

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 still has not fully recovered from the trauma.

The day-long event entitled "A Community Fractured: Compliance & Resistance" explored the rifts within the Japanese American community that formed through the incarceration and the ensuing years as *Nikkei* sought redress.

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 in-

carceration, the conflict and resistance inmates exhibited during the war, and the post-war activism that eventually won an apology and token compensation from the U.S. government in the 1980s.

Chizu Omori, a Japanese American writer and activist, served as the symposium director. Omori, who was 12 years old when she was incarcerated in Poston, Ariz., said she is 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 to comply with the U.S. government's plans to forcibly remove people of Japanese descent from the West Coast.

Tateishi, who joined the JACL in 1975, said he spent years questioning why the JACL endorsed the incarceration while working 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 *Nikkei* 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 was hospitalized with major injuries after the attack and remains in the hospital in critical condition.

Peoples 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 outside of court did not elaborate on the details that led to hate crime charges, but said his office is confident in evidence

that will emerge during a preliminary examination. He recalled racist attacks in Christchurch, New Zealand; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Poway in San Diego County, and addressed the Indian and Muslim communities in the Bay Area.

"When you are attacked because of your race, your religion, national origin ... whatever the reason for the attack on you - it's an attack on me, and my family, and on all of us as Americans," Rosen said.

Rosen said he spoke with the 13-year-old girl's father on the morning of May 30, and though the family is traumatized, he thanked the public for their prayers. The girl's medical condition and that of other victims are currently being kept private.

Two of Peoples' cousins were at the courtroom 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 hurt 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 public safety officers are working to determine if a mental illness or disorder played a role in the attack.

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 Americans of Asia-Pacific descent have made to their country.

Hollywood celebrities and politicians representing the Asian Pacific American community came together May 18 in Los Angeles to support a fundraiser held to help the center expand from a "migratory museum" that organizes temporary exhibits to a permanent Asian Pacific American gallery within the Smithsonian Institute.

"So much has been invisible for so long and hasn't been recognized," Lisa Sasaki, the center's director, told *Kyodo News*. "The APA community is very complicated and diverse, this is a community that speaks over a hundred different languages, migrated to the United States at various different points of time, that participated in American history for close to 200 years," said Sasaki, a fourth-generation Japanese American.

The center, which is seeking to raise more than \$20 million in its first round of fundraising, has already acquired a recent piece of 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.

"I can stand here tonight and proclaim that I am an actor playing roles casting for 'male actor,' but that wasn't always the case," said the event's emcee Harry Shum Jr., an actor known for his roles in "Glee" and "Crazy Rich Asians."

"There was a time when the script called for an Asian actor that was portrayed by a non-Asian actor. Mickey Rooney, Marlon Brando, Yul Brynner and Katharine Hepburn all played Asian characters in films. But with 'Better Luck Tomorrow' and 'Joy Luck Club,' we saw films that had Asian Americans or Asians cast as not just supporting actors," said Shum.

"The United States Congress now has 20 members in the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, the largest in U.S. history," said Rep. Ted Lieu of Los Angeles. "There's still great underrepresentation on the court system as well as in the private sector — law firm partners, CEOs — so there's a ways to go."

More than 20 million people identify as Asian American in the United States according to a 2017 census estimate. Five years ago, the center became a migratory exhibit in order to allow visitors to access its programs beyond Washington, said Sasaki.

"We started to recognize the fact that in order to be able to tell diverse stories, we needed to be able to leave Washington, D.C. and to go where the majority of Asian Pacific American communities exist, which is primarily the West Coast and Hawai'i and the Pacific," said Sasaki. "We want to be able to share the Asian Pacific American experience throughout the United States, which is why we think of ourselves as a migratory museum."

Sasaki pointed to the 2016 opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture — the Smithsonian's 19th museum that is

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Little Tokyo organization to redevelop mixed-use development project

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

The three-generation family-owned business closed in 2017.

"The owner's decision to sell the property to LTSC means the site will remain an important facet in the ever-changing landscape of the Little Tokyo neighborhood," LTSC said in a statement.

The center "will redevelop the 35,766 square-foot-site into

a mixed-use, 100 percent affordable transit-oriented development project. The multi-story residential building will consist of approximately 120-150 units, all affordable rental housing for low income individuals and families, with 50 percent set aside for permanent supportive housing.

