

# The Bulletin

A publication of the Cleveland Japanese American Citizens League  
As a service to the Japanese American Community and interested individuals and organizations

February/March 2009

## Editorial

By Hazel Asamoto

As we start the New Year, 2009 we have seen troubling and difficult times for families as well as corporations and organizations. The Cleveland Chapter of JACL is no exception. Membership has been down and the responsibility for its survival has been placed on a few hard working and dedicated individuals.

Your monetary support is greatly appreciated but in order to continue to grow, there is a need for a helping hand. Talk to anyone and express your concerns because that is the only way the chapter can move forward. New ideas, goals, and the interest of the next generation must be implemented into the organization.

For many people JACL stands for different things but its mission statement is to secure and uphold the human and civil rights of Americans of Japanese ancestry and others, and to promote and preserve the cultural heritage and value of Japanese Americans. Their motto is "For Better Americans in a Greater America".

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## Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese Dancers

By Beverly Kerecman

The Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese Dancers have some exciting performances in the future.

On Saturday, January 31, the dancers will perform Japanese dances, teach folk dances and demonstrate the kimono at the Ohayocon convention in Columbus. The Kimono as Art exhibit will open at the Canton Art Museum. This will feature the work of Itchiku Kubota 1917-2003 who used painstaking techniques to create landscapes on oversized silk kimonos. The exhibit will feature about 40 kimonos. This exhibit tour will only be in San Diego and Canton before it returns to the museum in Japan. Please check the website, <http://www.kimonoexhibit.com>, for events. The Sho-Jo-Ji dancers are scheduled to perform on Sunday, February 8 at 3:00 PM and on Saturday, March 7 at 1:00 PM. They will also perform at the evening Gala Opening on Saturday, February 7. The Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese Dancers will give a workshop on Friday, February 6 at 5:30 PM in the city of Canton, see website [http://cantonfirstfriday.com/february\\_09.aspx](http://cantonfirstfriday.com/february_09.aspx), along with other related activities from Japan. The interest in the Japanese kimono is also evident in the schools in the area. When we can we have visited and shared part of the Japanese culture with students.

The Sho-Jo-Ji Japanese dancers were part of a teacher workshop this summer in preparation for the Kimono as Art exhibit. Unfortunately the group was not able to travel to the second workshop in January due to bad weather conditions.

Over Labor Day Weekend, the Sho-Jo-Ji Dancers performed at the Oktoberfest in Berea and the Taste of Cleveland.

*Continued on page 3*

**Donors – Total \$95.00**

*Editorial-continued from pg. 1*

Shirley Kondo  
David Shimotakahata  
Kenneth Yoshino

As always your generous contributions and interest in The Bulletin is much appreciated.

Can we count on your help during this trying time? Your input is greatly appreciated.

Please note the 2009 Bulletin Budget is in this issue.

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	<p>The Bulletin is always available on our website: <a href="http://www.ikwdpl.org/jacl">www.ikwdpl.org/jacl</a></p>
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**Vital Statistics:**

**Condolences:**

**Grace Harumi Akiya** (nee Obata) age 91, passed away January 25, 2009, preceded in death by her beloved husband, Edward and six of her brothers and sisters. Survived by son Michael S. Sr. (Paula) of Souderton, PA., daughters Kathleen J. Vaughn (Dennis ) and Janet J.; grandchildren Sandy L. Akiya-Croce (Mark) , Michael S. Jr. ( Ellie) , Dennis E. Vaughn, Emiko G. Vaughn,, Jessica L. and Katherine E.; and great-granddaughter Mia L. Croce. Memorial may be made to the United States Judo Federation, PO Box 338,, Ontario, Oregon 97914.

