

# RICE PAPER



A newsletter of the Twin Cities chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League

SEPTEMBER 2007



## JACL Golf Best Ball Scramble Tournament

**rescheduled:** As those of you who showed up at our original tournament date of Aug. 19 know, we were forced to reschedule due to rain. Subsequently, the new date of

the golf tournament will be Sunday, Sept. 16, at 11 a.m. at Highland National Golf Course, 1403 Montreal Avenue, St. Paul (651-695-3774),

All of those golfers who can still play do not have to do anything; they will be contacted about the new tee time.

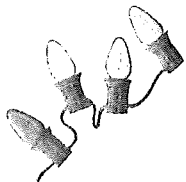
Those of you who cannot make this date, please call Jake Nakasone at 651-248-1896 to get a refund. We're still accepting sign-ups! If you're interested in playing, contact Jake.



## Silent Auction Donations

It is time again to think about the chrysanthemum dinner and the silent auction, I personally think it is the best part of the dinner. I am helping Gloria this year by collecting items from members. If you are a JACL member and would like to donate an item please contact me at 612-827-5280 or [ramat001@gmail.com](mailto:ramat001@gmail.com). I will need to know what you would like to donate and how I will pick up the item. We always have a great selection from our membership so I am looking forward to having another great year with auction items.

Submitted by Rachel Matsumoto - Silent Auction co-chair



We are looking for a chairperson for the December **holiday party**. If someone does not volunteer, there will not be a party this year! Any interested individuals may contact Lisa Shakerin at 763-537-6829.

## NEWSLETTER STAFF

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Scholarship Committee holds one seat

## TC JACL WEBSITE:

[www.twincitiesjacl.org](http://www.twincitiesjacl.org)

# Rice Paper Densho Project

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## Seattle's Densho Project Executive Director, Tom Ikeda, Visits the Twin Cities

Tom Ikeda, founder and executive director of the Densho Project, and his wife, Sara Yamasaki, came through the Twin Cities in August for their son's Ultimate Frisbee tournament in Blaine. Members of the Twin Cities JACL Education Committee and Japanese American Veterans of Minnesota had the opportunity to meet this amazing couple at the Fort Snelling Officer's Club, courtesy of Bud Nakasone.

Bud, an MIS veteran himself, took us to the Fort Snelling History Center to look at a well-done, but little-known exhibit about Fort Snelling, which has a section on the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Thanks to materials donated by Tok Yonekawa, the display includes actual Japanese language lesson plans used at the MIS language school during World War II. Bud then gave us a tour of Fort Snelling and showed us the buildings used by the MIS. Unfortunately, many of them are now in disrepair and are boarded up, but it is hoped that some will be preserved.

Tom mentioned that his father, who trained at Fort Snelling in the MIS during World War II, recalled being housed at the "Turkey Farm." The four-man tar-paper structures no longer exist, but Bud pointed out the area where he was also housed as an MIS student.

After the tour, Tom gave us a multimedia presentation about the Densho Project that he founded in 1996, inspired by his father-in-law's stories. In Japanese, Densho means "to pass on to the next generation," or to leave a legacy. The Densho Project's initial goal was to document oral histories from Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II. The project has evolved into a mission to educate, preserve, collaborate and inspire action.



*Lucy and Mikio Kirihara, Sara Yamasaki, Tom Ikeda, Bud Nakasone, Sally Sudo and Cheryl Hirata-Dulas in front of the MIS display at Fort Snelling History Center.*

# **Rice Paper** Densho Project cont...

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Tom took us through the Densho website ([www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org)), which has a digital archive with more than 500 hours of interviews, visual histories of Japanese Americans and others affected by the World War II incarceration. The website also contains a wealth of resources, with over 8,000 images of Japanese American history and an online curriculum guide with lesson plans that help students examine questions of civil liberties in relation to the Japanese American experience.

