



NIKKEI WEST

Weaving Threads of Our Ancestral Stories

By Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson

Namesake

My middle name, Fumie, is composed of three syllables stitched together from the names of my grandmothers: Fumi in Japan and Kikue in Hawai'i. The kanji characters in my name mean "beautiful branch of cotton rose." Although my grandmothers are no longer with us, I carry their memory in my name. My grandmothers' stories and the stories of their lineage are knotted into the places they called home, and some of these threads traversed the Pacific Ocean, weaving an intricate pattern of coming and going, of seeking a place to belong, and of bearing witness to stories for future generations.

In my memory, when I visit Obaachan in Tokyo, she is kneeling on a tatami mat, the sleeves of her understated kimono flowing like light. She is a tea master and calligrapher. She looks up with a quiet smile and offers me a bowl of tea. In her face are many unspoken stories, like scenes just out of view around the bend in a garden.



Fumi, my Obaachan, the tea master.

By contrast, when I visit my grandmother in Hawai'i in my memory, she is talking story in her boisterous, laughter-punctuated way, and her hands are making magic with thread and needle. She is running stitches through kitchen cloths in the sashiko style or crocheting table linens or piecing together Hawai'i quilts. From where she sits on the floor of her cluttered crafter's apartment, she scans the faces of her loved ones looking back from framed photographs: her husband in their wedding photo, my father and his two brothers as mischievous boys, her beloved grandchildren. . . . In her voice, stories fling open the doors of the house of memory and dance into the present.



Kikue, my grandmother, the storyteller.

I wish I had entered more fully into my obaachan's world of tea, silk, brush, and ink. I wish I had preserved the sound of my grandmother's storytelling voice and the creative dance of her hands. Time keeps pouring into the space between where I am and the room of memory.

And so, these told and untold stories of my ancestors take on the



The wedding photo of my paternal grandparents, Shigeki and Kikue Fujimoto.

shape of precious heirlooms, each as ephemeral as a bowl of tea, as delicate as lace. Then and now, my ancestors' stories are weaving us together across time.

Threads of family story and memory are also woven into my work as a children's book author-illustrator. In creating my books, *The Mochi Makers* and *Shell Song*, which are both rooted deeply in my family stories, I realized that our lives are all stories. My life is a story. Your life is a story. Our stories are not single threads but many interwoven threads in a vast and complex tapestry that began long before us—a tapestry that we carry with us, weave our own stories into, and then pass on to the next generation.

Motherland

In our multigenerational household, my mother has been the mochi maker at New Year's for many years. She was one of seven children born to my ojiichan and obaachan in Japan. When she was only 14 years old, my mother left for America all by herself. She was so young that she lost threads of her mother tongue and traditions over the years, but as she grew up and became a wife and mother herself, she held onto some traditions, like wearing kimono on a few special occasions and making mochi for New Year's Day.



My mother (14) on the day she left Japan, with her mother.



My younger daughter making mochi with my mother.

For four and a half months, I was nourished solely through TPN, and during that time, I thought a lot about food and family and love. In that headspace, I wrote the first drafts of my children's book *The Mochi Makers*. In this story, a little girl and her grandmother make mochi together, celebrating tradition and the memories that matter most. On every page of this book, I had the chance to savor and cherish a food so important in my family's food traditions—a food made from one primary ingredient: rice.

In the artwork in *The Mochi Makers*, I added color and texture from family textiles, including my mother's kimono, a yellow baby dress crocheted by my paternal grandmother, and kitchen cloths that my grandmother embroidered in the sashiko style.



My grandmother's sashiko embroidery on kitchen cloths.

I also incorporated my family photos, going back to my issei great grandmothers on my father's side (the first generation of mochi makers in my family to come to America), as well as my paternal grandparents' wedding photo, my father and his brothers as children, and that childhood photo of my mother and me in kimono.

For the characters in my book, and perhaps for all who have inherited the tradition of eating mochi at New Year's, one mouthful of mochi carries the flavors of generational history, tradition, and family ties.

The Mochi Makers closes with these lines: "Our mochi tastes salty like the sea Obaachan crossed long ago. And in our hands, it tastes as warm and soft as love."

This New Year's was the first year my mother did not make mochi. Instead, as she recovered from a fracture, my children, whose hands and hearts have inherited mochi-making from my mother, made our New Year's mochi. Perhaps someday, they will pass on this tradition of mochi-making to their descendants too.

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As a little girl with my mother in front of our home in Northern California.

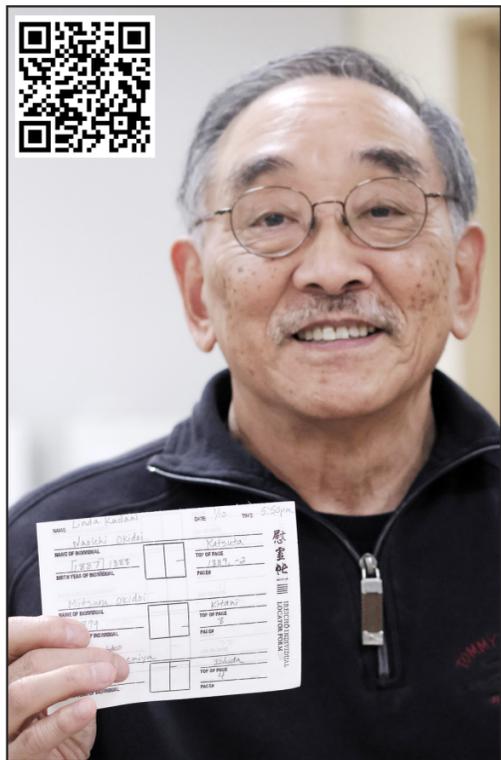
The sweet scene of my now elderly mother making mochi with my children represents for me the bequeathal of tradition, hand to hand, year to year.

I felt the magnitude of this inheritance of ritual, in particular, during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just as we were collectively plunged into a global pandemic in the spring of 2020, I completed chemo and radiation treatments for a rare aggressive cancer, and a few months later, serious treatment complications had me in and out of the hospital. After my third hospitalization, I came home hooked up to TPN, which is liquid nutrition delivered from a bag into a line that tunnels through a vein in one's arm to the entrance of the heart.

My surgeon told me that I might never be able to eat by mouth again and that I might be artificially fed for the rest of my life. And then he added, "If you are ever able to eat by mouth again, just don't ever eat rice." I remember laughing at the absurdity of it all.

