



JAPANESE AMERICAN **CITIZENS LEAGUE** **South Bay Chapter**

Newsletter Volume 51, Number One

February 2024

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - Kent Kawai

Happy New Year JACLeR's!!!

It is 2024 and the year of the Dragon! I wanted to wish everyone a Happy New Year and I hope the year is starting out very well for you. Now, before I mention about the upcoming events, I wanted to first state on behalf of the South Bay Chapter our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims of the Noto Peninsula Earthquake that struck the Western part of Japan on January 1st. If you are able to, please support efforts to provide relief for the victims. Also, as of this writing, we are experiencing an extraordinary storm event that has brought an enormous amount of rain throughout Southern California. This could be one of the wettest seasons on record. I hope everyone will get through this safe and sound so that we may enjoy the following upcoming events.

The first event this year is the Day of Remembrance on Saturday, February 24th from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Main Hall. There will be a film screening with a live discussion panel to follow. The film that will be screening is *Terminal Island: Lost but not forgotten*. For more information or to register for the event, please visit their website <https://www.jci-gardena.org>.

The next event on the calendar is the Torrance Bunka-sai on April 20th and 21st. I hope everyone will come out to this event where proceeds support programs that strength ties with the City of Torrance and Kashiwa, Japan. For more information, please go to the Torrance Sister City Association website at <http://torrancesistercity.org/>.

After the Bunka-sai will be our scholarship awards tentatively scheduled for May. We will provide additional information in this newsletter and on our website as we get closer to the day of the event. In the meantime, please encourage anyone you know to apply for the scholarships. The application process will be done online. For more information, please go to <https://sbjacl.org>

After the scholarship awards will be the Gardena JCI Annual Matsuri at the end of June. As of this writing, it is currently planned as a one-day event on Saturday. Details will be forthcoming as soon as they become available. This is the annual fundraiser for the JCI to support its facilities and programs. We encourage our members to attend this annual event and support the JCI. For more information, please visit their website <http://jci-gardena.org>.

Finally, the JACL is planning to hold the National Convention at the in Philadelphia, PA on July 10th to 14th. If you are interested in being a delegate for the Chapter or wish to serve on a Convention Committee, please feel free to contact me at, mkawaiusa@netscape.net. Details will be forthcoming in the next couple of months. Please visit the JACL website for the latest information at <https://jacl.org/convention>.

The South Bay Chapter is grateful and thankful for all the support we receive from you, the members. This chapter could not exist without your support. On behalf of the entire Board of the South Bay JACL, thank you for your continued support.

2024 is the Year of the Dragon:

Here's What That Means



By Jaime Wright

•

Published Jan 23, 2024

Chinese New Year is on Saturday, February 10th. Also known as the Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, Chinese New Year is celebrated at the second new moon following the Winter Solstice. This festival marks the end of winter and the beginning of a long-awaited spring. According to the Chinese Zodiac, 2024 is the Year of the Dragon. So what does the Year of the Dragon have in store for us? How will it compare to 2023's Year of the Rabbit?

What Does The Dragon Symbolize?

The Chinese Zodiac dates back to the Qin Dynasty over 2000 years ago, and is rooted in a system of zoolatry (or animal worship). As the legend goes, the Jade Emperor challenged all of the animals in the Kingdom to a "Great Race." Whoever arrived at his Palace first would win his favor.

Being a sacred animal in Chinese culture and mythology, everyone's bet was on the Dragon to take home the top prize. But along the way, the Dragon stumbled upon a village suffering from drought. He took pity on them and used his powers to send them rain before finishing the race. He finished in fifth place behind the Rat, Ox, Tiger and Rabbit.

Was I Born During the Year of the Dragon?

The Chinese Zodiac has a 12-year cycle, and recent Dragon years include **1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000 and 2012**. Famous people born during Dragon years include John Lennon, Al Pacino, Bruce Lee, Liam Neeson, Kamala Harris, Reese Witherspoon, Cillian Murphy, Rihanna, Hayley Williams and Emma Stone.

Note: Because of the lunar calendar, if you were born between January 1 and February 4 of any of the above years, it was still the Year of the Rabbit. If you're born between January 1 and February 4 of the following years (1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001 and 2013), you were too born during the Year of the Dragon.

What's the Dragon Personality?

Because of their status as a *favorite* animal, Dragons are seen as confident, idealistic and ambitious. Known for being goal-oriented and visionary leaders, they also have a softer side. Despite their fire-breathing exterior, Dragons yearn for support, acceptance and love.

So What's in Store for the Year of the Dragon?