A former Microsoft project manager, Tom works tirelessly at a second career that he is totally impassioned about. He hopes to expand his interviews to cover areas outside of the west coast, possibly including the Twin Cities. His wife, Sara, is equally impassioned about her work as a creative writing teacher. Over dinner she shared her experiences of developing her career through working to teach her own daughter, and how she is now helping students from all over the country to find their own voice and write from their hearts.

It was a pleasure and honor for us to spend time with Tom and Sara. Their son's team ended up returning to Washington as the first place champions in the 2007 Youth Club Ultimate Frisbee tournament.

Submitted by Cheryl Hirata-Dulas



*Bud Nakasone at Fort Snelling in front of a building used as classrooms for MIS students during World War II.*

*Photo credit: Tom LaVenture, Asian American Press*

# Rice Paper Normandale Japanese Garden

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It wasn't until my father passed away 7 years ago, that I became aware of how involved he had been in the Normandale Japanese Garden Committee. It was founded 31 years ago, and I sense there is a whole new generation of JACL members that are unaware of the connection between NJG, JACL, and the MIS Veterans, so I wanted to share the history with you.

In 1964 the Bloomington Affiliated Garden Clubs won a \$500 first place prize in a city beautification contest (Operation Evergreen), co-sponsored by the Federated Garden Clubs of Minnesota and Sears Roebuck. With that prize money the idea of a Japanese Garden was born. Five years later, The Bloomington Garden Clubs signed an agreement in November 1969, with Normandale State Jr. College's first president, Dale Lorenz and State Junior College Board Chancellor, Phillip Helland, to build a 2-acre Garden on the campus grounds.

In 1971, Bunnie Aaze and Yvonne Bublitz, co-chairs of the project, and Bloomington Garden Club members, connected with the MIS Veterans of Minnesota and enthusiastic support spread to alumni all over the country, including Hawaii. They voted to contribute to the MIS fund for the Japanese Garden, and to build a lasting expression of appreciation to the people of Minnesota for the kindness shown them while they were studying the Japanese language at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling, MN. The entire local Japanese American community offered support also. The Bloomington Garden Clubs, in their first joint venture with the JACL, sponsored their first sukiyaki dinner in 1971 as a benefit for the Garden.

With the funds raised, the MIS was able to donate the Bentendo and Taiko-Bashi (curved bridge). The plaque placed at the base of the bridge holds great meaning for all who read it, for in these troubling times of war and terror, it provides an important message of inspiration about kindness and gratitude. The plaque reads:

“We, the Japanese American Veterans of the US Army Military Intelligence Service Language School dedicate this Bentendo and Bridge to the people of the Twin Cities and all of Minnesota for the kind treatment we received while we were stationed here during WWII, 1942-1946.”

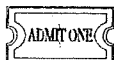
It has taken countless volunteer hours and many dollars to keep this garden in pristine condition. There were so many that helped, some of them have passed away, but their memory lives on in this beautiful place of peace and tranquility. Support from the Community and the Japanese Americans has always been there every time the Garden asks for help. For that, we heartily THANK YOU. To honor past volunteers and to keep alive the memories connected with the inception and construction of this unique Garden, we ask for your continued support.

## How can you help?

**Join the Garden Committee** – The Committee meets the 2nd Wed. of every month, March through November, 6:45 p.m. at the College. For further info contact Gail Wong (work 763-764-7813) or (home 952-944-1271). [gail.wong@gennmills.com](mailto:gail.wong@gennmills.com).

**Volunteer to help at the Suki-yaki Dinner, Sept 23** – This year marks the 23rd Suki-yaki Dinner sponsored by the Garden Committee. We need help for Sat and Sunday – Contact Shirley Huskins at [sehuskins@comcast.net](mailto:sehuskins@comcast.net) (651) 688-0456

**Buy a Ticket to the Dinner** - contact Pat Kirsch: (612)-866-5322; Toshi Nishida: (763)-588-1742; May Tanaka: (952)-934-9238



# Rice Paper NJG cont. and "Most Honorable Son"

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Perhaps you are like me, I volunteer in memory of my Dad. Through your support, we can keep this legacy alive.