"There will be approximately 13,000 sq. ft. of ground floor community, commercial, and service provider space to provide wraparound services for housing tenants."

日米 **Nichi Bei** WEEKLY

a publication of the

Nichi Bei

FOUNDATION

Sustaining Sponsor: The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation

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BACK ISSUES: \$1.50 to \$2.50, plus shipping & handling. Visit: www.nichibeijournal.com/nichibeiweekly/backissues/

POSTMASTER Nichi Bei Weekly
Send address PO Box 15693
changes to: San Francisco, CA 94115

The Nichi Bei Weekly (USPS 004-607) is published every other Thursday, the first Friday in April, and January 1 by the Nichi Bei Foundation, 1832 Buchanan Street, #207, San Francisco CA 94115. Application to mail at Periodicals Postage prices paid at San Francisco CA.

ON THE COVER: The ninth annual Northern California Soy and Tofu Festival on June 29 will feature delicacies such as (clockwise, from top left): A *tofu* dish from new food vendor Aroy, *yuba* noodles from Hodo Foods, *mochi* from demonstrator Kaori Becker and a Tofu Dessert Competition entry. courtesy photos.

Milestones

For information on placing an obituary, e-mail sales@nichibeiveekly.org, call (415) 673-1009 or visit www.nichibeiveekly.org/nichibeiveekly/obituary

OBITUARIES

TADEMARU, HARUKO ROSE, 100, passed away peacefully on April 22, 2019. Born in Baldwin Park, CA on February 13, 1919, Haruko was valedictorian of both her grammar school and high school, and featured in the book *Nisei Voices*, which highlighted the first Japanese American valedictorians of California public schools.

During World War II, Haruko and her family were sent to the Amache internment camp in Colorado, which her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren visited in 2010 and was written about in the *Nichi Bei Weekly*. Haruko and her late husband Harry Tadamaru relocated after the war to Chicago, where she actively volunteered at Midwest Buddhist Temple until the age of 99. She

loved dogs, enjoyed reading, and spending time with her great-grandchildren.

Haruko was the beloved wife of the late Harry Tadamaru, loving mother of the late Roy Tadamaru, Helen Ideno, Eugene Tadamaru and Sharon Mukoyama; cherished grandmother of Katherine Ideno, David Tadamaru, Karen Ideno-Chiou, Richard Tadamaru, Gail Tanaka and Lori Mukoyama; and adored great-grandmother of 11. She is survived by her brother Frank Fujita and many nephews and nieces.

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



Vicky Mihara Avery, origami artist and business owner, passes

By TOMO HIRAI
Nichi Bei Weekly

Noted *origami* artist Vicky Mihara Avery passed away from complications of pancreatic cancer early in the morning May 27, 2019. She was 62. She is survived by her parents Nobuo and Shizuko Mihara, younger siblings Linda and Roger Mihara, husband Matthew Avery, son Christopher James Avery and their two dogs.

Mihara Avery, a lifelong San Franciscan, 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 swim team at George Washington High School, and also raced cars and won the 1983 C Street Prepared Ladies Solo II national championship in Salina, Kan.

A renown gift wrapper, she wrapped a snowmobile during the 2007 Scotch Brand Most Gifted Wrapper Contest and was also featured on "The Martha Stewart Show."

Her family and friends, however, remembered her most for her ability to bring people

together. "She enjoyed connecting 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 many damn friends."

She helped organize the inaugural Pacific Coast OrigamiUSA Convention, along with *SaveNature.org's* annual bowling fundraiser. She was active in San Francisco's Japantown through the Nihonmachi Street Fair, the cherry blossom festival and the Buddhist Church of San Francisco.

Mihara Avery held a degree in business administration from San Francisco State University. She worked at Paper Tree, her family's paper store in Japantown. She also worked for the San Francisco Zoo, and owned Mountain Valley Paper Company in South San Francisco and Miki's Paper Company in Berkeley, Calif.

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

"Vicky said, 'I want to meet everybody now before I go, rather than you guys having a party

Vicky Mihara Avery
courtesy of
the Mihara
family



for me after I leave," her father, said.