Dragon years are considered the most auspicious years of any in the Chinese Zodiac. As the only mythical creature of the zodiac, the Dragon is considered to be both powerful and benevolent. Because the rules of the earthly realm don't apply to dragons (think about it: dragons can *fly*), this year has infinite possibilities. It's a year of increased confidence and security, of making dreams come true and sharing that wealth with others.

In addition to animals, the Chinese Zodiac also cycles through five different elements. So 2024 isn't only the Year of the Dragon, it's the Year of the Wood Dragon. Elemental Wood represents creativity and growth. Wood years are flexible: think of how a big oak tree can bend and sway in the wind. Between the fierce independence of the Dragon and the limberness of Wood, 2024 has a fresh, vital energy that's going to be key in breaking new ground. 2022 and 2023 were both introspective Water years, and this year is definitely a pivot in a bold new direction. Though things are uncertain, they're certainly looking bright.

I'm a Dragon. Is 2024 Going to Be My Best Year Ever?

Born under this sign, you might think that the Year of the Dragon is your time to shine but it's actually the opposite. Traditionally, a zodiac sign's year is the most *unlucky* for them in Chinese astrology. That being said, with Dragon years being the most auspicious (and thus those born in the Year of the Dragon being thought of as "lucky ones" to begin with), you have more going for you than usual in your own year. You're in an innovative and transformative period, and your actual peak might be in the years to come.

Though this isn't the *best* year for Dragons, this year *will* be great for industrious Rats, creative Monkeys, and hardworking Pigs.

What Brings Dragon Luck This Year?

There are certain symbols, directions and colors that are lucky for each zodiac sign. This can apply to those born as that sign as well as for all of us during that particular zodiac year. During the Year of the Dragon those are:

- **Colors:** Cyan, Blue, Purple
- **Numbers:** 6, 8
- **Flowers:** Bamboo and Cyclamen
- **Direction:** West, Northeast

2024 South Bay JACL Scholarships

It's that time again to start applying for our South Bay JACL Scholarships. All qualified students are encouraged to apply for our 2024 scholarships. Scholarships are open to all students of Japanese American ancestry residing in the South Bay JACL Chapter area and a member of the JACL. Scholarship applicants must be planning or currently attending a college or university and attended one of the following high schools:

**Ambassador Christian High School
Bishop Montgomery High School
California Academy of Math and Science
Gardena High School
Mira Costa High School
Narbonne High School
North Torrance High School
Palos Verdes Peninsula High School**

**Palos Verdes High School
Redondo Union High School
Rolling Hills Preparatory
San Pedro High School
South Torrance High School
Torrance High School
West Torrance High School**

Students are required to fill out only one application. The scholarship committee will select the recipients for each scholarship based upon the requirements posted on each scholarship.

Kiichi Egashira Memorial Scholarship

Open to students planning to attend or attending a college or university pursuing a bachelors or graduate degree in Physical and Biological Sciences, Engineering and/or Mathematics.

Janice Kobata Zoeger Memorial Scholarship

Open to students planning to attend or attending a college or university in pursuit of a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree in any field of study relating to biological sciences, foreign and/or ancient language or business.

The Ernest K. Tsujimoto Memorial Scholarship

The Tsujimoto Family will award a memorial scholarship to a student planning to attend or be enrolled in a college or university in pursuit of an Undergraduate/Graduate Degree majoring in the STEM fields: Science, Technology, Engineering or Math.

Gardena Valley Japanese American Citizens League Scholarship

Open to high school seniors only, who are planning to attend a college or university pursuing a bachelor's degree in any field of study.

David and Lily Nakatani Scholarship

Open to high school seniors only, who are planning to attend a college or university pursuing a bachelor's degree in Math & Science.

Students are encouraged to see the South Bay JACL website for more information, membership and the scholarship applications at: www.southbayjacl.org.

