



# *Florin J.A.C.L. Newsletter*

*Florin Japanese American Citizens League*

- *Sacramento Valley*

Andy Noguchi and Josh Kaizuka, Co-Presidents

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## **Spring-Summer 2017 Newsletter**

### ***IN THIS NEWSLETTER:***

**PAGE 2-3: President's Message**

**PAGE 3: Florin JACL Scholarship  
Recipients**

**PAGE 4: Florin's Obon Workshop**

**PAGE 5: Time of Remembrance, Roller  
Derby**

**PAGE 6: Florin JACL Commemorates 75<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary of EO 9066**

**PAGE 7: Recent Donations**

# *President's Message*

## *Civil Rights Movement Today?*

Whether you were alive and experienced the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s or learned about it in school, everyone of good conscience believes it made things better. Pivotal moments in the movement included Rosa Parks who would not give up her seat, the march from Selma to Montgomery, and Dr. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech in front of the Lincoln Memorial

Later, in a landmark case, *Loving v. Virginia* in 1967, laws restricting people classified as "white" marrying "colored" was held unconstitutional. How many of you know the JACL filed an amicus brief supporting the Lovings? How many know that William Muratani, on behalf of JACL argued at the Supreme Court challenging the race based marriage laws? Muratani argued that he would likely have been barred from marrying a "white" woman and he did so eight years after the ban was struck down by the Supreme Court.

Japanese Americans were part of the Civil Rights Movement led by African Americans and all people of good conscience. It was the right cause and the right thing to do. Since then, work to protect civil rights of all, protecting women's rights, marriage equality, voting rights, immigrant rights, and a plethora of civil participation by individuals in this country were achieved. Regardless of whether the political leaders were right or left, since the 60s, things seemed to be going in the right direction overall culminating with the first African American President.

Then something happened that took many by surprise.

I had lunch with a friend a few weeks ago. She is an African American who works advocating for the underprivileged and she told me that she was glad that Trump won the election. I was taken aback and shocked, but kept my composure and explored what she meant. I'd known her for over a decade and we hadn't talked politics in the past, because of her passion to help the under-represented in society, couldn't believe that she was a supporter of the current President. She went on to tell me that based on her work with kids and families of the underrepresented over many decades, she believed that racism never went away but was just under the radar. Racists kept their thoughts private or at least not as public because it wasn't politically correct. Expressing that she is no fan of the current President, but because of him, it proved her belief. Bigots and racists have come out of the "closet," been emboldened to speak and act out.

This election cycle has sadly exposed that many, including political leaders, don't know or care about the mistakes of the past and the fight to never again let it repeat. Exposed are factions within the country intent on discriminating, profiling, and placing blame on anyone who doesn't look or sound like them for their problems. There is Islamophobia, stereotyping Latinos, an attack on immigration reform, and worst of all bullying and Twitter attacks against individuals and businesses that do not fall in line with the administration.

Florin JACL and its partner groups work to make sure actions like Executive Order 9066 is not only remembered, but does not happen again. The Japanese American community has worked for years and continues to educate that what was wrong then, is still wrong now. The incarceration of 120,000 American citizens was unwarranted and perpetuated by war mongering, bigotry, racism, and a failure of political leadership. **(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)**

## *President's Message Continued...*

**(FROM PAGE 2)** Clearly, far too many in the current political climate continue to perpetuate the mistakes. The same bigoted rhetoric continues. Political leaders are trying to pit and scare the masses with stereotyping entire groups based on religion, race, the right to choose their own medical choices, all to divide instead of unifying. Just a few days ago in response to a “sanctuary state” debate in Colorado, a lawmaker defended his bigoted and racist beliefs citing how Executive Order 9066 is precedent to Colorado’s opposition against registries against Muslims or other religious groups stating, “there is no time to ask questions and find out who is a citizen and who’s not.” He went further to object to the title of act, the Ralph Carr Freedom Defense Act. Governor Carr was one of the few political leaders in 1942 who stood up and refused to send Japanese Americans in Colorado to incarceration camps because he believed that the US Constitution protected all Americans, a very unpopular position at the time. It wasn’t until after his death that Coloradans realized that he was right.

A plaque at the Colorado State Capitol Memorializing Governor Carr reads, “Dedicated to Governor Ralph Carr as a wise, humane man, not influenced by hysteria and bigotry directed against the Japanese Americans during World War II. By his humanitarian efforts, no Colorado resident of Japanese ancestry was deprived of his basic freedoms, and when no others would accept the evacuated West Coast Japanese, except for confinement in internment camps, Governor Carr opened the doors and welcomed them to Colorado. The spirit of his deeds will live in the hearts of true Americans.”

Civil rights, liberties, and freedom of speech are under attack today and it is incumbent on each and everyone one of us to stand together, unite, and protect it for all. Florin JACL and its members have stayed true to speaking out and protecting against bigotry, racism and fear mongering. We have great leaders, members, and a very inspiring group of next generation youth leaders. We have great working relationships with numerous groups and organizations in the community. Now is the time to be inspired and committed to make sure we unite to keep the dream alive. Now is the time to continue the progress towards making a better community for all, and mistakes of the past are remembered to ensure it doesn’t happen again.