The Book of Names at

Reporting by
Brad Shirakawa



Brad Shirakawa photos

91,000+

LEFT: Alan Amemiya, born in Sacramento, holds the card that lists the names given to him before he stamped them into the Ireicho. His family was in Poston.

“My mother worked for the attorney Henry Taketa and he was one of the ones that got the redress started in Sacramento,” Amemiya said.

“And so I’ve kind of talked about this and knew about it for a long time.”



The Ireicho book of names is at 91,000 plus and counting. That’s how many names in the book have been stamped and remembered as of early January, 2026. Just about 35,000 more to go.

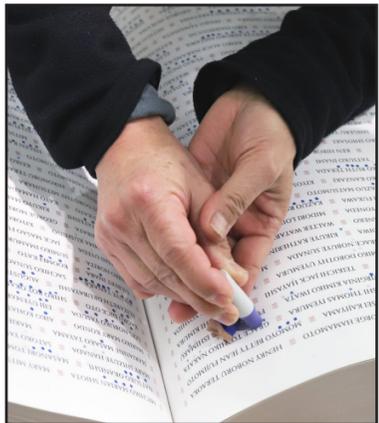
The book was at the San Jose Buddhist Temple from January 8 to 11 for families to add a small, blue colored stamp beneath the name(s), to remember those who were incarcerated in the camps, prisons, holding facilities and more across America during WWII.

Linda Kadani and friend Alan Amemiya, both living in Monterey, CA, came to stamp the book. “The project information was sent to me by Larry Oda, JACL National President,” Kadani said. “He sent it, knowing that I had taught the concentration camps as I was a teacher.”



Linda Kadani

Kadani taught American history at a Modesto junior high school. “My parents always talked about it. So I was one of the lucky ones who knew everything about it growing up.”



Chris Mildebrandt photo

Jamie Nakatani, a Yonsei born in Los Angeles, brought her family to San Jose as she now lives in Davis. Her families were in Manzanar and Tule Lake. Al-



Jamie Nakatani

though she had already stamped in Southern California, she came to do it again. “To see my grandparent’s names. It’s humbling, how many people were impacted,” she said.

They Called Us Enemy - By George Takei Recommended for all ages

Book reviewed by Kuni Nishijima



My family’s been hooked on Culinary Class Wars, a South Korean cooking competition show, on which one of its hundred contestants learned to cook through reading manga. On a few separate occasions, a relative remarked that I would like this chef because his storyline involves comic books, something they distinctly associated with me – and importantly, not themselves (though we all rooted for the contestant).

This isn’t the first time I’ve been singled out for enjoying comics, and I find this distance deliberate, albeit without malice. It’s the sort of line in the sand we all draw between ourselves and others we might respect as individuals, but have no interest in understanding more deeply, much less emulating. I understand this aversion – after all, comics are often seen as juvenile escapist fantasies about superheroes, ninjas, and high school life – but I reject it, nonetheless. In reality, comics address as wide a range of topics as novels or film, from mountaineering to mineralogy, gardening to garment construction, modern parenting to medical politics.

Takei’s *They Called Us Enemy* covers one such unexpected topic for the

medium: an autobiographical account of the WWII internment experience through the eyes of a five-year-old child. The memoir manages to maintain a lighthearted, whimsical lens while never downplaying the seriousness of the events occurring around young George and his family. Takei never glorifies the experience, but having been a young child at the time (though the very responsible and precocious oldest of three), depicts the playful, even joyful times he and his family had during this time (and through his adult eyes, reflects on how his parents’ experience had to have differed).

Illustrator Harmony Becker portrays this inner light with the cutest panels of little George with his round cheeks, shining eyes, and the universal Asian baby haircut. If you’re anything like me, it’s easy to forget (and proportionally embarrassing to admit forgetting) that “old people” weren’t always old – dare I say, they were children once too – and the graphic novel medium is a format made for igniting recognition of others’ humanity through visual depictions made on the artist’s terms. It’s as if to say, “Look: this guy we all know, this guy was a child too. See the joy and the worry and the curiosity and the levity not through the eyes of George Takei – the actor, advocate, cultural personality, and meme – but through this child’s eyes.” Critics complain that graphic novels are read too easily to be respectable, but it’s that very ease that makes them so powerful. They have the ability to make empathy easy.

It’s a quick, relatively easy read, and a great re-entry point into reading if you haven’t picked up a book in a while.

WHAT’S OUR YOUNG GENERATION UP TO?

By Diana Narasaki Trujillo

Some schools have general “Asian Clubs,” while others—such as Leigh High School in San Jose—have more specific organizations like the Japanese American Culture Club (JACC). We wanted to learn more about the intentions behind their organization, so we asked members a variety of questions about their activities and what they hope to gain from their shared interest.

Catie Yokota (President)

Regarding culture and community: “At JACC, we are serving up gyoza, boiling udon, and handing out mochi ice cream to allow the entire student body a taste of our cuisine. From doing trivia games about fun facts about Japan to folding cranes and learning the story of Sadako, we are giving a sneak peek into our background. These shared experiences honor our roots and welcome all, extending our community.”

Collaboration with other cultural clubs: “We strive to build a diverse community with clubs that share the same values as JACC! Every year we have a joint meeting and potluck with the Asian Pacific Islander Student Alliance and Hindu Student Association to allow all to try bits and pieces of our different cuisines. We also take pride in manning a booth at Leigh’s annual MultiCultural Night, alongside all cultural clubs at Leigh.”

Ryder Hirata (Vice-President)

How many members in their group: “In total, we have 7 members.” Events outside of school: “In previous years, JACC has collaborated with Prospect High School’s Japanese American Culture Club in an Obon spotlight. As well as Multi Cultural Night and Food Fair in extra Leigh events.”

How does the club help other students learn about your culture? “Our club fosters an understanding about our culture through fun activities centered around art, history, or unique customs. We also share Japan’s rich culture through food, with new meetings, we feature new Japanese foods that everyone is excited to try. Through these experiences, we are so lucky to have impacted not only Japanese students, but many other demographics and communities across our school.”

Addison Ando (Secretary)

Have you personally learned anything new through the club that you weren’t aware of previously? “Being a part of JACC has expanded my knowledge about Japanese traditions and values, gaining new curiosity and appreciation for the culture. JACC has inspired me to spread my culture within my school community. Overall, we offer an amazing atmosphere for all of my classmates to do the same.”