All materials must be submitted no later than: **April 1, 2024**

2024 National JACL Scholarships

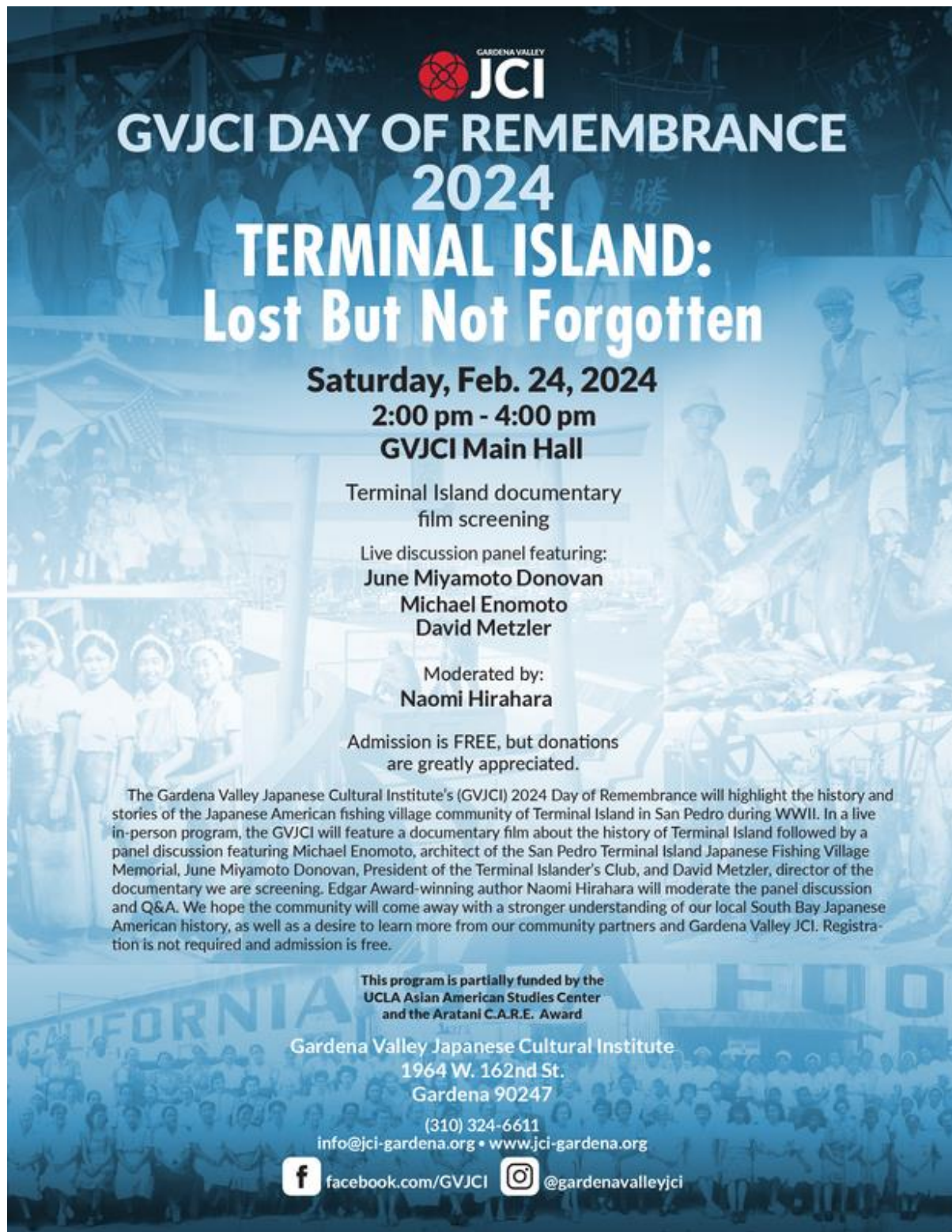
The JACL began its National Scholarship and Awards Program in 1946.


The National Scholarship and Awards Program offer scholarships to students at the entering freshman, undergraduate, graduate, law, financial need and creative & performing arts. All scholarships are one-time awards.

All those applying to the National JACL Scholarship Program must be a youth/student or individual member of the JACL; a couple/family membership held by a parent does NOT meet this requirement. Applicants must be enrolled in school in the of Fall 2024 in order to be eligible for a scholarship

Applications are available at the National JACL website at www.jacl.org

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
Day of Remembrance 2024



 **GVJCI DAY OF REMEMBRANCE
2024**

**TERMINAL ISLAND:
Lost But Not Forgotten**

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024
2:00 pm - 4:00 pm
GVJCI Main Hall

Terminal Island documentary
film screening

Live discussion panel featuring:
June Miyamoto Donovan
Michael Enomoto
David Metzler



Moderated by:
Naomi Hirahara

Admission is FREE, but donations
are greatly appreciated.




The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute's (GVJCI) 2024 Day of Remembrance will highlight the history and stories of the Japanese American fishing village community of Terminal Island in San Pedro during WWII. In a live in-person program, the GVJCI will feature a documentary film about the history of Terminal Island followed by a panel discussion featuring Michael Enomoto, architect of the San Pedro Terminal Island Japanese Fishing Village Memorial, June Miyamoto Donovan, President of the Terminal Islander's Club, and David Metzler, director of the documentary we are screening. Edgar Award-winning author Naomi Hirahara will moderate the panel discussion and Q&A. We hope the community will come away with a stronger understanding of our local South Bay Japanese American history, as well as a desire to learn more from our community partners and Gardena Valley JCI. Registration is not required and admission is free.

This program is partially funded by the
UCLA Asian American Studies Center
and the Aratani C.A.R.E. Award

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
1964 W. 162nd St.
Gardena 90247
(310) 324-6611
info@jci-gardena.org • www.jci-gardena.org

 **facebook.com/GVJCI**  **@gardenavalleyjci**

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
Calendar of Events




REGISTER FOR

SMARTPHONE CLASSES

*6 class series covering beginner smartphone basics
for iPhone and Android*

MONS, FEB. 5, 12, 26, MAR 4, 11, & 18
GVJCI NISEI VETERANS MEMORIAL HALL
1:00-2:00PM LECTURE
2:00-3:00PM TUTORING
\$10 PER CLASS OR
\$50 FOR ENTIRE SERIES (\$10 SAVINGS!)

To register, call the GVJCI office at
(310) 324-6611 or visit the
Events/Programs/Classes section
of our website.



OUR MISSION | 私達の使命
A space to engage, share, and embrace the Nikkei experience and culture. | 日系の経験と文化に関わり、共有し、受け入れる空間
1964 W 162nd Street, Gardena, CA 90247
www.jci-gardena.org | info@jci-gardena.org | (310) 324-6611 | IG: @gardenavalleyjci | FB: facebook.com/GVJCI



SELF DEFENSE WORKSHOPS

The theme of these workshops is Self Defense and Situational Awareness. The first 30 minutes will focus on Situational Awareness and general considerations of preparedness. The remaining 90 minutes consists of introduction of practical self defense techniques including striking, kicking, and blocking as methods to minimize any attack and injury and to facilitate escape. Each workshop is taught by 6th degree black belt instructor Art Ishii from the Matsubayashi-Ryu Karate-Do of Little Tokyo. **FREE** but donations appreciated! Scan the QR code to register now!



OLDER ADULT CLASS

(men & women)

THURS, FEBRUARY 15, 2024
10AM-12PM

WOMEN'S CLASS

TUES, MARCH 12, 2024
7-9PM

LOCATION:

Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall
1964 W. 162nd Street
Gardena, CA 90247

To register, please visit the Events/Programs/Classes page on the GVJCI website:
www.jci-gardena.org/gvjci-upcoming-events

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JOIN US FOR

HINAMATSURI

SAT, MARCH 2, 2024, 2-3PM

GVJCI MAIN HALL

\$5 PER PARTICIPANT

CRAFT & ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AGES 5-10



To register, please visit the GVJCI website under "Events/Programs"

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BEGINNER BONSAI REPOTTING WORKSHOP



DATE: Saturday, March 16, 2024

TIME: 10AM-1PM

FEE: \$60 per person

(supplies included but participants must bring their own bonsai tree in need of repotting)

LOCATION: GVJCI Outdoor Breezeway

This workshop will be a hands-on working introduction to bonsai repotting and care taught by the Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai. Students will learn the basics of pruning and repotting their bonsai tree. Bonsai is an outdoor activity, and instructors will explain the basics of watering, fertilizing, pest control, and tree maintenance.

Limited to 20 participants. Supplies included. Refreshments will also be served!