Sincerely,  
Josh Kaizuka

## Florin JACL’s Scholarship Students

**Outstanding 2017 Florin JACL Scholarship students honored at the fun May 13<sup>th</sup> Ice Cream Social: Left to right - Brandon Ishikata (Loyola University – Chicago Gradate program), Chase Marini (Ponderosa High), Derek Imai (McClatchy High), and Matthew Murata (Kennedy High). Photo by Brandon Miyasaki.**





**9th Annual**

# **Florin Obon Festival Dance Workshop!**



**Tuesday, July 11, 2017 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm Workshop  
Buddhist Church of Florin (Multi-Purpose Room)  
7235 Pritchard Rd (off Florin Rd), Sacramento  
7:00 pm – 8:00 pm Dance Practice**

**(Donations welcome to cover light hot dog meal)  
Sponsored by Buddhist Church of Florin  
and Florin Japanese American Citizens League (Florin JACL)**

**Please RSVP back so we have enough food:  
Email: [florinjacl5@outlook.com](mailto:florinjacl5@outlook.com) or call (916) 393-5007**

## Remembering the Past at the California Museum

“Remembering the Past, Guarding Our Future” was the theme for the 2017 Northern California Time of Remembrance held at the California Museum on Saturday, February 11, 2017. A sold-out crowd of more than 260 individuals were in attendance to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Executive Order 9066.

Emcee Barbara Takei said, “We are hearing echoes of 1942 and feel that pain all over again, and we share that pain of our Muslim friends, of refugees and the undocumented.” She continued by saying, “It is not the time for silence, and no more ‘shikata ga nae.’ It’s time to say ‘no, no.’”

The feature of the event was filmmaker Konrad Aderer’s, “Resistance at Tule Lake” the little-known wartime incarceration story of segregated Tule Lake. “Our community was silenced. Protest was treated as disloyal,” commented Barbara Takei. Toshiko Akiyama said, “I think the generation after us should know what happened so that they would never let something like this happen again.”

The Mary Tsukamoto Daruma Community Service Awardees were:

1. Shigeo Yokote, a 100 year old veteran of WWII and community activist
2. Priscilla Morita Ouchida, former JACL National Executive Director who responsible for passage of Assembly Bill 2710, the first monetary redress bill in the US to those Japanese American state employees fired during WWII.

The unity candle-lighting ceremony shared stories and lessons from the past, similar to the current Executive Orders directed towards limiting entry of entire communities and building walls. (This article is excerpted from Heather Ito’s article in the Nichi Bei Weekly, March 2 – 15, 2017. )

## Florin JACL’s Roller Derby Night

A lot of fun and exciting competition topped the Florin JACL’s Roller Derby Night June 17<sup>th</sup> in Sacramento. It was great seeing our own Michelle “Hamcat” Huey (left) jamming around the track and even taking a few hard hits for the “Donna Party” team. Check it out if you have the chance. Photo by Brandon Miyasaki.



# ***NEVER AGAIN!***

## **Florin JACL Commemorates 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of EO 9066**

By Michelle Huey

On February 19, 2017, the Florin JACL held their Japanese Americans Say “Never Again!” event at the Florin Buddhist Church. Almost 200 participants gathered at Florin Buddhist Church to commemorate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066.

It was a time to reflect on past injustices against Japanese Americans as well as speaking in support of Muslims, immigrants, refugees and others who are being targeted today. This was also an opportunity to create new alliances to ensure mass incarceration never happens again.



The program began with Reverend Yuki Sugahara, who shared the Buddhist perspectives of the challenges of today. Professor Isao Fujimoto spoke about his experience in the camps and Fumie Shimada recognized the 24 WWII incarcerated individuals who joined us at the event. She was followed by Basim El-Karra who shared the Muslim American perspectives on challenges today. This was all tied together by our co-MCs, Jesse Okutsu and Michelle Huey.

Afterwards participants connected at small reception afterwards where prompts were posted around the room encouraging participants to answer questions such as “what inspired you to come today?” and “what caused the past and today’s backlash?”

The program and reception were sponsored by Council on American Islamic Relations – Sacramento Valley (CAIR), Buddhist Church of Florin (BCF), and Florin Japanese American Citizens League (Florin JACL-Sacramento Region). The entire event was live-streamed and can be found on our Facebook.

## **Upcoming Event!!!**

**July 19, 2017 - 6:30pm: Community Forum on Islam and African Americans.**

Let’s overcome the myths and misconceptions about Muslim Americans. Join the Sacramento Area League of Associated Muslims (SALAM) Islamic Center for free community forums in a safe, informal setting to ask questions, learn, and and visit an Islamic mosque. The Florin JACL works closely with SALAM and applauds this public outreach to dispel people’s fears, similar to those faced by innocent Japanese Americans during WWII.

SALAM Center at 4541 College Oak Drive, Sacramento just across from American River College. For more info please visit: <https://www.salamcenter.org/>.

## Recent Donations

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

### **Donations Supporting Chapter Programs:**

George Waegell

Mike Fauzy

Dan Diorite, in memory of Bill Sekikawa

Cindy Kakutani, in memory of June Sunahara

Adele Logsdon, in memory of Haru Maeda

### **Donations Supporting the Florin JACL Scholarship Fund:**

Sacramento Nikkei Singles

Margie Sunahara, in memory of June Sunahara

Donations to the Florin JACL general fund directly support the Chapter's programs that serve our mission to promote civil rights, social justice, and cultural heritage for all Americans through community education, alliances, and leadership. Donations to our Scholarship Fund help our Chapter provide scholarships to graduating high school seniors and college students to continue their education at institution of higher learning. Thank you!

## It's Obon Time!!

**July 11, 2017 - 530 pm – 7pm: Come out to Florin's 9th Annual Fun Obon Dance**

Workshop. An excellent introduction to the Japanese American community's premiere cultural event. Come learn the meaning, history, dance steps, and equipment of the Obon Festival. Join in with the church dance practices at 7pm. Co-sponsored by the Buddhist Church of Florin and Florin JACL-Sacramento Valley.

The event is led by Hanayagi dancer and past Florin JACL President Cheryl Miles, plus organized by co-chairs Jennifer Kubo and Jenny Takahashi. . Please see flier on Page 4 for more information and how to RSVP to this email.

**Florin Japanese American Citizens League**  
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