

Japanese American Citizens League

NEWSLETTER

TWIN CITIES CHAPTER

President / Matt Abe

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TOKYO MADNESS

If you've had a hankering to visit Tokyo but haven't the time and/or money, you might drop in at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis to see its current show, "Tokyo: Form and Spirit." The Editor of This Newsletter was invited to the show's opening celebration on April 19, and she can attest that the evening was certainly true to the physical feel of Tokyo. While standing at the bar trying to get a free glass of Sapporo beer, she was almost crushed by the crowd. In an equally precarious state was our scholarship secretary Kimi Hara, who had volunteered to fix sushi and other tasties for 2,400 people. Kimi was behind the buffet, trying to keep plates of rapidly disappearing food somewhat filled. My husband assures me the food was delicious; as you might guess, getting to the free sushi was no mean feat either.

However, the crowd was quickly forgotten during the spirited drumming of Soh Daiko, a New York-based taiko drumming group comprised of both men and women. Later indoors, Noh dancer Takahisa Tsubaki performed scenes from the play Yoshitsune and Benkei. His subtle but powerful dancing silenced the otherwise noisy audience---and considering he had to compete with the several dozen television monitors placed under the plexiglas stage, an admirable performance. He did elicit a few nervous giggles when, as Benkei, he leaped and thrust a halbeard into the crowd.

So how was the show itself? If the viewer is looking for examples of fine traditional Japanese art, he or she might be disappointed. The older pieces (from the Edo, Meiji, and Taisho periods) shown at the Walker are mostly folk art and objects for everyday use: a firefighter's uniform and equipment, dishes, lacquered obento boxes, clothing, toys, and shop signs. There is a good assembly of ukiyo-e prints, a luxurious black palanquin, a festival shrine, and a tea ceremony room from New York's Japan Society which had been brought in pieces and reassembled for the show.

The best and most interesting pieces, however, are those created by contemporary Japanese artists and designers. Especially look for the columns by architect Fumihiko Maki and designer Kiyoshi Awazu (the fire watchtower is the most amusing and accessible); the giant toy dog on the terrace by Shigeo Fukuda; the series of Japanese television commercials shown on the monitors in Gallery Six (my preschool daughters voted these the best of the show); and an eerie yet tranquil Buddhist "landscape" by Toyo Ito and Kohei Sugiura.

(Incidentally, there is a calendar of events scheduled around the show, including butoh and Noh dancing, music, films and video. For more information call the Walker.)

"Tokyo: Form and Spirit" runs until July 20. Call the Walker at 375-7600 for more information concerning events, admission and hours.

P.S. Best wishes to Karl Nomura, whom I saw at the opening along with his wife Louise. Karl is recovering from surgery for glaucoma.

MINNETONKA MILESTONE

Longtime Minnetonka city council member Sam Higuchi died of a heart attack April 11, 1986. He was 62 years old.

Higuchi, an independent, served on the council from 1954 to 1969, and again from 1974 to 1981. He also served briefly as acting mayor of Minnetonka in 1977. He was one of the first Japanese Americans to become active in Minnesota politics.

According to an obituary in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, Bill Hise, who served on the city council with Higuchi for four years, said Higuchi's most memorable speech before the council was made in 1980, when several residents protested against the opening in their neighborhood of a group home for children with eating disorders.

"Sam talked about pre judice and bigotry and compared it to the pre judice he had seen himself as Japanese American," Hise was quoted as saying. "It was probably the finest political commentary I have heard."

Higuchi was buried April 14 at Lakewood Cemetery.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

On Thursday, May 22nd, the TC JACL will honor the 1986 High School Graduating Students at the Campus Club, U of M. Scholarship awards will be given to outstanding students. JACL members and friends are encouraged to attend.

Campus Club is located on the 4th floor of the Coffman Memorial Union Building. (Parking Ramp "B" from River Road)

Cost: \$13.00 per person

Please make your reservations with:

Tom Ohno.....831-5869

Yuri Ezaki...926-1195

Calendar of Events

May 22....JACL Scholarship Dinner

June 1....Sukiyaki Dinner

June 29...Picnic, Phalen Park

July 20 National Convention, Chicago

August 10..Golf Tournament

November 1...Installation Dinner, Fort Snelling Officers Club

MINNESOTA NIKKEI PROJECT.....Sam Honda

Project needs your help!

The Projects goal have been to take the Isseis some place of interest every month. When we began this project in 1978, most of the Isseis were in their upper 70's or lower 80's. Now that they are in their upper 80's and 90's, places to take them are somewhat restricted by their limited walking at their age. Where can we take them? Any suggestions will be appreciated.

In March the Issei were invited to a Spring Festival sponsored by Mita Haru Kai a Japanese Dance group. Also, in March Isseis were guest of the JACL Credit Union Dinner held in Apple Valley, China Doll Restaurant. President of the credit union, Roy Kyono, thanked the Isseis for their part in the credit union. At the beginning it was with their money the credit union was established.

In April, Isseis were in St. Paul's Como Park Conservatory to see the Spring Flowers. The Japanese Garden was not open. Later in the afternoon they enjoyed a Korean Dinner at Ginza Restaurant.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project received donations from Eunice & Toshio Okuma
and Jim & Amy Sugimura

On March 5th, Wednesday Day-out Program, Suzume Restaurant provided box lunches. Eunice Okuma, Lucy Kirihara and Esther Suzuki donated the birthday cake in honor of their mother's (Mrs. Torii) 80th birthday.....a youngster in our group.

On March 19th, Mary Kitagawa & Fumi Kyono provided the lunch in honor of their mother's (Mrs. Nagamitsu) birthday. Mieko Ikeda made 3 varieties of mochi gashi.

On April 2nd, Rev. Otani's church members provided the lunch. Kimi Har, Mrs. Nishimura, Takako Sakamoto and Kazuko Hanzlik.....all prepared parts of the lunch.

On April 16th, Ginko Lundin prepared the lunch.....again and again.

Thank you to all.....
Volunteers are greatly appreciated.

We wish to convey our sympathies to the family of Fuki Abe who passed away on April 27th. Besides operating Yamato Imports with her husband, Leslie, Fuki was a teacher in flower design (Ikebana) and held classes in flower arrangement in Minneapolis. Our project will remember her as a very good cook. Fuki provided lunch for our Day-out Program many times. We will miss her generosity and fine cooking.

ON REDRESS.....Our funds for National JACL Redress Program is progressing very well. We have met our quota for 1986. We'll have funds for Legislative Education Committee.

The fund drive is still on. Those who wish to contribute to our redress program. Checks to be made payable to TC JACL and mailed to:
Sam Honda
3935 Lakewood Ave.
White Bear Lake, MN 55110.

MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED