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 2026 Newsletter

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Obon Dance Workshop:
Jennifer Kubo, Jenny Takahashi
Scholarship: Karen Yamamoto
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Co-President's Message

By Josh Kaizuka

I had the opportunity to attend the National JACL Convention in Las Vegas at the end of July. I thought it got hot in Sacramento, but Vegas was something else. Luckily, the air conditioning in the hotel was pretty good—maybe too good at times.

I went as a non-delegate since we had two very capable representatives from our chapter attending, Michelle Huey and Krista Keplinger.

It was interesting to hear from Lilly Simmering, the new Executive Director of JACL. She appears to have experience on both the national and local levels, working with large and small organizations, and she has some ambitious ideas about how to make JACL more relevant and increase membership. Unlike some other conventions, there were contested elections for the national board, which was interesting to observe. You can read a more detailed report on the convention from Krista Keplinger in this newsletter.

Also in this newsletter, you will see that we have been busy as usual, with our annual Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage and Cultural Exchange at the end of April, our Ice Cream Social, where we recognized some exceptional scholarship awardees, and our Obon Workshop.

Our members have also been attending and participating in events over the last few months, and you can read more about them in this edition of the newsletter.

The Nikkei Dogs Scholarship Fundraiser is back this year, so please make sure to sign up and attend, because this is one of our main scholarship fundraisers. Bring your family and friends, and donate generously so we can award more scholarships! We also need volunteers, so please sign up if you can.

As we draw toward the end of summer, many civil rights and social justice issues remain unresolved. Birthright citizenship seemed to be a settled issue after the U.S. Supreme Court reaffirmed it, but it is being challenged again. The targeting of immigrant communities continues and is increasing in scope. The erasure of history continues, and new challenges seem to be just a social media post away.

Our chapter remains committed to advocacy through education and alliances. We know that the work of protecting civil rights and social justice is never finished, and sometimes it can feel overwhelming. Our history has shown us that when we come together, speak up, educate others, and build strong alliances, we can make a difference.

As we move into the second half of the year, I encourage everyone to stay engaged, participate in our programs and events, and continue to support the work of our chapter. Whether it is through attending a meeting, volunteering at an event, bringing someone new to a program, or simply having a conversation with someone about the issues we face, every effort matters. Thank you for being part of Florin JACL-SV and for everything you do to strengthen our community because together, we thrive—Strength Through Unity.

Fun & Successful 2026 Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage

2026 Florin Manzanar Pilgrims in front of Camp Monument.
(Photo by Josh Kaizuka)

By Andy Noguchi

Insight, inspiration, fun, friendship, and solidarity highlighted this year's 3-day bus pilgrimage to the former WWII Manzanar concentration camp April 24 -26th. Fifty-four diverse pilgrims journeyed together and built a community that grasped today's importance of "No more Manzanars, Backlash, or Hate!" They traveled 320 miles from Sacramento to Manzanar Park in the shadows of the Sierra Nevada Mountains 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 trip.

The U.S. government created the WWII concentration camps, including the first of 10 major camps at Manzanar, to imprison 125,000 innocent Japanese Americans in desolate reaches of the country. It racially profiled them for Japan's December 7, 1941Pearl Harbor attack. It fabricated a scapegoat for racism, economic greed, and political opportunists. The government imprisoned almost 400 Florin residents in Manzanar, among the 2,500 Florin residents evicted.

This year's pilgrimage learned Manzanar's history, the injustices, and vital lessons for today. The 54 pilgrims toured the world-class interpretive center in the former Manzanar High School gym. They hiked through reconstructed barracks, latrine, and mess hall guided by retired Manzanar Superintendent Bernadette Lovato Johnson. They were enlightened along the way by seven WWII camp survivors. They joined an educational program of over 2,000 at the camp cemetery organized by the L.A. Manzanar Committee. Pilgrims also 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.

An amazing highlight of this year's pilgrimage was the 8th annual Culture Exchange initiated by the local Native American AkaMya Culture Group. Pilgrimage Muslims, Japanese Americans, diverse travelers, plus local community leaders joined in. Iwa Daiko Collective led rousing taiko drum, music, and dance numbers. Native American leader Sage Romero shared that they were the first people to be displaced from their homes to be imprisoned on reservations. The Mayor of Bishop, Inyo County Supervisors, and many local community leaders welcomed us. They repudiated WWII-era anti-Japanese American laws.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Fun & Successful 2026 Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage

(FROM PAGE 3) The 54 pilgrims included camp survivors, Mits Yamamoto, Terrie Masuda, Dan Uyeyama, Christine Umeda, Sachi Louie, Marielle Tsukamoto and Judy Fukuman. Seven Muslim Americans joined this year creating many eye-opening discussions about Islam, culture, and post 9/11 backlash. Nineteen energetic young Next Generation folks from high school age to young adults pitched in. Half of the travelers were first-timers with us.