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SANSEI STORIES

WEDS, APR 3, 10, 17, 24, MAY 1 & 8

7:00PM - 9:00PM

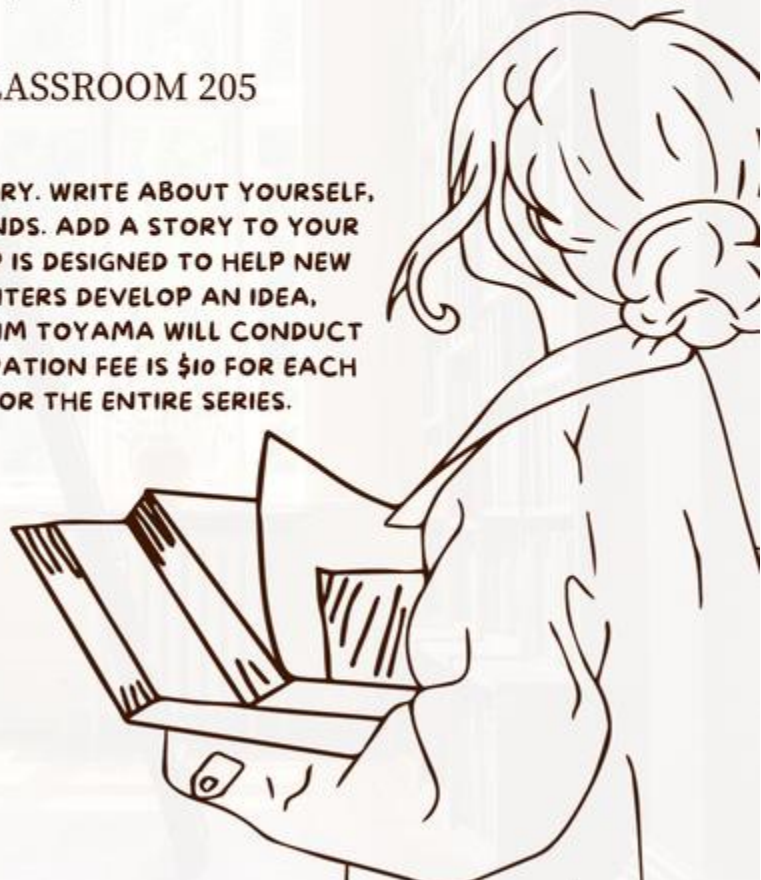
GVJCI UPSTAIRS CLASSROOM 205

\$10 PER CLASS

WRITE AND TELL YOUR STORY. WRITE ABOUT YOURSELF, YOUR FAMILY, YOUR FRIENDS. ADD A STORY TO YOUR LEGACY. THIS WORKSHOP IS DESIGNED TO HELP NEW AND EXPERIENCED WRITERS DEVELOP AN IDEA, CHARACTER OR STORY. TIM TOYAMA WILL CONDUCT THE WORKSHOP. PARTICIPATION FEE IS \$10 FOR EACH WORKSHOP OR \$60 FOR THE ENTIRE SERIES.



scan to
register!



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SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN THE AAPI COMMUNITY

In partnership with Asian American Drug Abuse Program

SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2024

10-11AM

GVJCI UPSTAIRS CLASSROOM 207/208

FREE TO ATTEND

Dean Nakanishi, CEO of the Asian American Drug Abuse Program (AADAP) will give an overview of Substance Use Disorder and some perspective from his 30 years of service. This overview will offer a perspective from AADAP's approaches, to treatment, and current trends in the field. This session will give participants an opportunity to ask direct questions. AADAP's goal is to give participants insight into AADAP's addiction services, how to approach the issue, and in what ways the community can help advocate for an issue that is commonly kept, "hush, hush!"

This program is free to attend. Registration is not required.

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Ouchi-Gohan Workshops

JAPANESE HOME COOKING WITH CHEF MIKE INOUE

Learn how to make a variety of Japanese staples with veteran chef Mike Inoue! **Limited to 10 people per workshop.** Visit jci-gardena.org/gvjci-upcoming-events or scan the QR code below to register!



Instant Pot Cooking

SUNDAY, April 7, 2024, 10AM-12PM

Learn to make oden, tonjiru, and a special gohan!

\$60.00 per person

Agemono (Fried Food)

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2024, 10AM-12PM

Learn to make shrimp and vegetable tempura, and chicken and pork katsu!

\$60.00 per person

Futomaki (Fat Roll)

SUNDAY, APRIL 28, 2024, 10AM-12PM

Learn to make a 7-ingredient futomaki!

\$60.00 per person




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The Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
and Grateful Crane Ensemble present:

Showa Alley


by Shokudo.

Come experience a bit of Japan as the GVJCI
breezeway is transformed into a yokocho!

Drawing inspiration from the post-war Showa
era, you'll be immersed in the sights, sounds,
smells, and tastes of a bustling Japanese
alleyway brought to you by the team behind
the Shokudo series.

Mark your calendars for Showa Alley on
Saturday, April 13th, 2024. Tickets start selling
Monday, January 22nd, 2024 on the GVJCI
website. Proceeds will benefit the Gardena
Valley Japanese Cultural Institute and Grateful
Crane Ensemble.

Saturday, April 13th, 2024
4:00pm to 10:00pm
21+ only





manzanar pilgrimage

**SATURDAY,
APRIL 27
6AM-9PM**

The annual community-wide Manzanar Pilgrimage at the Manzanar Historic Site will be on April 27th. Manzanar was the site of an American WWII concentration camp that was used to forcibly house people of Japanese descent from 1942-1945. The Pilgrimage Program features speakers, performances, interfaith religious ceremony, and community ondo. It will be a first come first serve basis and registration will end once spaces fill up. Payment will guarantee registration. Former incarcerated receive free admission.

If you would like to reserve a seat on the bus, please visit the GVJCI website to register.

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COMMUNITY BUDDHAHEAD BREAKFAST CLUB: Pancakes, Eggs and Camaraderie



Monthly meeting serves hearty helping of friendship, fellowship and nostalgia.