Submitted by Gail Wong



*Picture of MIS Language School Veterans Dec 1970*

*Back Row L to R: Frank Yanari; Nobu Tanabe;  
Norman Steward; Mas Matsumoto; Kiyoshi Ishibashi;  
Tsutomu Kumagai (Steve)*

*Front Row L to R: Harry Umeda; Bunnie Aaze;  
Yvonne Bublitz; Charles Tatsuda; Jim Sugimura*



**Most Honorable Son.** After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Army recruiting offices filled with young Americans volunteering for war. Among them came many Nisei-Japanese-Americans whose parents were Japanese immigrants. Though they were American citizens, most Nisei were turned away. But in Nebraska, a 23-year-old Nisei with a passion for flying named Ben Kuroki demanded to serve his country.

The next four years of his life would be amazing: a B-24 aerial gunner flying against Axis forces on three battle fronts, an escape attempt from the Spanish army, moments of shame, fame and frustration when he saw his own American countrymen held behind barbed wire because their Japanese ancestry.

As a lone Nisei in the Army Air Corps, Kuroki flew over the oil fields of Ploesti, Rumania, where one thousand men were lost. Kuroki watched friends and colleagues fall from the sky in flames. At the end of his European tour, Kuroki had finished 30 missions. Most were lucky to survive 25.

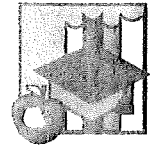
Ben Kuroki came home, the first Nisei war hero. Sent to California where airmen rested before reassignment, he feared walking the streets, even in uniform. Every Japanese-American had been removed from the West Coast. Kuroki joined activists fighting the discrimination and spoke at the Commonwealth Club, an influential group of government, academic and business leaders in northern California. The roomful of cynical business and government leaders stood and cheered, tears running down many faces. University of California-Berkeley Vice President Monroe Deutsch said Kuroki's speech marked the turning point for acceptance of the Nisei back to California after the war.

The Army sent Kuroki to the internment centers to recruit Nisei to fight for America in Europe. In a surreal tour of the camps, small cities behind barbed wire, Kuroki was hailed as a hero by some and despised by others who rejected the government that had stripped them of their civil rights. In an odd turn, Kuroki found himself at odds with many of the people for whom he had been fighting the war.

Most Honorable Son, a film by William Kubota, airs Tuesday, September 18 at 7pm on TPT Channel 17.

# Rice Paper JACL Scholarships

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**2008 High School Local Scholarships** Scholarship applications for 2008 high school graduates will be available in January 2008. Please contact Pam Ohno Dagoberg (763-557-2946, [dagob001@tc.umn.edu](mailto:dagob001@tc.umn.edu)) if you are interested in obtaining a scholarship application or would like to recommend someone for a scholarship.

Scholarship recipients must be current JACL members. Individual Student or Family membership status is required (Individual membership of a parent does not qualify the student to receive a scholarship). To obtain a membership application, please contact Joanne Kumagai at 763-420-6639.

Applications will be sent to the following students: Torey Asao (Deephaven), Mari Kai Bennett (Henry Sibley High School), Jesse Judkins (Dresser, WI), Simeon Gerard Kawakami (Trinity School @ River Ridge), Bailey Kimitch (Eden Prairie High School), Bryant Miyazaki (Buffalo High School), Travis Mizuhata (Glencoe Silver Lake High School), Alex Noonan (White Bear High School), Joe Prescott (St. Thomas Academy), Josh Savitt (Hopkins High School), Jeff Tanaka (Hopkins High School), Alison Tsuchiya (Minnetonka High School), Abbie Wesley (Eden Prairie High School)

In addition to completing the application form and submitting a transcript, students must write a short essay entitled "The Value of Further Education." Applications are evaluated based on scholastic achievement, extra curricular activities, community service and the essay.