What has being a part of your club meant to members personally? “JACC has been a place to connect Leigh students and Japanese culture to explore it’s traditions and values. It’s a space to learn, ask questions, and experience everything that the culture has to offer. We often meet once a month with a presentation about a specific topic followed by different Japanese foods like udon, yakisoba, and much more.”

Emmi Pham (Treasurer)

Club plans going forward: “In the future, we would love to host more activities such as traditional crafts and food, as well as invite more guest speakers. We would also love to connect with other JACC clubs at different schools and with the Japantown community by supporting events, organizations, and volunteering to strengthen our connection with the Japanese culture.”

What does being part of the club meant to members personally? “Being part of the JACC club has allowed members to gain a sense of belonging and the opportunity to learn and appreciate Japanese culture. Additionally, it gives them a chance to connect with others who share a similar interest in exploring Japanese culture and building meaningful connections.”

Julie Seaman (Outreach Commissioner)

What events do you host at school? “At Leigh’s JACC, we’ve hosted a variety of events honoring facets of Japanese culture. We always pair our meetings with a fun activity and food, such as Japanese trivia with udon, or Japanese calligraphy with mochi ice cream! One of our most popular events was during Setsubun, where we threw fukumame (roasted soybeans) at two teachers dressed up as oni (demons) to invite prosperity for the new year.”

Other students learning about our culture: “JACC is a cultural hotspot within the Leigh community, facilitating cultural exchange within not only Japanese American students, but a wide range of students representing Leigh’s demographics. We believe in teaching Japanese culture through exciting and engaging mediums such as food and games to not only share the uniqueness of Japanese culture, but to encourage all students to continue adapting to cultural ideas and perspectives different from their own. As we introduce cultural traditions and new foods monthly, each member of the JACC has the opportunity to experience a condensed, lived experience of Japan at Leigh.”

Kazusa van Prooijen (Ambassador)

The appeal of joining JACC: “I had planned since before to join some kind of club. But what really set this apart from other clubs I had seen was the community. Everyone who went to the JACC club meetings seemed genuinely interested in learning about the culture. I wanted to help spread my culture and learn new things about it.”

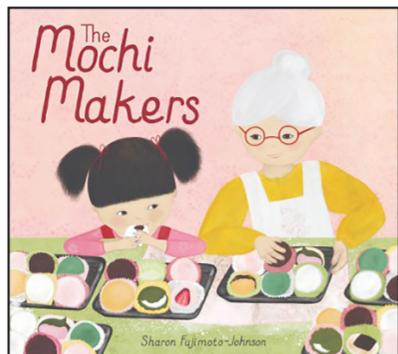
Club plans going forward: “I think it would be fun to have something like a Japanese cultural night type of thing like the Chinese cultural night and Garba night.”

Leo Fukushima (Ambassador)

The appeal of joining JACC: “I was inspired to join JACC because it was a club to connect with other Japanese people. And, in the club I was able to share and learn more about my passion for Japanese culture.” Club plans going forward: “In the future, I would like to host field trips to Japan Town. I would also like to host a club trip to Japan someday.”



WEAVING THREADS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



The Mochi Makers by Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson (Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane Books, 2024)

Inheritance

When I was nine years old, my family moved from California to Yokohama, Japan. There, I learned to answer to the name that I had rarely used until then: my middle name composed of three syllables stitched together from the names of my grandmothers. There in the land of my mother's birth, I grew into my mother's kimono, the threads of which had kept my mother connected to her motherland.



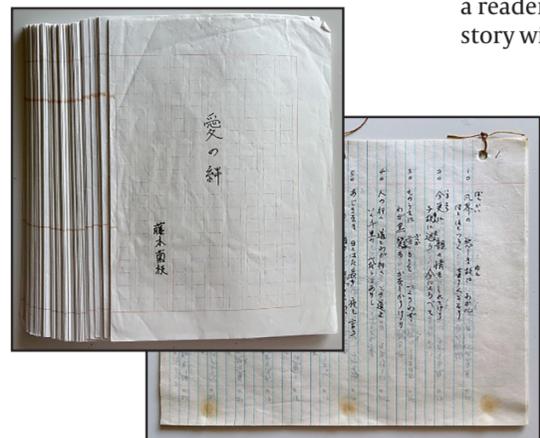
Wearing my mother's kimono in our home in Yokohama, Japan.

And there in Japan, where I began to understand my cultural duality as a Japanese American and a Japanese, my father gave me the shells that his father had collected in incarceration camps in Hawai'i during World War II. My grandfather had died long before I was born, so I had never met him or heard his story from him directly. Even at that young age, I understood that my grandfather's shells carried a precious story.



A portion of my grandfather's shell collection from the incarceration camps.

When I was a college student, my grandmother in Hawai'i entrusted me with her handwritten autobiography and tanka poems. Threads of her life and of my grandfather's life were meticulously recorded in these pages. For my senior honors project, I translated this body of work, wrote a personal commentary, and created three handbound art books for display.



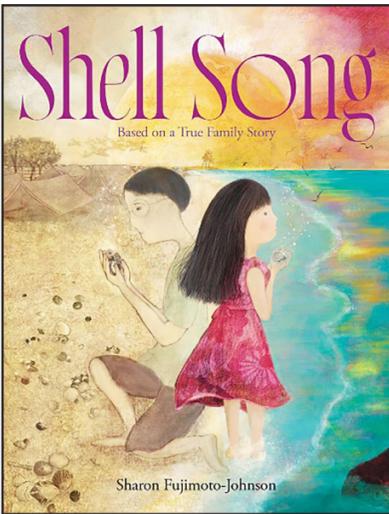
My grandmother's handwritten autobiography and tanka poems



Spreads from The Mochi Makers.

I knew that I wanted to share my grandfather's story more widely, but it took me many years to recognize that the shells he had collected at Sand Island and Honouliuli held the key to telling his story. These shells had borne witness to loneliness, lost time, and despair behind barbed wire. They had passed from my grandfather's hands into my father's hands and then into my hands. They had traveled from incarceration to liberation, from life to life beyond, from Hawai'i to the mainland and to Japan and back to the mainland, and from my childhood all the way into my adulthood years. Across time and place, these shells resolutely carried my grandfather's story forward.

In my children's book *Shell Song*, I wove together threads of my grandfather's story as found in those shells and in the words of my grandmother. In the artwork of *Shell Song*, I digitally collaged my grandfather's shells, soil from the two incarceration camp sites where my grandfather found the shells, color and texture from my grandmother's wedding kimono, and fabric textures from my now elderly father's wardrobe.