By P.C. Staff

On recent Friday morning at King's Hawaiian in Torrance, Calif., some of the customers undoubtedly looked at the large gathering of older, mostly Japanese American men who had taken over a section of the famous bakery and restaurant and wondered to themselves: "Who are these guys?" The more eagle-eyed among the curious might have noticed the custom T-shirts worn by many in the group and gotten a partial answer: They were witnessing the monthly meeting of the BBC. No, not that BBC. This BBC stands for the Buddhahead Breakfast Club. According to the main organizer, Chris Segawa, this BBC is all about common experiences, friendship, camaraderie — and, of course, breakfast. Segawa said that the Buddhahead Breakfast Club started more than 20 years ago with eight original members who decided to get together informally once a month for breakfast. What they had in common was a shared Japanese American — or Japanese American adjacent — background, ties to Los Angeles County's South Bay area and, in many instances, military service during the Vietnam War. Over time, word began to spread. "It just kept growing and growing," Segawa said. As the Buddhahead Breakfast Club grew, it had to change locations several times. Fortunately, King's Hawaiian Bakery & Restaurant turned out to be the ideal place: It was large enough to handle up to 50 or more BBC attendees, and its "aloha" menu was tailor-made for, well, Buddhaheads. Now, there's a list of nearly 80 regulars. Attendance is by invitation only because of the increased head count. Segawa calls everyone on the list the night before as a reminder and to see who is coming. At a recent gathering, Don Bannai, original member Sam Ito, David Miyoshi and Sunny Tesaki all gathered at Kings Hawaiian. And thanks to the artistry of one of the original members, Richard Mikami, even though they have their own T-shirt — and what makes even an unofficial group more "official" than having a T-shirt? — it remains informal and congenial. There's also the therapeutic aspect to something as simple as getting together once a month and having breakfast. "Back in the day, we used to fight," Segawa admitted. "The Westside against the Eastside, and we were Gardena guys. Now, we sit down and eat together. . . . It's been a real good thing for everybody." (Editor's Note: To view a short video of a recent Buddhahead Breakfast Club meeting, visit tinyurl.com/4dzaxewb.)

Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution



The Fred T. Korematsu Institute promotes civic participation and education that advances racial equity, social justice and human rights for all.



FRED T.
KOREMATSU
INSTITUTE

The internment notice came out, and it burned me up, you know. Here I am, an American, and I have to go to internment camp. I was really upset. And I said, 'I'm not going to go. I'm an American and that's what I am and I'm going to stay that way.'" – Fred T. Korematsu

On January 30, we celebrate **Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution**. In 2010, the state of California passed the first Fred Korematsu Day bill, making January 30 the first day in the U.S. named after an Asian American.

But as much as the day is about civil rights and civil liberties, Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution is also about our Constitution. Fred Korematsu learned about the Constitution in high school. And he believed he had rights as an American citizen. At the time of the Japanese American Incarceration, all due process of law was denied to citizens of Japanese descent. Two thirds of the 125,000 people that were incarcerated were American citizens. And it didn't matter. Fred Korematsu knew this was wrong. Why should he go to a prison camp? There were no charges and there was no day in court. He truly believed in this country. He believed in the Supreme Court even though the *Korematsu v. United States* decision in 1944 was against him.

Have we learned from our history? We currently find ourselves at a crossroads in how we deal with hard history and real threats to our civil rights. Right now, teachers in pockets across the country are being prevented from teaching uncomfortable facets of the American story from slavery and the struggle for civil rights to the displaced and marginalized indigenous and tribal communities around the country. We think blatant discrimination or the prospect of mass incarceration is in the past, but as we saw with the proposed "Muslim Ban" of 2016 or public hate speech and rhetoric that affected the AAPI community in the wake of the pandemic, there is no guarantee that the horrors of racial profiling, violence, and unfortunately, incarceration will not rear their head's again.

When the exclusion order was posted on telephone poles in 1942, like many others, Fred Korematsu was angry and hurt, and left unsure of his future. He could not believe that the United States government could pass Executive Order 9066 against its own citizens. He was an American who represented his community and championed free speech, social justice, and racial equality. He understood that we must take on the obligation that comes with the rights granted to us by the US Constitution. While it is our social responsibility to stay informed, to vote in every election, and to stand up for what is right, our civil liberties should be sacrosanct. We can *never* again sanction the wholesale rounding up and detention of a group of people, based solely on their nationality, sex, or religion.

People tend to have short memories and we need to keep reminding people not to repeat the same mistakes of the past. The fight for justice, racial equity, and human rights begins with education. And there is no place more important than the public education classroom for sharing the truths, histories, and voices of all peoples and the power of the Constitution. the freedoms guaranteed in our Constitution but also prevents another Japanese American incarceration that upended the lives and livelihoods of 125,000 people who shared ancestry with "the enemy". Our Bill of Rights protects each citizens' civil liberties from the federal government's infringement and overreach. Fred believed when you see something wrong or unfair, you speak up. You let your voice be heard. In the end, we must stand up for what is right every day. This is about all of us.