Native, Muslim, and Japanese American performers in the 2026 Culture Exchange (photo by Josh Kaizuka)

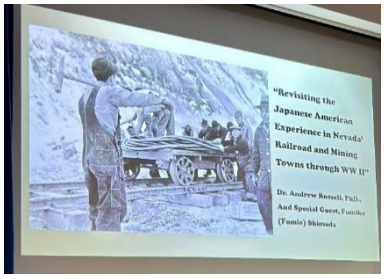
Numerous allies joined this year included those from the Iwa Daiko Collective, Parkview Presbyterian Church, California Museum, Buddhist Church of Florin, Opening Doors, Jan Ken Po Gakko, Sacramento Japantown Mural Project, Asian Community Center, California State University – Sacramento, and Nichibei News.

Save the Date – Manzanar Pilgrimage April 23-25, 2027

Important Notes for the April 23-25, 2027 Florin Manzanar Pilgrimage: Please contact us if you would like to be on our interested traveler list. Applications should be ready by February 1, 2027 with acceptances after for the limited spots. Traveler fees of $425 per person double occupancy are again expected. Discounts are $75 (camp survivors), $50 (youth), and $30 (Florin JACL members). For more info, please contact Andy Noguchi via email at FlorinJACL@outlook.com.

Nikkei History in Nevada

Members of our chapter may have heard a little about Japanese American history in Nevada, especially when Andy Noguchi talks about Fumie Shimada's family trying to get into an incarceration camp during WWII and his work on reparations for Japanese American railroad workers who were unjustly fired.



(Fumie Shimada, Andrew Russell)

In May, Fumie Shimada was a panelist discussing her early life growing up in Nevada. Fumie talked about how her father lost his job with the railroad after the attack on Pearl Harbor and how their family survived the war.

The event was hosted by the California Museum as part of a discussion with historian and author Andrew Russell about his new book, Like Friends, Like Foes: Japanese Americans and Nevada Through World War II.

2026 JACL Convention Recap

By Krista Keplinger

Another year, another convention! This year's JACL National Convention was in Las Vegas at the Paris Hotel, with the theme of "Reigniting Our Purpose and Mission." Since it is a business year, there was a presentation and approval of the budget in addition to resolutions. The resolutions were as follows:

- Resolution 1: Support of Immigrant Communities Targeted by ICE
- Resolution 2: Relating to the Implementation of a Strategic Plan for the 2029–2030 Biennium
- Emergency Resolution 1: Issuing a Statement on the Potential Closure of NARA Archives in San Bruno and Chicago

The resolutions were passed rather quickly and unanimously; the only discussion was for Resolution 1, and that was to add an amendment to approve JACL chapters' ability to assist those being targeted by ICE raids in their own communities. The budget discussion, however, was prolonged, which is to be expected, but was eventually approved.

The workshops this year revolved around preserving incarceration sites, intergenerational trauma resulting from incarceration, youth leadership/next-gen education, and Black reparations. I personally attended the workshops on youth leadership and Black reparations, both of which were very informative.

The San Diego JACL chapter conducted a study recently asking what youth members wanted from JACL, and the results were enlightening—along with cultural activities, respondents indicated that they would like leadership and professional development opportunities. San Jose JACL has done a great job of doing this by offering internship positions for college credits, and I'd be interested to see what adapting this for Florin would look like.

The Black reparations workshop, organized by Carol Kawase of NCWNP and featuring Peggy Nagae, Masumi Hayashi-Smith, and Don Tamaki, was excellent. Don, as always, is extremely concise and talented at dissecting rhetoric, and he has provided common-sense rejoinders to critics, as well as a template for other chapters and organizations to spread the message. Peggy talked about Tsuru for Solidarity's work on Black reparations and solidarity through coalition-building, and Masumi introduced Tsuru's 407 Project, an initiative to start conversations within the JA community to talk about reparations and build education, communication, and allyship around this movement. I've signed up for both Tsuru's and Nikkei Progressive's listservs on Black reparations, and I already have ideas for what Florin can do!

While the page count of the California Task Force to Task Force to Study and Develop Reparation Proposals for African Americans final report is scary (1,100 pages), the Executive Summary of the report is worth a read. It's only 56 pages, and the list of recommendations is a gold mine. The legislative proposals are exhaustive and very exciting and would help everyone—not just Black Californians. ***(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)***

2026 JACL Convention Recap

(FROM PAGE 5) On a local level, AB 2599 is currently making its way through the state legislature. AB 2599 is a bill that, if passed, would require any corporation doing business in the state that has annual worldwide gross receipts of $100,000,000 or more to certify it has searched through all of its records to ascertain whether it has sold people subjected to slavery, used those enslaved as collateral, provided loans to purchase those enslaved, insured those transactions or the people subjected to slavery, and provided aid or other services to facilitate those transactions. This data would then be accessible on a public platform. If people are interested, I would love to get a group together to go to the next hearing for AB 2599 to show our support. Redress for our community would not be possible without the support of Black advocates, and it's time to return the favor.

