Regional/National

Symposium examines wartime scars

By TOMO HIRAI
Nichi Bei Weekly

More than three quarters of a century since the forced removal and incarceration of some 120,000 people of Japanese descent in American concentration camps, the Japanese American community is still not fully recovered from the trauma.

The day-long event entitled “A Community Fractured: Compliance and Resistance” explored the rifts within the Japanese American community that formed through the incarceration and the ensuing years as Nisei sought to rebuild. Held May 11 at Futures Without Violence in San Francisco’s Presidio, the symposium explored the Japanese American Citizens League’s compliance with the U.S. government’s orders during the wartime incarceration, the conflict and resistance inmates exhibited during the war, and the post-war activism that eventually won an apology and redress compensation from the U.S. government in the 1980s.

Chizu Omori, a Japanese American writer and activist who served as the symposium director, Omori, who was 12 years old when she was incarcerated in Poston Relocation Center, said sometimes overcome with sadness or anger when she thinks about the divisions formed within the Japanese American community.

“I feel that huge damage was inflicted on us,” she said. “We still haven’t been able to process that damage completely. The first session focused on the “Beginnings of Resistance,” with John Tateishi, head of the JACL’s redress campaign and later its national director during the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Tateishi spoke on the background behind the organization’s decision in 1975 to work on the redress campaign. Starting with the organization’s Seattle roots as the “American Loyalty League,” founded in 1929, Tateishi explained how the JACL became the government’s mouthpiece for the Nisei community as an English-speaking American citizen-run organization.

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Suspect in Sunnyvale car attack charged with hate crimes

SUNNYVALE, Calif. (Bay City News Service) — A man accused of attempted murder after driving into a group of eight people in Sunnyvale last month was charged with hate crimes enhancements in Santa Clara County Superior Court on May 30.

Isaiah Peoples, 34, allegedly targeted three people at an El Camino Real crosswalk on April 23 because he perceived them to be Muslim or Indian, according to the Santa Clara County District Attorney’s Office. A 13-year-old girl who was also hit with the car later died with major injuries after the attack and remains in the hospital in critical condition.

Peoples, who was charged with eight counts of attempted murder in April, and prosecutors on May 30 added hate crime enhancements to the attempted murder of the 13-year-old girl and her father, who are both Indian.

District Attorney Jeff Rosen said via email that the case is still under investigation, and prosecutors don’t give media briefings on cases.

Two of Peoples’ cousins were at the courthouse before the hearing, and said prosecutors’ depiction of the attack was shocking, and at odds with everything they knew about their cousin. Peoples was a war veteran in the U.S. Army who suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, according to the family.

He had picked up food on his way to a bible study class when the attack occurred.

His family is mixed-race, mixed-religion and Muslim celebrations have always been embraced in their household, family members said. Thomas Miller, who described himself as Peoples’ cousin, said the hate crime charges were being used to stir up public frenzy in the case.

Another cousin, Michelle, said she’s been speaking with Peoples at the jail. He was always a quiet, gentle man who “wouldn’t stir a fly,” she said, and has been speaking even less after being jailed.

The FBI was called to assist in the investigation on the day of the attack and is assisting the Sunnyvale Department of Public Safety with their investigation. Though hate crimes violate federal law, the case will be prosecuted locally, according to Rosen.

The details of the case are still under investigation, and prosecutors and safety officers are working to determine if a mental illness or disorder played a role in the attack.

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Little Tokyo organization to redevelop mixed-use development project

LOS ANGELES — Little Tokyo Service Center has purchased the former Umeaya Rice Cake Company site, located at 414 Crocker Street.

The three-generation family-owned business owned the 13,000 sq. ft. site of a Japanese-style building, which was once the rice cake company’s factory. The family needed to sell the property to LTSC means the site will remain an important facet in the neighborhood’s “landscape of the Little Tokyo neighborhood,” LTSC said in a statement.

The center “will redevelop the 35,760 square-foot-site into a mixed-use, 100 percent affordable, transit-oriented development project. The mixed residential building will consist of approximately 120-150 units, all affordable rental housing for low-income and very low-income families, with 50 percent set aside for permanent supportive housing.

The project will be approximately 13,000 sq. ft. of ground floor community, commercial, and service provider space to provide wraparound services for housing tenure.”

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Asian Americans push for representation at Smithsonian Institute

By KIMI ROBINSON
Kyodo News

LOS ANGELES — More than 20 years after its founding as a diversity initiative, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center is working to create a permanent Washington exhibit space where visitors can learn about the contributions of Asian Pacific Americans to the U.S. history.

"We want to be able to share Asian American history to display in the Smithsonian: a blue Marchesa gown worn by Constance Wu’s character Rachel Chu during a pivotal wedding scene in the 2018 summer blockbuster “Crazy Rich Asians,” which was hailed as the first major film in 25 years to feature an all-Asian cast.