Completed applications must be mailed by March 31, 2008.

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## National JACL Scholarship Awards Program

The National JACL annually awards college scholarships. Presently, National JACL administers: eleven (11) Freshman scholarships, eight (8) Undergraduate scholarships, eight (8) Graduate Scholarships, three (3) Law scholarships, two (2) Creative & Performing Arts scholarships, and one (1) Financial Aid scholarship. The scholarship awards range from \$5,000 to \$1,000.

The Undergraduate Scholarships are continuing education awards for students (other than Freshman) working on their undergraduate (bachelor's) degree. A student in any category may apply for the Financial Aid scholarship by submitting financial aid documentation from their college and noting their desire to be considered for this award.

It is a requirement of the National JACL Scholarship Program that the applicant be a Student or Individual member of the JACL. The membership of their parent will NOT fulfill this requirement. Applicants may submit their membership registration with their application.

It is requested that your Chapter inform your community of these valuable scholarship opportunities. It is an excellent opportunity to boost membership and stimulate interest in the JACL. The updated information brochure and applications for the National JACL Scholarship Program are posted on the JACL's website ([jacl.org](http://jacl.org)) each October. The documents are in Word and PDF formats for easy access.

Any questions may be directed to National JACL Scholarship Committee Chair David Kawamoto at (619) 557-5796, or [dhkawamoto@aol.com](mailto:dhkawamoto@aol.com).

# Rice Paper National JACL Youth Conference

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My definition of community is a place where one is accepted into a group of people and feels comfortable being herself. I've been a part of many communities, but at the JACL National Youth Conference I found a community, that for the first time, looked like me.

As a Minnesotan, I've always felt that I could identify more with the Caucasian population simply because that is who I'm surrounded by everyday. However, I've never really felt like I fit into that group, and, after going to Japan, I realized I didn't really fit there either.

As a result, I've buried my Japanese American identity in the back of my head and never really noticed or thought about it. When I arrived at the conference however, that changed.

Through meeting the other Japanese American kids, I realized that I wasn't the only one who never felt like they fit in. But all of these kids were like me. They ate rice with hamburgers, were the "token" Asians in some of their classes and many didn't speak a word of Japanese.

Each speaker at the conference made me feel so proud to be Japanese American. They talked about the difficulties faced by the community, but also the responsibility we have of carrying the Japanese American community into the future. The speakers celebrated my community, which had endured the pain of internment, and somehow can still find positives in the horrific and unjust experience.

For the first time, I felt like I had a cultural community. Not only did these attendees look like me, but they also experienced many of the same issues; pressure from others to be good at math or science just because we're Asian, or being asked "So, where are you from?" Most of us didn't fit in in Japan, and many of us, especially from the Midwest, didn't fit in at home in our own cities and schools.

That isn't to say that my school or city has been anything but welcoming to me. I've had a great experience in Minnesota. It's not that I've been ignoring my identity out of fear that I wouldn't be accepted. I ignored it because I saw no reason to celebrate it or bring it forward.

Now I have a reason to celebrate it. I couldn't be prouder of my family and my community's history and what we've accomplished over the last hundred years. I am ready to go into the world as a proud Yonsei. Instead of just accepting that I don't feel Japanese or like a "real" American, I know I have a place, a community to be a part of and I'm ready to take action.

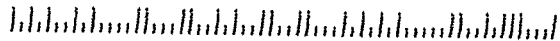
Submitted by Mara Fink

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**Heads up on Japanese food making class.**

Members have inquired about taking another  
 japanese food class, so I thought  
yes, this would be fun to do in  
the winter season. Plan Ahead...

look for more information on a Japanese food  
making class for the winter season, probably  
February. We are in the planning stages but the  
class might cover sushi making part 2, monju  
in the microwave, and what to do with mochi.  
We had a great time during the last class this  
one looks just as messy and fun.

Submitted by Rachel Matsumoto

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