds in a tie.

Looking back on Sam’s life, he really set a great example for us. Do good things in the world. Take care of your family, friends, and community. And, share some fun, humor, and happiness with others. Sam, you got it right!

Nikkei Dogs

Florin JACL Scholarship & Youth Programs Fundraiser



Senbei Stacking

Face Painting

Raffle &

BINGO Prizes, Prizes, PRIZES!

- * Grilled Hot Dogs
- * Teriyaki Hot Dogs
- * Chili
- * Rice
- * Cupcakes
- * Cold Drinks



ALL YOU CAN EAT!

Adults \$12

Ages 4-12 \$6

3 & Under FREE

October 14th, 2023, 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Buddhist Church of Florin

7235 Pritchard Road, Sacramento 95828

Order Tickets by **October 9, 2023**

Contact:

Cindy Kakutani cindykakutani@gmail.com

CUPCAKE DONATIONS Contact:

Twila Tomita

Event Sponsorship & Donations
Welcomed & Graciously Accepted



Nikkei Dogs
Florin JACL-Sacramento Valley
Annual Scholarship & Youth Programs Fundraiser
October 14, 2023 @ Buddhist Church of Florin
Ticket Order Form, Donations & Volunteer Sign Up



Please mail or email by Friday, October 6, 2023

Mail to: **Florin JACL-SV, Nikkei Dogs, PO Box 292634, Sacramento, CA 95829**

Or email to: **florinjacls@gmail.com** Payment by credit or debit card at <https://bit.ly/47QnL4X> or scan the QR Code

Name _____		Phone: _____	
# General Tickets	\$12 X # _____	\$ _____	
Children Age 4-12	\$6 X # _____	\$ _____	
Children 3 & Under	Free # _____	\$ _____	0.00 _____
Total # Attending _____		Total Check enclosed \$ _____	
Unable to Attend – Please accept my Donation of \$ _____			

Event Sponsorship	
Gold \$100 or more \$ _____	
Name _____	
Silver \$50 or more \$ _____	
Name _____	
Bronze \$25 or purchase \$50 in tickets \$ _____	
Name _____	

BINGO & RAFFLE DONATIONS GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED
Raffle Donations

Bingo Donations

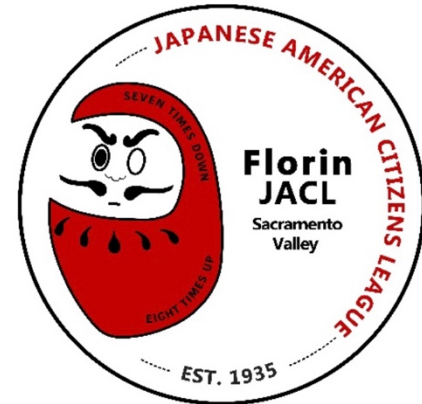
I WILL VOLUNTEER TO HELP: Contact me at Phone # _____ Email: _____ Set up Tables and Chairs Saturday October 14, 2023, 9:00 a.m. at the Buddhist Church of Florin YBA Hall _____ I will bring Cupcakes _____ Dozen to Nikkei Dogs

SAVE THE DATE
Florin JACL – Sacramento Valley 88th Anniversary Luncheon
“Strength Through Unity”

Saturday December 2, 2023

11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Valley Hi Country Club
9595 Franklin Blvd.
Elk Grove, CA 95758



Honoring Outstanding Community Leaders

Pres. Emeritus Robert S. Nelsen, CSUS, Kansha-shō Award
Tom Nakashima, Florin JACL-SV Leadership Award
Prof. Ayad Al-Qazzaz, CSUS, Community Leadership Award
Buddhist Church of Florin, Community Service Award