Hiroshima, a Grammy-nominated Asian American R&B jazz band, was among other Asian Americans in sports and culinary arts who were honored during the event. Various speakers lauded the community’s increased visibility in media and American culture."

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OBITUARIES

TADEMARU, HARUKO ROSE, 100, passed away peacefully on April 22, 2019. Born in Baldwin Park, CA on February 13, 1919, Haruko was a dedi-
cator of both her grammar school and high school, and featured in
book Nisei Voices, which highlighted the
first Japanese American valdic-
tion of California public schools.
During World War II, Haruko and her
family were sent to the Amache interment camp in Colorado, where
her children, grandchildren and
great-grandchildren visited in 2010
and was written about in the Nichi
Be Weekly. Haruko and her late
husband Harry Tadema, both
loved dogs, enjoyed reading, and spend-
ing time with her great-grandchildren.
Haruko was the beloved wife of the
late Harry Tadema,
loving mother of the late Roy Tade-
maru, Helen Ideno, Eugene Tadema-
ru and Sharon Mokuyma; cherished
grandmother of Katherine Ideno,
David Tademaru, Karen Ideno-Chiou,
Richard Tadema, Gail Tanaka and
Lori Mokuyma; and adored great-
grandmother of 11. She is survived
by her sons and many
nephews and nieces.

Private services were held in Los
Angeles, CA, and Chicago, IL.

FROM PAGE TWO: Asian Americans at Smithsonian

the only one of its kind in the
country — as an example of how
long it takes for a minority group in
the U.S. to establish its own

FROM PAGE THREE: Affordable senior housing

and 31 for 50 or less. Units will
also be offered at least one pass
through the AC Transit Easy Pass program for the first three
years.

Hana Gardens has a restored
400-square-foot former florist
shop, an outdoor public plaza and
Japanese Heritage Gar-
den with information signs and
sidewalk markers, celebrating the
Japanese American flower

Growing industry that thrived
during decades in West Contra
Costa.
The flower shop was operat-
ed by the Mabuchi family, who
lived in an attached home in the
rear.
The complex is one of sev-
eral new housing projects built,
under construction or planned
along San Pablo Avenue in El
Cerrito.

Vicky Mihara Avery, origami artist and business owner, passes away

By TOMO HIRAI
Nichi Bei Weekly

Noted origami artist and business owner Vicky Mihara Avery passed away
from complications of pancreatic can-
cer early in the morning of May 27,
2019. She was 62. She is sur-
ived by her husband Peter and
Shizuko Mihara, younger brothers
Linda and Roger Mihara, husband Matthew Avery, son
Christopher Avery and their two
dogs.

Mihara Avery, a lifelong San Francisco,
was born March 24, 1957. She and her sister Linda have been well-known in the
origami community. She was one of the first two girls to join the men’s team at
George Washington High School, and also raced cars and won the 1983 C Street Prepared Ladies
national championship in Salina, Kan.

A renown gift wrapper, she
wrapped a snowmobile during the 1983
Gifted Wrapper Contest and was also featured on “The Mar-
tha Stewart Show.”

“A great friend, however,
remembered her most for her ability to bring people
together. “She enjoyed connect-
ing people,” her husband said.

“Whether it was teaching or
through an event. Whether it was
making sure friends stayed in
touch. That’s why she has so
different families.”

She helped organize the
inaugural Pacific Coast Origa-
miUSA Convention, along with
SaveNature.org’s annual bowling
competition. She moved to San
Francisco’s Japantown through the
Nihonmachi Street Fair, the
cherry blossom festival and the
Buddhist Church of San Fran-
cisco.

Mihara Avery held a degree in
business administration from
San Francisco State University.
She worked at Paper Tree, her
family’s paper store in Japa-
town. She also worked for the
San Francisco Zoo, and owned
Mountain Valley Paper Com-
pany in South San Francisco and
Miki’s Paper Company in Berke-
ley.

At her request, the family
held a celebration of life May 25.
More than 100 people came.

“Vicky said, I want to meet ev-
everybody now before I go, rather
than you guys having a party
for me after I leave,” her father
said.

Robert J. Lang, an origami art-
ist, had recently moved down to
Southern California, but attend-
ed the celebration of life to say
his farewell.

“One of the hallmarks of Vicky
was that no matter whatever hap-
pened in organizations, in her
life, she maintained an absolutely unflappable good
cheer and nature,” he told the
Nichi Bei Weekly via e-mail. “I have been with a good shot smile!”

A memorial service will be
held on Saturday, June 29, 11 a.m.,
at the Buddhist Church of San
Francisco, 1881 Pine St., in San Francisco’s Japantown. The family requests, in lieu of
flowers, a contribution be made to
Guide Dogs for the Blind, Glasa-
coma Research Foundation, or
SaveNature.org.

Nichi Bei Foundation

Rates:
$75 PREMIUM: Print AND Digital Edition
$50 PRINT: Digital Edition ONLY
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PURCHASER’S INFORMATION:
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