

ED'S NOTES

Ed Mitoma, editor



Our Nov/Dec 07 issue was printed on double-size paper but it cost lots more so we are going back to single page printing.

I try to review some new books that may of interest to the JA community. I got from the library: David Halberstam's *The Coldest Winter: America and the Korean War*, 2007 Hyperion

a thick book of 719 pages. It gives a comprehensive narrative on the political decisions and miscalculations on both sides. In thumbing through it, I found that Halberstam had included the tremendous struggle that befell Lt. Gene Takahashi in battle. (pp 409-415). I was acquainted with Takahashi long ago in Cleveland, Ohio. He passed away recently.

I should mention that our "CAMP MUSUBI" project is a sizeable effort for our board to undertake. Ray Shibata, our Scholarship chair, agreed to take on this task as he figured that he would have more time because he retired from his work at the end of November. Ray worked for Hughes/Boeing for 34 years and was a senior project manager. Our next issue comes out in March 2008.

Although JAs are known to be all-American we may have an identity crisis. Please see identity article below..

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN NIKKEI

CULTURAL IDENTITY Bobby Okanaka

LA has long been a gateway between Japan and the U.S. It started over 100 yrs ago when the first Issei landed on the California coast in search of better opportunities and continues today with Japanese businessmen and their families flying into LAX.

The recent Japan Expo, now in its 28th year, held at the LA Convention Center is a prime example of the transmission of Japanese culture. Visitors enjoyed a wide variety of booths offering traditional & modern Japanese arts and crafts on display

But among all the festivities, where were the Nikkei (the Japanese Americans – the JAs)?

People who were born in Japan and now reside in LA still identify strongly with their homeland and make an effort to maintain their cultural identity through language, food, customs and traditions. These people, not American-born Japanese, are largely the organizers of the Japan Expo. And so, as an event, the Japan Expo is able to meet its goal of promoting Japanese culture and building stronger ties between Japan and America. But as for the Nikkei, who were born in America and were raised with American values and culture, they do not share the same goals as the Japan Expo organizers.

Nikkei ties to Japan are primarily familial ones. Visits to Grandma & Grandpa (bachan & jiichan) are when Japanese customs like walking indoors shoeless or eating with chopsticks are practiced, but once the family returns to their suburban home, life reverts back to shoes and forks. As the older generation passes on, many Nikkei,

IDENTITY, continued on page 7

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Kent Kawai

Greetings and Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that 2007 is over and we are beginning 2008. It has been an interesting year for me as your President and I would like to thank everyone who supported the South Bay JACL in the past year.

For 2008, we are in the process of working on new programs and activities that I hope will allow our chapter to become a viable and important partner in our community. One of the programs the South Bay JACL is currently working on is trying to set up a "Camp Musubi" program in the South Bay area (Please see Camp Musubi article). I would like to thank Ray Shibata for his giving time and effort to head this program. We are looking for volunteers to help get this program off to a good start. If you are interested or know of someone who you think might be interested in working on a program like this please contact us.

Another program that we are working on is the Arcadia book project. We are still in need of photos of the Japanese American community in the South Bay area. Please look through your photo collection Every picture has a story behind it, even pictures that look ordinary shed light on a bygone era. You just might have that one photo that sheds light on the history of the JA community.

Finally I would like to thank members that have continued to renew their memberships. I cannot emphasize enough as to how much your support of the South Bay JACL is to us. Please continue to support our chapter and the JACL in the coming year. On behalf of the entire South Bay JACL board thank you for your continued support and we look forward to working with you. Kent

CAMP MUSUBI

A major project for our Chapter is the sponsoring of Camp Musubi in the summer of 2008. Envisioned is a week-long Camp Musubi program for teaching middle school students about Japanese American culture and heritage.

The project goal is to develop an awareness and interest in the Japanese American culture through many hands-on experiences. He middle school-aged kids will be guided by college interns and community experts on a variety of workshops and presentations. There have been a number of "Camp Musubi" programs presented in the last few years by other local JA groups and we plan to borrow from their programs. Activities being considered include: taiko, bonsai, marital arts demonstration, Ikebana, papermaking, performing arts, festivals, and field trips to Japanese gardens in the Los Angeles area.

Camp Musubi is made possible through tuition, fund raisers, in-kind contributions, and volunteer support. Raymond Shibata has been appointed the focal point/camp director with Amy Phillips as the consultant.

Details such as the camp schedule, cost of tuition, student age range, the number of students that can be accommodated, and details of the camp program - will be made known by our newsletter in the future. Persons wishing to volunteer their time and services are asked to call Raymond Shibata right away at (310) 376-6624..