Shell Song by Sharon Fujimoto-Johnson (Simon & Schuster/Beach Lane Books, 2025)

The Japanese American incarceration story is large, complex, and varied, but I wanted *Shell Song* to be a simple melody line, not an entire orchestra. It is simply my grandfather's story as carried across generations to me in his shell collection. I wanted this story to be told simply enough that a child could understand the core concepts and gently enough that a reader of any age could hear the story with an open heart.



My grandfather's shells digitally collaged into a spread in Shell Song.

Preservation

In April 2025, I reached the five-year milestone of surviving cancer. That same month, *Shell Song* was officially released, and two of my poems about my grandfather's incarceration appeared in *The Gate of Memory*, a collection of poems written by descendants of Nikkei wartime incarceration. At the Japanese American Museum of San Jose, I opened a six-month long exhibit that showcased my grandfather's shell collection, family artifacts, and photos. Titled "Kahō Heirloom: The Family Stories that Connect Us," this exhibit invited visitors to consider how to preserve and share their own family heirlooms.



My father (R) and my brother (L) viewing the exhibit honoring our family story. (Photo credit: Valley Images Photography)

The year 2025 also marked the 10th anniversary of the incarceration camp site at Honouliuli being designated a national park. I had the honor of giving a virtual keynote presentation as part of the commemorative event lineup for the Honouliuli National Historic Site. On book tour in Hawai'i, I shared my grandfather's story on Hawai'i Public Radio and on Hawai'i News Now and at venues including Bishop Museum, da Shop, Native Books, Barnes & Noble, and Pacific Historic Parks Bookstore at Pearl Harbor. I share all this because, in ways that I could not have imagined, threads of my family story persisted through time and have found a way to continue on.

Storylines that began long before me in the lives of my ancestors intertwined with the storyline of my own life and with a collective

tapestry of stories beyond. I have the honor and responsibility now to continue the work of weaving stories.

Each thread of ancestral inheritance, whether oral history, a family recipe, or a physical heirloom, is given to us to hold, behold, and weave into the legacy that we pass on to those who come after us. The act of retelling our ancestors' stories breathes life into them and allows them the chance to persist. Through our voices, history steps out from the shadows of the past into the present light.

Just as I carry my grandmothers' memory in my name, I am a conduit for the stories of all of my ancestors. Their voices weave a winding pattern across generations, oceans, and languages to find their home in me. But as we immigrants and descendants of immigrants know, home is an evolution of belonging through the years and places in which we set down our roots. The journey of storytelling—the receiving, the preservation, the retelling—is a life-long endeavor. In our hands, the stories of our ancestors, like time and memory, bloom like cotton roses, and petals fall into the open hands of the next generation. These stories carry the sound of the sea like small shells. They hold the shape of the textile maker's hands like lace. They weave threads of memory into the tapestry of our lives.

Now and always, stories call us by our namesake to remind us that we are all the storytellers we've been waiting for.

What is your family heirloom?

Many of us have family treasures tucked away in corners of our lives: snippets of family history, recipes, or artifacts that hold our family stories. Preserving and sharing these family treasures can feel overwhelming at first. Where should one begin? My suggestion is to find a thread of family story that calls to you and to start small. The process doesn't have to be comprehensive or all-consuming. Every small thread of family story matters. Here are a few ideas:

- Dedicate a bulletin board to collecting family photos or stories.
- Write down family recipes or capture on video a loved one making a special recipe.
- Collect fragments of family story on scraps of paper or in a notebook.
- Start a family tree.
- Create a timeline of your family's history.
- Display a special family heirloom in your home.
- Write captions for family photos.
- Ask elders to share memories and document their stories.
- Host a family video chat to share memories. (Make sure to record!)

Perhaps you feel you don't have family heirlooms to preserve and share. Your family heirloom can start with you. Create something to pass on to the generations after you.

A LOOK BACK IN TIME

A modern look at the hills surrounding Bruyeres, France where the 442 fought in October to mid November 1944
by Brad Shirakawa ••• Photographs by Sebastien and Allan Roure, France



The **Monument Americain** lies along the Peace and Freedom Trail on **Hill 555**, or what the French call Helledraye (ill-a-dray). This memorial was inaugurated by the citizens of Bruyeres in October 1947, just three years after the 442 liberated their village. Helledraye was the launching point for which the 442 began their attack on October 15, 1944.

Vosges en Hiver

(vohj en E-vehr - Vosges in winter)

The Vosges are the mountains where the 442nd RCT was fighting to liberate Bruyeres (bruy-yair) in October 1944. After the rescue, they continued east, along with the rest of General Dwight Eisenhower's Allied units in the same area, moving towards the France-Germany border. Their goal was to push the Germans out of France, thus liberating the country.

After Bruyeres, Belmont (bell-moh) and Bifontaine were liberated, the 442 rescued the lost battalion near La Houssiere (la who-c-air). Then they approached the city of Saint-Die (sahn-d) in early November. It was snowing by then. Veterans who survived the up close, sometimes point blank fighting describe the miserable fog, rain, snow and inevitable trench foot.

Sebastien Roure and his son, Allan, live nearby and documented the freezing conditions similar to what the 442 suffered. Our special thanks to the Roures for access to their beautiful, story telling photographs, which were taken in early January 2026.



ABOVE: The Torch monument, representing the 442's shoulder patch, was inaugurated in October 2017.



Clairiere du Souvenir

ABOVE and LEFT: A new exhibit exists in the Vosges on Helledraye, the **Clairiere du Souvenir** (clare-e-air d souvenir - remembrance clearing), unveiled in October 2024. It's a path that takes you on a short walk to the Helledraye Monument Americain (photo at top). On the way, you will see artifacts, foxholes used by the 442 and silhouettes of the soldiers.

The Clairiere du Souvenir memorializes the sister city relationship between Honolulu and Bruyeres, which began with a handshake between Wilbert "Sandy" Holck of Hawaii and Gerard Deschaseaux (des-chas-zo) of Bruyeres in 1961.

Holck was a Hawaiian born member of the 442 Cannon company. Note their names (Holck et Deschaseaux) on the bottom of the poster at left. Their relationship created the lasting friendship between the two cities.

Hommage et Reconnaissance aux familles Holck et Deschaseaux means homage and recognition of the Holck and Deschaseaux families.