**Yoshio Toyota**, age 93, beloved husband of the late Ida M. (nee Andow); loving father of Linda Carol Toyota (Kenneth Olah), and Janice Toyota (Barry O'Brien); grandfather of Tomiko Olah, and Kirin O'Brien, brother of Teruko Kanai and the late Ichimi, Takeshi, Kameo, Tsuruo, Shichizo, and Toshi. Memorial contributions may be made to West Park United Church of Christ, Judson Foundation, or the National JACL (Cleveland Chapter), 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

**The Bulletin is supported by donations. There is no subscription rate. Articles in the Bulletin are solely the responsibility of the authors. Neither JACL nor the Bulletin is responsible for articles that are submitted by the writers. Comments, suggestions and donations are always welcome. Send comments and contributions to:**

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*(Contributions are tax deductible)*

**Or email:**

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**Bulletin Budget Report 2008 and Projected 2009**

*Sho-Jo-Ji Continued from pg. 1*

	<b>2008</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Donation	1685.00	<b>2500</b>	2100
Advertising		<b>100</b>	100
Holiday Greetings	1140.00	<b>1700</b>	1400
PC Greetings	70.00	<b>200</b>	100
Misc. Fund Raising			
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>2895.00</b>	<b>4500</b>	<b>3700</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>ACTUAL</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Printing	1765.10	<b>3000</b>	2500
Postage for Bulletin	392.25	<b>500</b>	500
Other postage		<b>175</b>	100
Permit Fee	175.00	<b>175</b>	175
Office Supplies	108.56	<b>250</b>	125
Computer Supplies	0	<b>200</b>	200
PC Holiday Greetings	70.00	<b>200</b>	100
Misc. Expenses			
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2510.91</b>	<b>4500</b>	<b>3700</b>
 Balance as of 12/31/08	 384.09		

The Sho-Jo-Ji Dancers performed at the JACL Holiday Fair in November. The dancers and backstage helpers were recognized for their service to preserve the culture of Japanese dance.

If you are interested in having our group perform Japanese dances, teach Japanese folk dances or show how to wear a kimono please contact us. We welcome anyone interested in helping us to continue to preserve the wearing of kimono or Japanese dance to join us. Please contact Nanci (216) 651-5643 [nancireese@yahoo.com](mailto:nancireese@yahoo.com) or Bev (440) 473-4145 [shojjibevharu@earthlink.net](mailto:shojjibevharu@earthlink.net).

**Mochistuki**

*By Roy Ebihara*

Making mochi the old fashion way has not become a lost art, not yet anyway. About twenty people assembled in Roy and Aiko Ebihara's garage to witness the pounding of a gooey mass of steamed rice into a doughy mass called "mochi".



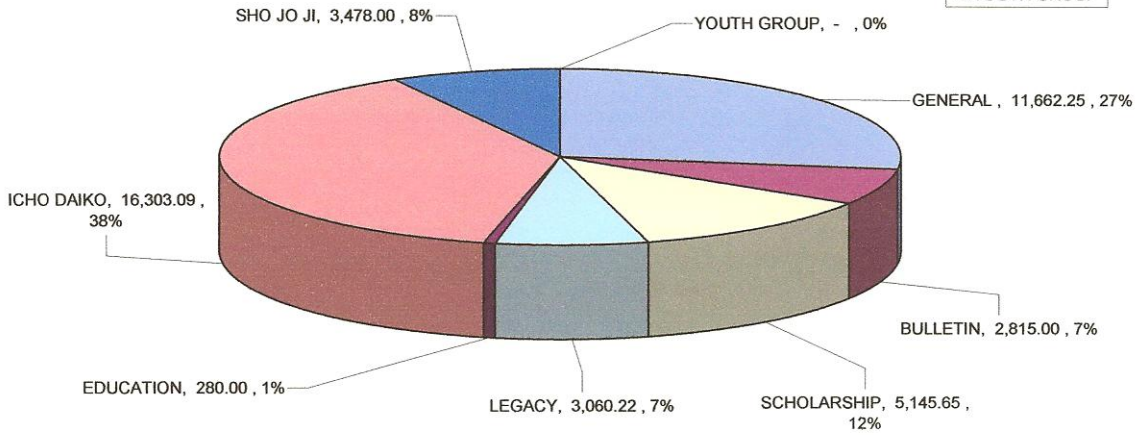
Traditionally done by men, the hand pounding was done with a wooden mallet (kine), moving the rice quickly between alternating strikes in a wooden mortar (usu). Once the pounded rice was determined to be sufficiently "doughy", the women proceeded to separate the dough into "balls" of mochi. Trying to replicate a lost art is no easy task, but the mochi was tasty and certainly authentic.