Robert J. Lang, an *origami* artist, had recently moved down to Southern California, but attended the celebration of life to say his farewell.

"One of the hallmarks of Vicky was that no matter whatever happened in organizations, in her store, in her life, she maintained an absolutely unflappable good cheer and nature," he told the *Nichi Bei Weekly* via e-mail. "I have never seen her not 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, Glaucoma Research Foundation, or *SaveNature.org*.

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

museum in the nation's capital.

"But it is possible," she said. "It's going to take all of us in order to do this."

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 Garden with interpretive signs and sidewalk markers, celebrating the Japanese American flower

growing industry that thrived for decades in West Contra Costa.

The flower shop was operated by the Mabuchi family, who lived in an attached home in the rear.

The complex is one of several new housing projects built, under construction or planned along San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito.

FROM PAGE TWO: Symposium examines wartime scars

"When the war started, the JACL found itself in a position of having to answer to the government on Japanese Americans, where we were, what we were doing and — most importantly — our loyalty to this country," Tateishi said. Fearing violence directed at Japanese Americans, Tateishi said the organization's wartime leaders advocated for compliance over defiance. Later, to further prove their loyalty, the organization also advocated *Nisei* volunteer for the military. Tateishi concluded the organization did its best, but still had "a lot to answer for."

Arthur Hansen, professor *emeritus* of history and Asian American studies at California State University, Fullerton, took a more critical perspective on the organization, speaking about the JACL's wartime role. Hansen outlined the resistance and frustrations of James Omura and Harry Ueno, two *Nisei* who vocally opposed the JACL. Hansen particularly noted the resentment harbored by *Kibei*, *Nisei* educated in Japan, such as Ueno.

Following a lunch break, the event resumed with its second session, "Conflict, Protest and Organized Resistance," detailing three unique ways Japanese Americans protested their treatment during the war. Takashi Hoshizaki, one of the last surviving draft resisters from Heart Mountain, Wyo., recounted how he and 62 other men refused to report to the draft while they and their families were incarcerated. Robert Rusky, member of the

Fred Korematsu *coram nobis* legal team in the 1980s, described the nuanced differences among the supreme court challenges to the wartime incarceration. Barbara Takei, Tule Lake Committee board member, explained how mass resistance led to the creation of the Tule Lake Segregation Center.

Finally, four speakers presented on the final session in "Post-war, Redress and Activism." Alice Yang, provost of Stevenson College and associate professor of history at the University of California, Santa Cruz, explained the foundations of the "model minority," which were built from the belief Japanese Americans had quietly gone along with the wartime incarceration. Yang noted how *Sansei* and *Nisei* activists pushed back, denoting how Japanese Americans had fought incarceration. "In fact (activists) argued the very silence ... was in fact a reflection of damage and suffering within the community," she said.

Following Yang, Tateishi gave a second talk on the Japanese American Redress Movement from within the JACL while Susan Hayase detailed her perspective from the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations. Tateishi explained how the JACL worked with Congress to lobby for the apology and the contentious issue of debating whether the apology should include a monetary compensation. Hayase, meanwhile, spoke about how her organization sought to independently unify disparate

groups seeking an apology.

At the end of the third session, Kimiko Marr spoke briefly on the continued relevance of pilgrimages that tie in Japanese American wartime experience to modern-day issues.

Divisions within the community, however, ran further than some expected. Omori noted that the symposium could very well have taken place over a week. Grace Shimizu, director of the Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project, confronted Tateishi over the omission of Japanese Latin Americans from the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 during a Q-and-A format session. Tateishi said he had asked the JACL and Congressional leaders to "come back" to the JLA issue after the redress bill was passed, but nothing was done. Tateishi said the JACL decided to not push for compensation for Japanese Latin Americans abducted from South America since their inclusion in the redress bill, according to the *Nikkei* congressional leaders, could "jeopardize" the bill.

At the conclusion of the event, Nancy Ukai of the Berkeley chapter of the JACL and Josh Kaizuka of the Florin chapter presented a draft resolution apologizing to the resisters at Tule Lake "who suffered shame and stigma during and after the war due to the JACL's attitudes and treatment towards individuals unfairly labeled 'disloyal.'" The resolution is planned to be discussed at the JACL national convention in Salt Lake City, Utah this coming August.

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