Las Vegas was hot—and not just because of the 115-degree heat! We had two (TWO!) contested races this year, which I have personally never seen before—VP of public affairs and president. Carol Kawase, who ran from the floor, won the race for VP of public affairs, and Sheldon Arakaki of PNW won the office of president. Simon Kutz, Alex Tokita, and Seia Watanabe were elected to their positions of NYSC rep, NYSC chair, and VP of membership, respectively, and other positions on the board will be appointed by the new president.

All in all, it was a very interesting convention—the next two will be online, so I am excited to not be in 115-degree heat, but will miss catching up with old friends and making new ones.

Florin Members Join Quakers "Love is Action" Event

Florin JACL-SV member Elizabeth Sarine, who has been working with the Sacramento Friends Meeting (Quakers), helped organize the "Love Is Action" silent worship event in June at McKinley Park. It was an act of public witness against fear, violence, and authoritarianism—and in solidarity with communities facing harm and dehumanization.

Participants paused for quiet reflection in solidarity with communities facing harm and dehumanization. Photos of people who died in ICE detention or were killed by ICE were displayed, and participants read each person's name, along with their dates of birth and death.

Members Elizabeth Sarine and her daughter, Michael Lindsey, Jessie Morris and his mother, Katherine Morris, and Josh Kaizuka attended.

It was meaningful to come out and show our support, especially since the Quakers were one of the few organizations to support and speak out for the Japanese American community during World War II. Quakers continue to speak out and take action on behalf of those who are being targeted today.

Ice Cream Social Recap

(Evan Fujii-Sisler, Heather Koike, Jaselle Umeda, Wren Nishio, Nathan Lee)

As usual, the afternoon started with ice cream and all the fixings, including root beer for those who wanted a float! We had a great turnout as we celebrated our amazing group of scholarship recipients: Jaselle Umeda, Evan Fujii-Sisler, Wren Nishio, Nathan Lee, and Heather Koike, who received both the Mark Merin Civil Rights Scholarship and the Ayad Al-Qazzaz Outreach Scholarship.

Heather and Jaselle, who were our Florin Manzanar Ambassadors this year, also provided a great recap of this year's pilgrimage and shared some insights from their experience.

Andy Noguchi, chapter co-president, also talked about why the pilgrimage is important, the lessons we can learn from understanding what happened, and its relevance to today.

The Scholarship Committee, led by Karen Yamamoto, did a wonderful job introducing each of the awardees. We also had a great crew of volunteers scooping ice cream—and everyone won a raffle prize!

Florin Obon Workshop

Without fail, the Florin Obon Workshop, organized by Jenny Takahashi along with the Buddhist Church of Florin, was a lot of fun! Ernie Takahashi was the hot dog master, making sure attendees had a dog or two, along with other side dishes, so everyone could focus on learning about the history of Obon and practicing dances for the Obon season.

Cheryl Miles, a past president of our chapter who trained at the prestigious Hanayagi Jutei Mai dance school, talked about the history of Obon and the various forms and meanings of the dances to a captivated audience. She has led the Buddhist Church of Florin's Obon festival for about 40 years!

After some demonstrations, everyone went outside to practice and get ready for this year's Obon season.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make the workshop a success, and to everyone who attended!

Membership Update

Welcome to Our New Members

Judy Louie
Poonie Holst
David Okita
Jeffrey Takahashi & Krissy Hirai
Erica Tomlinson

Thank You to Our Most Recent Renewing Members!

Alex & Joyce Eng
Nancy Arata-Fong & David Fong
Lynn Franklin
Amos Freeman & Teresa Kato
Judy Fujii
Paul Hironaka
Maurine Huang
Michelle Huey
Josh Kaizuka
Krista Keplinger
Polly Kleinberg
Heather Koike
Maya Koike
Yayoi Kushida & Jonathan Musicant
Jonah Lee
Madison Lee
Anthony Marquez
John Marshall
Paul & Callie Masuhara
Scott Matsumoto
Gina Matsuno Moeller
David Morikawa
Susan Reiko Morioka Bertram
Luther & Amy Nishimura
Rumi & Kazunari Nozue
Larry Ota & Tina McKee
Kathryn Otagiri
Kristina Sazaki & Neil Matsuoka
Heidi Sakazaki
Reed Sato
Virginia Uchida
Guy Turner
Judy Ueda
Keith & Paula Umemoto
Nancy Whiteside
Frances Yamada
Sharon Yamamoto
Harold & Nancy Yamauchi
Takashi & Carol Yogi

At the JACL Florin – Sacramento Valley Chapter, we're deeply thankful for every member who joins or renews each year. Your support fuels our fight for justice, equality, and civil rights—not just in words, but through action. From educational events to powerful partnerships, we stand united with organizations that share our passion for social justice and civile rights. Through thought-provoking presentations, open dialogue, and community outreach, we keep the legacy of the Florin JACL alive—and more relevant than ever.