Our friends and neighbors enjoyed mochi in ozoni soups or ate it with sweet bean sauces, nori or kinako and afterwards enjoyed an array of traditional Japanese New Year fare. A good time was had by all, and no, the traditional New Year is not dead! Omedeto!

*(Pictured above are on the left, Ikuko Kurosawa who bravely dug her hands into the mortar while Joel Ito, right, pounds the mochi)*

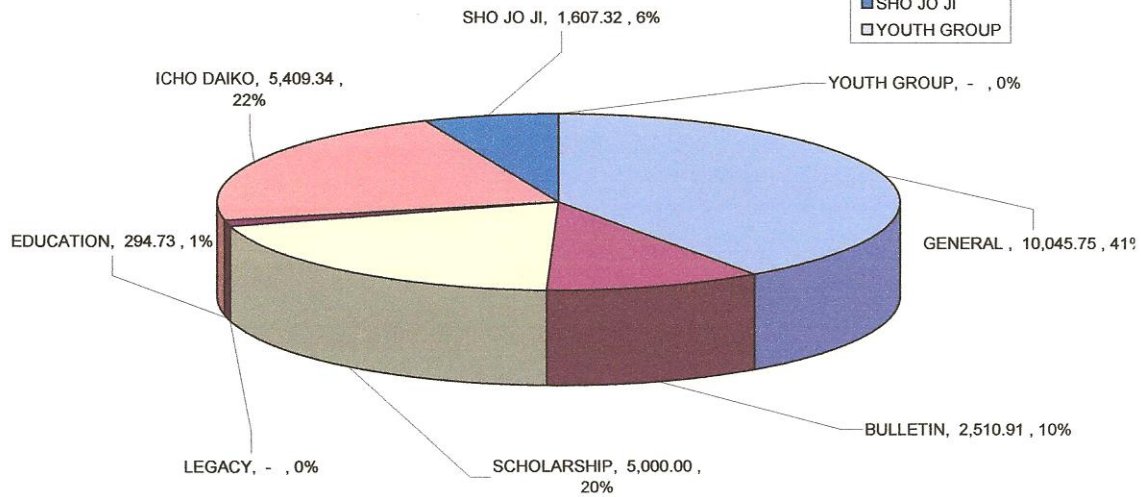
**JACL Cleveland Chapter  
Income By Funds  
January 1 - December 31, 2008**

- GENERAL
- BULLETIN
- SCHOLARSHIP
- LEGACY
- EDUCATION
- ICHO DAIKO
- SHO JO JI
- YOUTH GROUP



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## CARP News

*By Shig Igarashi*

The senior CARP organization had their annual Holiday Party on December 4, 2008 at Tizzano's Party Center, Euclid, Ohio. Some 59 people attended the exciting luncheon event. There were three special visiting guests, including local and out of town, Bob Nakaji, from Concord, CA, Hiroko Goda from Tacoma, WA, and Rev. Ms Yoko Ogui from Lakewood OH.

The luncheon was the first order of the day with a choice of three entrees, strip steak, prime rib and chicken Marsala. Also included were tossed green salads, side dish of buttered green beans and baked red potatoes and dessert was spumoni ice cream.