The unveiling of the Clairiere du Souvenir took place on October 20, 2024, 80 years after Bruyeres was liberated by the 442.*

*Some sources state Bruyeres was liberated on October 18, but fighting continued in the village for at least two more days.

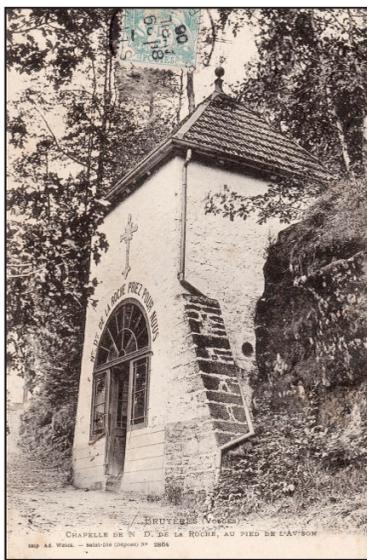
The Chapelle de Notre Dame de la Roche is the Notre Dame Chapel at the rocks (row-sh). It's one of the many tiny chapels that one can find all over France. It's also where a memorial to Staff Sgt Robert Kuroda stands, to commemorate his efforts near where he died. It's located in Bruyeres (ah-v-sohn) hill, which the Army called Hill D. Not part of the Clairiere du Souvenir, this memorial was created and installed by Sebastien Roure.

Although Bruyeres was liberated on October 20, 1944, that same day, Kuroda encountering heavy fire on a heavily wooded slope. Kuroda advanced within ten yards of a machine gun nest and killed three Germans with grenades, then killed or wounded at least three more with his machine gun.

He noted that an American officer was wounded on an adjacent hill and rushed over, only to find him dead.

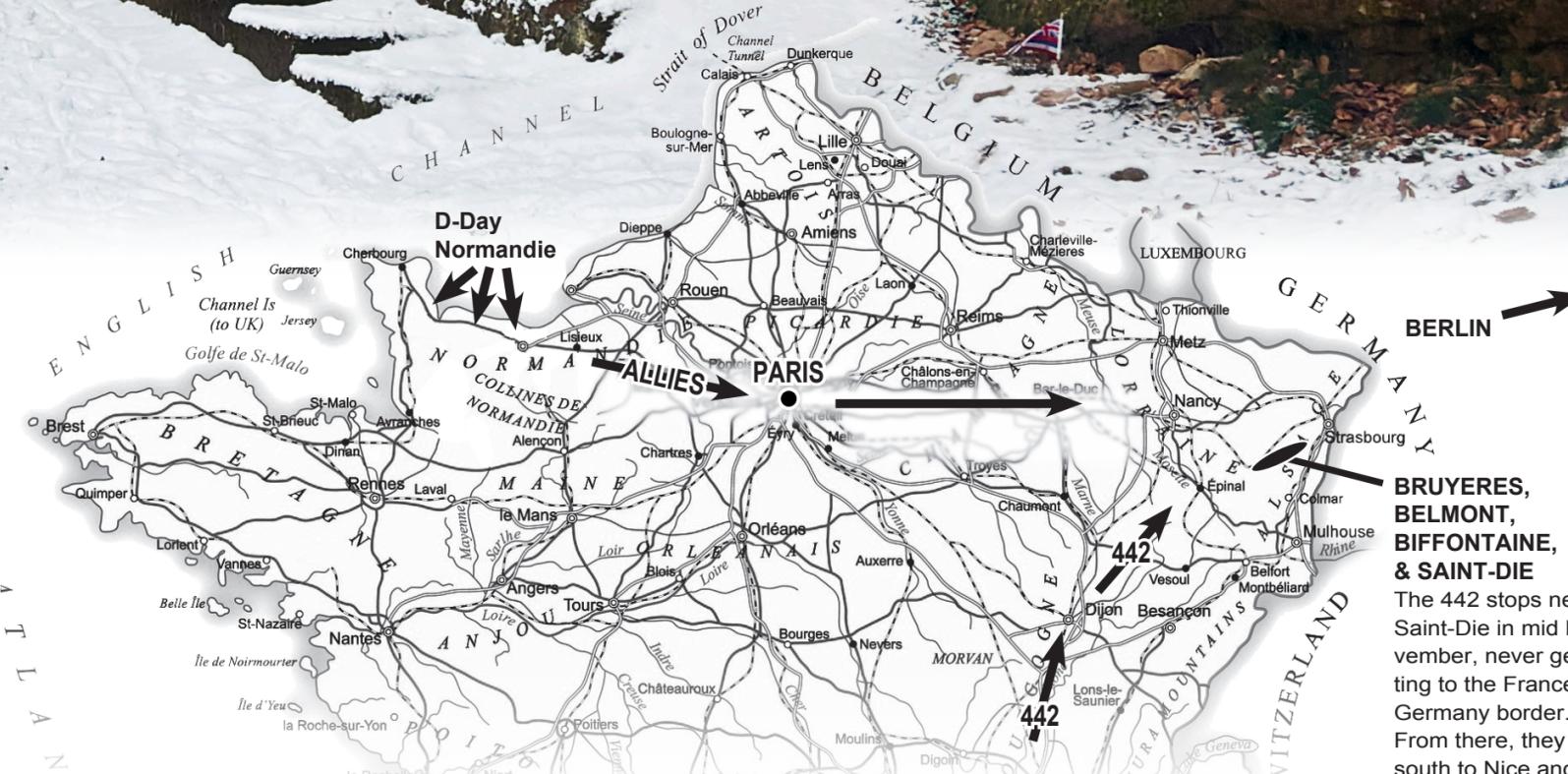
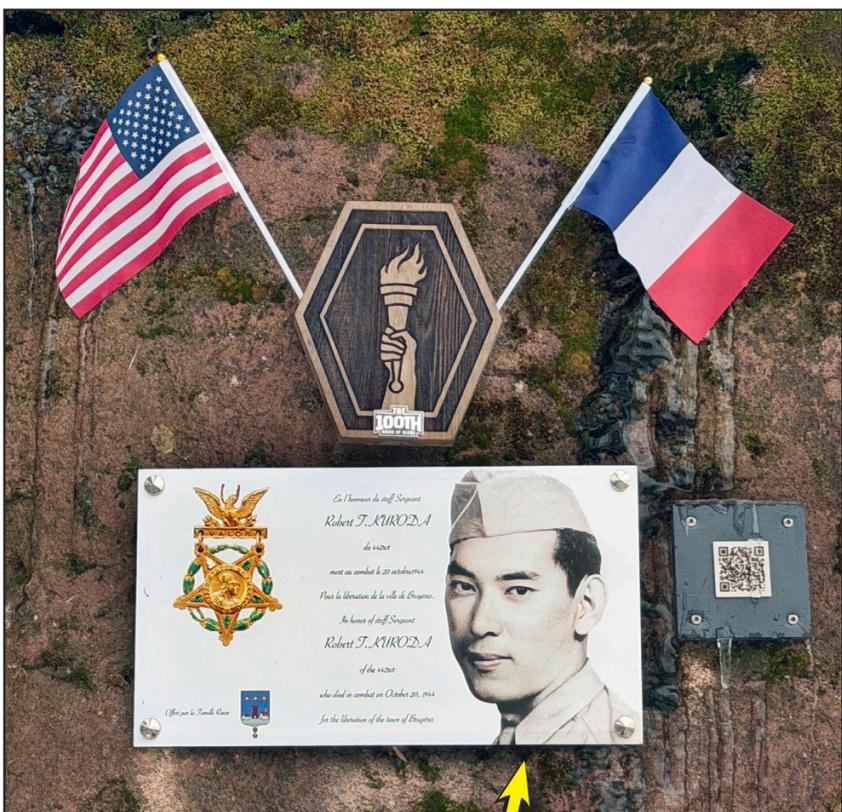
Picking up the officer's submachine gun, Kuroda advanced through continuous fire toward a second machine gun emplacement and destroyed the position.

As he turned to fire upon additional enemy soldiers, he was killed by a sniper.* In 2000, Kuroda was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, America's highest military honor.



circa 1910s-1930s

Robert Kuroda Memorial at le Avison



D-DAY to PARIS to the GERMAN BORDER

BRUYERES, BELMONT, BIFFONTAINE, & SAINT-DIE
 The 442 stops near Saint-Die in mid November, never getting to the France-Germany border. From there, they go south to Nice and the Alpes-Maritime for their version of the Champagne Campaign

* The information about Robert Kuroda's efforts that day comes from Katherine Baishiki, Joe Kuroda and the Echoes of Silence project in partnership with Japanese American Living Legacy.

Life Tributes

Obituary Notices

MARI HAYASHI

LYNN HORIYE

SHIGEKO MAYEHARA

GREG MORIOKA

RICHARD NAKASHIMA

BRYAN YUKIO UYEDA



Mari Hayashi

Mari Hayashi entered into eternal rest on Wednesday, January 7, 2026 at 95 years of age.

She is pre-deceased in death by her parents, eldest son, David, and has been reunited with her husband, Kiyoshi, of 71 years.

Mari leaves behind her daughter, Linda Liang (Sam), son, Michael, and daughter-in-law, Candice Hayashi. Mari was a loving grandmother to Carissa Borges (Joe), Kelsey Hayashi, Samantha and Samuel Liang, and great-granddaughter, Mia Borges.

She was very family-oriented, electing to return to the United States after her education in Japan, to work in canneries and in the fields before she started cleaning houses so she could send money home to support her family in Japan. Mari and her husband spent numerous years farming together at their residence where they provided fruits and vegetables to family, friends, and neighbors.



Lynn Takao Horiye

Lynn Takao Horiye passed away peacefully on December 17, 2025, at the age of 78. He was born on September 24, 1947, in Bingham City, Utah, and moved to San Mateo, California, in 1962.

Lynn attended San Mateo High School, where he competed in gymnastics and wrestling, and continued gymnastics at the College of San Mateo before graduating from San José State University. Gymnastics became the foundation of his life's work and passion.

In 1968 Lynn enlisted in the Army Reserves.

Lynn dedicated majority of his life to teaching and coaching gymnastics at San José State, Sunnyvale Recreation, and most notably Saint Francis High School. At Saint Francis, he coached Varsity Girls Gymnastics and JV and Varsity Girls Tennis, leading his gymnastics teams to 20 CCS Championships. He was also a longtime statistician for Lancer football and basketball. The Saint Francis community—faculty, students, and alumni—remained lifelong friends.

Each summer, Lynn taught gymnastics at the Kutsher Sports Academy in Massachusetts for 33 years, where he formed enduring friendships that lasted throughout his life.

Lynn retired from Saint Francis after dedicating nearly 40 years there, in June 2025 and soon after took his first trip to Japan, a long-awaited and meaningful journey.

He is survived by his older brother Roger (Chiye), nieces Joy (Leng), son Nikko and Aileen daughter Analisa and by his younger sister JoAnn (Tad), nephew Troy, niece Shannon (Brett), sons Ollie and Logan. He was predeceased by his twin sister Linda, and his parents Tazuko and Loriy.

Lynn will be remembered for his dedication, kindness, and the countless lives he touched as a coach, mentor, and friend.

The Funeral Mass was conducted at St. Francis High School, located at 1885 Miramonte Ave., Mountain View, CA, on January 24, 2026.



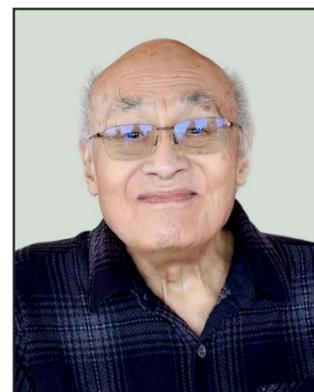
Mayehara Shigeko
Nov. 30, 1928 – Dec. 26, 2025

MAYEHARA, SHIGEKO, 97, of San Francisco, passed away peacefully on December 26, 2025.

Born in 1928, Shigeko was a woman of grace and dedication. She spent her life creating a warm and welcoming home for her family, expressing her love through her exceptional cooking and handmade sewing projects.

Family and friends are invited to attend a Celebration of Life on Saturday, February 21st at 11:00 AM at Pine United Methodist Church. A luncheon will follow. Please RSVP to: RSVPMayehara@gmail.com. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Kimochi (San Francisco) or Yu-Ai Kai (San Jose) in memory of Shigeko Mayehara, supporting the community she loved so much.

She was preceded in Death By: Fred Mayehara, husband, Sachiko Umehara, daughter and Lisa Sera, daughter in law. She is survived by her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and their families: Tom (Claudia) Mayehara; Kristina Walden; Mike Umehara, Eric and Christina (Robert Chiang) Umehara, Ellie, Catherine and Kenji Chiang; Bob Mayehara; Takeshi (Kimiko) Sera, Yoji and Toshiro; Kaz Sera, Ryan (Kay) and Lauren; and Michael (Ginger) Sera, Jeffrey and Marcus. She will be deeply missed by all who knew her.



Bryan Yukio Uyeda

Bryan Yukio Uyeda, a beloved brother, uncle, and friend to many, passed away on January 1, 2026, at the age of 91.

Bryan was born in Seattle, WA, to Tadao and Lilly Uyeda. His youth was spent attending Leschi Grade School, Washington Jr. High School and Garfield High School. Bryan joined the United States Air Force in February 1954 and was stationed at Lackland Air Base in Texas. He was later relocated to Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, WA, and completed his military service in October 1957.

He began working for Boeing in 1958 and stayed there several years before moving to San Jose, CA, where he took a job with Lockheed Missiles and Space Company in Sunnyvale, CA. He was later employed by Memorex in Santa Clara, CA, where he worked for many years. His friendly, outgoing personality led him to meet many new friends in the San Jose area. Not only would this be his favorite place, but these new friendships would become lifelong. Bryan later returned to Seattle in 1978 and worked for Boeing once again before retiring.

Bowling was Bryan's greatest passion. He enjoyed traveling to bowling tournaments with his bowling buddies, and over the years, he managed to collect fifteen bowling balls along with winning many trophies, which were proudly displayed on his fireplace mantel. One of his favorite trophies was over three feet tall.

Bryan is survived by his sisters, Grace Uyeda, JoAnn Yamamoto, Evie Hall (Pat), younger brother Deane (Barbara), and nephews Ric Yamamoto (Alan Omuro), Daron Hall, and niece Sheryl Yamamoto, and 2 great nieces, 2 great nephews, 1 great-great nephew and 1 great-great niece.

Bryan's final wish was to be interred at the Tahoma National Cemetery in Covington, WA.

A private memorial service will be held for the family on a future date. To honor Bryan's memory, a donation to Fred Hutch Cancer Center or a charity of your choice would be greatly appreciated.

Gregory Lance Morioka

Gregory Lance Morioka, 76, passed away leaving a legacy of meticulous care, service, and song. Born in Ontario, Oregon, to Glen and Maxine Morioka, Greg spent his formative years in Morgan Hill, California. A proud alumnus of Live Oak High School, he was the Senior Class President for the Class of 1968 and a key member of the 1967 Varsity Baseball Championship team. Greg had a long career as a Sales Mngr. for Retailers Assoc., covering 185 locations across the Western United States before retiring in 2008.

Greg was a devoted fan of the SF Giants & 49ers.; an avid collector of coins & sports memorabilia. Greg loved the simple joys of life and he found peace in nature, whether fishing, camping, or traveling in his motor home or simply sitting on the patio watching the finches feasting on bird seed he left for them. His vibrant spirit was best captured through his voice; an excellent singer, he was often compared to Jim Nabors when singing at the First Assembly of God. At home, he was the heart of holiday gatherings, using his culinary flair and meticulous nature to spice up unforgettable family meals.

Survived by Siblings : B. Aiko Morioka and husband Peter Ling of Mill Valley, CA; Steve T. Morioka & wife Linda of Coarsegold, CA.; Russ F. Morioka & wife Sandra & children Brian & Sherri of Watsonville, CA; Penny R Morioka & husb. Scott Mallory of Hollister, Nephew Brandon Morioka & wife Becky. & children Jacob & Nathon of Manteca, CA. Preceded in death by his parents Glen and Maxine Morioka of Morgan Hill, CA.



Richard Wataru Nakashima

Richard Wataru Nakashima, 88 years old, Sacramento, CA-born, longtime resident of Los Angeles, California, passed away peacefully on December 1, 2025, at St. John's Emergency Hospital in Santa Monica, CA. He is survived by his loving wife Kazuko Nakashima; Children, Steven (Dana), James, and Judy (Eddie); Grandchildren, Ryu, Koyo, Takuya, Kae, Yuka and Hideo; Sisters, Atsuko Tremble, Takeko Watanabe, Michiyo Shimbashi, and Aiko Hayashida; also survived by many nephews, nieces, other relatives and friends.

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GOT A FREEZER FULL OF MOCHI?

WHAT TO DO WITH ALL THIS LEFTOVER MOCHI?

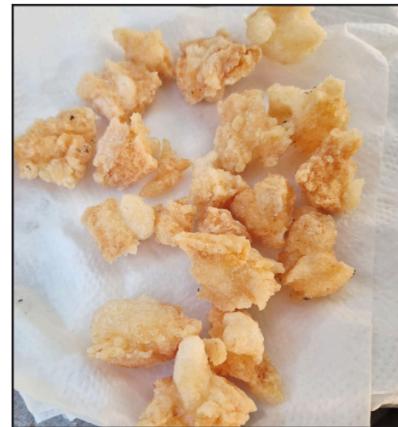


It's almost been a month since New Years, the time when you may receive bags of mochi! If you haven't yet devoured the glutinous, sticky, chewy cakes, they are probably stored in the freezer. They are best frozen from 1-2 months, so here are some ideas on what to do with them!

CRUNCHY CRISPY MOCHI

Arare bites

Aireen Aireen says the key to successful arare is that the mochi pieces are well dried before you fry. You can dry them overnight or use a microwave oven or air fryer to accelerate the process, but don't heat too much.



Sprinkle powdered salt after its fried!

Mochi Waffles

Lisa Hirata Diffenderfer likes to use her mini waffle maker to make waffle chips. She uses a variety of seasonings, but her favorite flavor is to sandwich furukake between 2 pieces of mochi and press it with the waffle maker.



Add peanut butter or chocolate to make a sweet treat
Add cheese to make it savory

MOCHI BACON WRAPPED ROLLS



Ingredients:

- Mochi 3pcs
- seasoned nori seaweed
- bacon 4 slices
- For the sauce: soy sauce 2 tsp; mirin 2 tsp; cooking sake 2 tsp; sugar to taste

Instructions:

1. Cut the mochi into quarters (lengthwise)
2. Wrap the mochi with nori and pan fry at low heat until they soften slightly
3. Cut the bacon and wrap the mochi, then fry them until the bacon gets crispy
4. Mix the sauce and add it, and cook for few more minutes!


Join Us Today!





Join the fun this summer at Nakayoshi Gakko!

Nakayoshi Gakko, or "Friendship School" is a two-week summer program held at the Mountain View Buddhist Temple where children in grades 1 through 8 learn about Japanese culture and tradition. It is a wonderful opportunity for children and parents to explore the many aspects of the Japanese-American heritage.

Nakayoshi Gakko is a full day program (8:30am-3:30pm). Mornings feature art, literature, social studies, and Japanese language, while afternoons bring hands-on activities like origami, traditional dance (odori), abacus (soroban), cooking, calligraphy (shuji), games, music, and more!

Visit www.nakayoshigakko.org for details and to secure your spot.

Important Dates & Info:

2026 Session:
June 15th – June 26th, 2026

Children entering 1st – 8th grade for the 2026-2027 school year are eligible.

Registration opens in January.

We are also a 501(c)(3) organization and a co-op. Parent participation is required and welcomed!







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PLANTS BY POST

Florin JACL: 90 Years of Courageous Civil Rights Advocacy

By Jim Tabuchi

SACRAMENTO, CA - On January 10, 2026, the Florin Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) celebrated its 90th anniversary. The gala luncheon was attended by over 180 community members and took place at Sacramento State University. Sharon Ito was the emcee and they honored Elk Grove Unified School District, Julie Thomas, Titus Toyama and Greg Wada. The program provided an opportunity to look back at the decades of mission fulfillment to stand up for the civil rights of persecuted people, not only Japanese Americans.



Opening comments by Florin JACL Co-President Andy Noguchi

In more recent times Florin JACL has stood up for civil rights for those other than Japanese Americans. They held the first anti-Asian hate forum in 1990 to combat attacks of Chinese- and Hmong-Americans. They helped lead the Firebombing Coalition after attacks on Sacramento JACL, NAACP, Temple B'nai Israel and councilmember Jimmie Yee's home. Florin JACL has supported same-sex marriage equality. They have supported the Sikh community after their temple was attacked. They have supported the Black Lives Matter movement and advocated for redress and reparations for African Americans. Members have also stood firmly with Muslim, Arab, South Asian, and Sikh Americans, forming a strong relationship with the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), whose members participate in the annual pilgrimage to Manzanar.

Mai Vang, Sacramento City Councilmember and Sac State Asian American Studies Professor, stated, "Florin JACL has 90 years of showing up, of refusing to be silent, of choosing solidarity over safety. I see what practice looks like. Thank you for teaching this young girl in South Sacramento, a daughter of refugees, how to stand up and fight back."

The continued vibrancy of Florin JACL can be attributed to its intentional embrace of new involvement and leadership. Like other chapters, they began with Issei and Nisei participation, but openly welcomed young Sansei to become members and soon lead the chapter. Women have played an integral role, beginning with Carol Hisatomi as the first Florin JACL president. Women have served as president

or co-president for 17 of the past 35 years.

They have actively involved the next generation of leaders and today they gave the Next Generation Leadership award to Gregory Wada, who is a Yonsei taiko performer, composer and instructor. Michelle Huey, also a Yonsei, was elected as a new Vice-President.

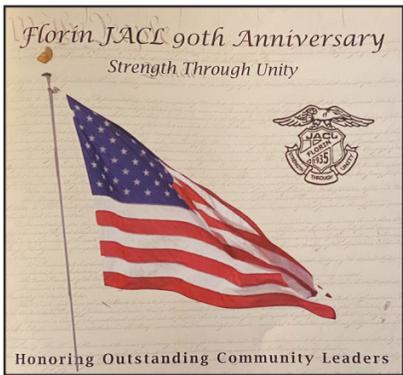


McClatchy High school senior, Heather Koike, sang the song "Rise Up" featuring the lyrics "When the silence isn't quiet, and it feels like it's getting hard to breathe, and I know you feel like dying... I promise we'll take the world to its feet".

Co-President Josh Kaizuka closed the program with a stern and timely message, "In these moments Japanese Americans likely aren't going to get rounded up and sent to concentration camps. We don't want that to happen again to any other group of people. And that's why when 9/11 happened our community rose up to help protect our Muslim brothers and sisters. During the pandemic, because of discrimination, people were targeted. That resulted in a lot of different organizations addressing anti-Asian hate. And the reason why each of you are important is so that we can collectively fight back, that we can respond. To make sure that the fundamentals upon which this country was supposedly built are actually realized, where all people are treated equal for social justice and civil rights for all people."



Emcee Sharon Ito (L) and Co-President Josh Kaizuka (R)



Program Honoring Outstanding Community Leaders

The Florin JACL chapter began in 1935 to support Japanese Americans in the thriving community of 2,500 people. Most of the Japanese Americans located in this community, just east of Sacramento, farmed some of the best strawberries and table grapes. In those early days one of the first causes they took up in 1939 was to desegregate the all-Japanese Florin East School. Then Florin JACL was called upon to support its members who were dispersed in multiple directions during the forced incarceration of WWII.

The chapter supported the right of immigrant Asians to become citizens, resulting in the naturalization of 60 Florin Issei. They were then instrumental in supporting the Japanese American call for redress. Their members have created the Time of Remembrance program at the California Museum that teaches over 4,000 students annually and they have helped to create the Japanese American archival collection at Sacramento State University. Co-President Andy Noguchi stated "With democracy under attack in many ways, our lessons are so vital for today. We have to be on guard, we have to stand up, we have to resist."



Northern California's Japanese American Newspaper

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1769 Hillsdale Avenue, #54330
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E-mail us:
editor@nikkeiwestnews.org

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YAK Kenko (Healthy) Living Series 

What to Know When Calling 9-1-1 Preparedness & Resources

Guest Speaker:
Gabriela Modglin,
B.S., A.S. Paramedic
EMS Duty Chief for Santa Clara County EMS Agency

Date/Time: Wed, February. 4, 2026, 10am to 12 noon
Location: Yu-Ai Kai, 3rd Floor
588 N. 4th St., San Jose

Cost: Free -- Seating is limited!
Please Register online at:
<https://tinyurl.com/Calling911KLS>

For questions, email/call: staff@yuaiwai.org or (408) 294-2505

Participants will learn:

1. When it is appropriate to contact 9-1-1.
2. Resources that help facilitate care when contacting 9-1-1.
3. The function of the 988 Lifeline.
4. What a L.I.F.E File is and where to access it.

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