We need *you* to keep the momentum going. Membership is increasing since the last newsletter, and your involvement makes all the difference.

Haven't renewed yet? Want to join? Visit: https://jacl.org/member and make sure to select "Flori-Sacramento Valley" or contact Katherine L. Morris at katmorris77@hotmail.com or (916) 719-8389.

Thank you for being part of our community. With your continued support, we'll keep making history—together. We can't wait to see you at our next event!

IT'S BACK!!

NIKKEI DOGS

Florin JACL Scholarship & Youth Programs Fundraiser

October 17, 2026
5:30 to 8:30 pm

Buddhist Church of Florin

7235 Pritchard Rd, Sacramento

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

ALL YOU CAN EAT!!
Adults - $12
Ages 4-12 - $6
3 & Under - Free

Senbei Stacking • Face Painting • Raffle & ... FREE BINGO!
PRIZES, PRIZES, and MORE PRIZES!!

ORDER TICKETS by October 9, 2026. Contact:

Karen Yamamoto - karenyamamoto@sbcglobal.net
Rick Uno - rickuno54@gmail.com

CUPCAKE DONATIONS, contact:

Twila Tomita - twilatomita@gmail.com

Event sponsorship and donations are welcome & graciously accepted.

Nikkei Dogs
Florin JACL-Sacramento Valley
Annual Scholarship & Youth Programs Fundraiser
October 17, 2026 @ Buddhist Church of Florin
Ticket Order Form, Donations & Volunteer Sign Up

Please mail or email by ***Friday, October 9, 2026***

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

Or email to: florinjaclsv@gmail.com Payment by card at https://tinyurl.com/NikkeiDogs **or scan the QR Code**

Name_____ Phone: _____

# General Tickets	$12 X #_____	$_____
Vegetarian Tickets	$12 X #_____	$_____
Children Age 4-12	$6 X #_____	$_____
Children 3 & Under	Free #_____	$_____0.00_____

Total # Attending _____ Total Check enclosed $_____

Event Sponsorship

Gold $150 or more $_____
Name_____

Silver $100 or more $_____

Name_____

Bronze $50 or more $_____

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 17th at 9:00 a.m. at the Buddhist Church of Florin YBA Hall

_____I will bring Cupcakes ____ Dozen to Nikkei Dogs

_____ I will help _____ (setup, wash dishes, sell raffle tickets, serve drinks, ***clean up***)

Support or Donate to the *Reclaim Sacramento Japantown: Destroyed by Design* Exhibit!

We are thrilled to share a preview of artist Karen Tsugawa's design for our upcoming exhibit at the Sacramento History Museum. ***Reclaim Sacramento Japantown: Destroyed by Design*** opens on November 6, 2026, and runs through April 2027.

Once a vibrant downtown community, Japantown was devastated by the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II and later by redevelopment that erased much of the neighborhood.

The exhibit will be an immersive experience featuring Japan Alley facades, artifacts, videos, and personal stories from Japantown descendants.

Your contribution will help fund the construction and installation of the exhibit, as well as community programming, a fall festival, live entertainment, cultural demonstrations, civil rights activities, and hands-on experiences for all ages.

You can donate online at **https://tinyurl.com/SacJapantown** or by scanning the QR code.

- To donate by check, please make it payable to **The ABAS Law Foundation** (Memo: **"Japantown Museum Exhibit"**) and mail it to: 555 University Ave., Suite 235, Sacramento, CA 95825.
- Sponsors who contribute **$1,000 or more by September 26, 2026,** will be recognized in the exhibit and invited to a special reception prior to the public opening.
- Donors who contribute **$100 or more** will be invited to a special reception prior to the public opening.

The exhibit honors Sacramento's Japanese American pioneers, who rebuilt their lives against immense odds, and ensures that the spirit of Japantown remains a lasting and meaningful part of our city's history.

Reclaim Sacramento Japantown Steering Committee thank you for your support!

Reclaim Sacramento Japantown is a community-based project of **The ABAS Law Foundation**, a 501(c)(3) educational and charitable nonprofit corporation. Taxpayer ID: 91-1859906.