BASEBALL BEHIND BARBED WIRE

A new short film carved out of the *Diamond Diplomacy* documentary project.

Stripped of their constitutional rights, their homes, businesses, and dignity, 120,000 Japanese Americans were forced into dusty desolate camps, surrounded by armed guards and barbed wire.

Ironically it was the All-American pastime of baseball that saved their sanity.

Baseball Behind Barbed Wire tells the story of the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans, through the uncommon yet popular lens of baseball, America's national pastime.

There is great irony in the popularity of the All American Sport of baseball being played by Japanese Americans during WWII incarceration. Incarcerates had their citizenship and civil rights taken away and the entire community was forcibly confined from 1942-45. And yet, playing baseball invoked some semblance of normalcy under duress. Playing baseball was a chance to assert their citizenship and affirm their loyalty as Americans, even as camp guards in towers pointed their rifles inward and the barbed wire kept them confined. Making the best of a bad situation, camp communities as a whole would get involved, as mothers and grandmothers sewed uniforms out of produce sacks, old clothing, and deconstructed mattress ticking. Some ordered baseball equipment from the Sears catalog, while others wrote to their Caucasian friends back home to get their team uniforms out of storage and shipped to them.

The spine of the film is the story of the Gila River Camp in Arizona, brought to life by a handful of characters that were its primary baseball players. Best known is Kenichi Zenimura, a small but athletic figure known as "Zeni". He had already made a name for himself in the world of baseball, having even played with the famed Babe Ruth. With the help of his two sons and several other avid young players, they built a real baseball diamond complete with stands and dugouts from pilfered scrap lumber and fence posts. They even rerouted the camp's irrigation system to cut down on flying dust. Zeni built several ballparks in his lifetime, but his crowning glory was the one in the dusty desert of Arizona surrounded by barbed wire.

The All-American pastime became a favorite for many incarcerates at all ten camps stretching from California to Wyoming to Arkansas. Some of the camps had two or three fields and some had as many as thirty teams, including anyone who wanted to play. They even managed to negotiate permission from government authorities for teams to travel long distances for games at other camps.

In 1945 the internees were finally free to leave, but there was little hope that they could go "home." Piecing together new lives, Japanese American communities rebuilt, reeducated, retooled, and regained confidence. The concepts of "gaman" (endurance) and "gambaru" (to persevere and keep working hard) are core to the Japanese soul. Baseball embodied this spirit. Decades later,

a handful of courageous former internees and their supporters built a movement and lobbied Congress to seek reparations. Finally, in 1988 President Reagan signed a formal apology, and

the U.S. government issued reparation checks of \$20,000 per survivor. If there was one thread that ran through this unforgiving history, it was baseball, still popular and still shared by America and Japan. The two nations, now friends and allies, will soon celebrate 150 years of the shared national pastime.



Yuriko Gamo Romer



Marc Smolowitz: Director/Producer



Abby Ginzberg: Producer



Loi Ameera Almeron: Co-Producer



Shirley Thompson: Editor



Andy Black: Director of Photography

Fundraiser to Build a Museum for Nisei Veterans in Bruyeres, France



From Heroes of the Vosges Museum,

We are less than a year away from the eightieth anniversary (October 2024) of the liberation of the Vosges communities of Bruyères, Belmont, Biffontaine and the near miraculous rescue of the Lost Texas Battalion. We are again reminded of the sacrifice made by the young Nisei men of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team in October 1944. With each passing day, fewer of these heroic soldiers are left to tell their story and it is essential that we create a lasting exhibit that will carry their story to future generations. Where better to have such an exhibit than on the very ground made sacred by the Nisei sacrifice?

With the agreement and support of the Mayor and City Council, the town of Bruyères is working to create a start-up museum to commemorate the Nisei and the members of the French Resistance who helped liberate these communities. To that end, we are seeking artifacts associated with the Nisei soldiers and donations to create a small museum that will preserve these artifacts and stories for future generations.

We have created a website at vosgesheroes.org and have obtained non-profit (501 (c) (3) status (93-3459043) for the museum fund. The website also offers a children's book called *Marie of Bruyères* that tells the story, in both English and French, of a little girl who meets one of the Nisei liberators. All donations and proceeds for the sale of the book are deposited in the Museum Fund.

Please go to vosgesheroes.org and make a generous donation and buy the book. Please also see hill555.org that describes our earlier effort to create the Torch Monument dedicated in 2017. For additional information, please call Carl Williams, the U.S. Volunteer, at 916-233-8069

LTSC Mourns the Loss of Alan Nishio, Long-Time Board Member, Activist, Community Leader and Friend



With a heavy heart, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) mourns the passing of Alan Nishio, our longest tenured Board President, iconic community leader, wise mentor and deeply cherished friend. After battling cancer for over 17 years, Alan died peacefully on December 27, 2023 at the age of 78.

Born in the Manzanar incarceration camp in 1945, Alan responded to the prejudice his family and community experienced by bolstering organizations and leading social justice movements with skill and compassion. He dedicated his life to strengthening Little Tokyo and the Japanese American community in solidarity with other communities of color.

His life of activism and brilliant career include these roles: a founder of UC Berkeley's Asian Americans for Political Action student group and member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee during the Free Speech Movement in the 1960's; a founder of UCLA's Asian American Studies in 1968, serving as Director for two years; an administrator at CSULB from 1972 and later becoming Associate VP of Student Services until his retirement in 2006; a professor/lecturer in CSULB's Department of Asian and Asian American Studies; a founder of the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization in the 1970's; a founder and co-chair of the National Coalition of Redress/Reparations in 1980 (a grassroots organization that played a significant role in the redress campaign for Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II); and serving on the Board of Directors of LTSC, Kizuna, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center and California Conference for Equality and Justice.

We at LTSC are deeply grateful for the invaluable insights, pioneering vision, stabilizing wisdom, smart quips and radiating warmth that Alan brought to our organization. He served on LTSC's Board of Directors for 38 years (1984–2022), 12 of which as Board President. He provided strong leadership in the early days of Terasaki Budokan's capital campaign, built up LTSC's board membership and systems, helped guide the organization's transition when our founding Executive

Director Bill Watanabe retired, and provided mentorship and stability during the difficult times of our former Executive Director Dean Matsubayashi's illness and transition thereafter.

Never one to steal the spotlight, Alan's work often happened behind the scenes in board meetings and office hallways—always with an emphasis on relationship-building, sustainability, and doing the right thing. Alan also had a special knack for making people feel seen; his warm approachability, down to earth relatability, and genuine encouragement drew you in, built you up, and inspired you to act. He never had to be loud to be heard, and his deep care for people and community was evident in his every action.

Although we mourn the loss of an iconic leader and dear friend, we're grateful and blessed to have had Alan champion our mission. LTSC will continue forging ahead with the tools and vision Alan provided. We will keep him in our hearts, referencing him as our guide, knowing that every positive impact we create would make Alan so proud.

"Alan Nishio was the perfect Board leader. Over the course of LTSC's development, creating the CDC branch and later merging, he served as the President of LTSC for over 20 years! Alan could listen to conflicting viewpoints during a Board discussion and somehow synthesize differing comments into a common-ground resolution that everyone on the Board could support. He was a master at that, and I jokingly told Alan he could be "President for life" if he chose to do so. Alan guided LTSC during its growth years and helped the Board make key decisions regarding which directions and policies the organization should implement. Alan also made sure that the Board supported the staff and worked cohesively with the staff so that the organization functioned efficiently and provided services that benefited the community. We have lost a wise and compassionate leader and his voice will be missed."

—Bill Watanabe, LTSC Founding Executive Director

"Alan was an incredible driving force for LTSC, Little Tokyo, and the Japanese American community. A true gift of his was his ability to mentor and inspire the next generation of leaders to ensure continued stability and strength for our community. He was brilliant and committed to LTSC's mission, and I know he'll be dearly missed. I am forever grateful for his thoughtful guidance, kind words, and unending care for Little Tokyo."

—Claire Kitayama, President, LTSC Board of Directors

"For all of Alan's incredible accomplishments and impact as a decades-long community activist and leader, what makes Alan really special is the way he always took the time to sit down and get to know each person that crossed his path, with a genuine interest in their life and aspirations. This was reflected in all of the students whom he got to know during his years as an administrator at Cal State Long Beach, and in the countless LTSC staff who worked with Alan, or who may have only had brief, but memorable and meaningful encounters with him during his tenure on the Board. He made everyone around him feel valued, which is ultimately what his vision for a better community and world was about."

—Erich Nakano, LTSC Executive Director

This article was taken from an LTSC Message posted on January 08, 2024

**For those of you that have “Lapsed” your JACL Membership,
please renew them and continue supporting the JACL**

JACL MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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Title First MI Last Name
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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

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Chapter: **South Bay Chapter**

Membership Category (please circle)	Individual/Regular	\$65
	Couple/Family	\$110
	Student /Youth	\$30
	Thousand Club	\$200
	Century Club	\$350
	Millennium Club	\$1,000
	Thousand Club Life	\$3,000 (one time payment)
	Century Club Life	\$5,000 (one time payment)

Mail check to: **NATIONAL JACL Headquarters**
Att: Membership
1765 Sutter Street
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