The program consisted of the following games. First game was Christmas Bingo, created by Tomi Andow and led by Betty Ochi. The three winners were Hazel Asamoto, Kay Negrelli, and Alice Nakao. The second game, Guess What? (Idiom game) created and led by Joe Negrelli. The first place winner was Marge Schettine, second place, winner, Jerry Omori and the third place as Masie Yamauchi, The third game was reverse raffle led by Betty Ochi assisted by Mar Reese on the board, Tomi Andow recording, Emiko Stidd and Sue Bacnik prize distributors. There were twelve intermediate prize winners and five sharing the grand prize. They were Marge Higaki, Yuki Nakaji, Marge Schettine, Bob Maki and Mary Nakaji. The fourth item on the program was group singing lead by our guest Ms Yoko Ogui, a very talented Japanese vocal singer. She passed out Japanese song sheets to everyone in the group to follow. She led them to about dozen songs and ended with group of ladies singing in front written in Japanese Son Sheets. It was an exciting event for all, to reminisce and appreciate the good old days.

The event also included a surprise 90<sup>th</sup> birthday for Fusako "Effie" Shijo with a choice of two types of cakes. Door prize gifts were won by Yuki Nakaji, Kim Maki,

Jim Konishi and Jim Furukawa. Betty Ochi passed out candy canes for everyone.

Instead of a gift exchange, the CARP group chose to donate food staples, collected at the party, to the Dennison United Church of Christ Food Pantry in Cleveland, Ohio.

The party ended with the giving of poinsettia plants for the shut-ins, purchased by President Harry Taketa and distributed by Sunshine chairperson, Mary Nakaji.

Special thank yous go of to the committee members, Shig Igarashi, chairman, Tomi Andow, Betty Ochi, Joe Negrelli, Mary Reese, Yuki Sakiguchi and John Ochi, Treasurer. The party planning was splendid, job well done!

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## "A Case of Disloyalty"

*By Roy Ebihara*

How many of us can remember if there were any cases of treasonable acts committed by Japanese Americans during WWII? Until recently, I could only remember the 1950 trial of Iva Toguri D'Aquino who was accused of being the infamous Tokyo Rose and ultimately convicted of conspiracy to commit treason. But, there was another case.

This past summer, while attending a conference in Denver, sponsored by the Japanese American National Museum, I sat in on Prof. Eric Muller's talk on the 1944 trial of the Shitara sisters. For many of us little was known or said about this case in which the three Shitara sisters were convicted of conspiracy to commit treason against the United States.

Prof. Muller, who did an extensive study of this legal case, related the story of the Shitara sisters who were young Niseis, who helped two German war prisoners to escape from their POW camp in eastern Colorado in

the fall of 1943. The Shitara sisters, Toots, Flo and Billie, were all married, temporarily separated from their husbands, and incarcerated in the Amache Relocation Camp in eastern Colorado.

In short, this is the story: The three sisters were furloughed to work and live on a nearby onion farm outside of Amache. Also nearby was the Trinidad POW camp which housed German military prisoners captured in the course of the war in North Africa. Some of these German POWs were allowed to work alongside the JA farm workers. Through time the Shitara sisters developed a friendship with two POW's, Heinrich Haider and Hermann Loesher. Friendship turned to romantic affairs, and the two POWs were now able to convince the sisters that they needed help to escape, not to return to Germany to fight again, but to find life somewhere in the Americas. On the night of October 17, 1943 the Shitara sisters somehow managed to get a car, supplied the prisoners with civilian clothes, some maps, and drove southward into New Mexico. In a matter of days Haider and Loescher were caught in northern New Mexico and returned to captivity.

The government, pressured by media to do something, and armed with meager circumstantial evidences and hearsay information, sought treasonable charges against the Shitara sisters. The case was brought to trial in Denver in early 1944. During the course of the trial and hearings, the federal prosecutors presented no compelling evidences to show that the sisters committed treasonable acts since it became clear by testimonies that in escaping, the two POWs had no intention to go back to Germany to fight again. In essence, the sisters' motive to aid the POWs was simply romantic. It can be considered a case of disloyalty and betrayal, but only to their husbands for their foolish misbehavior.

The Justice Department lawyers had "no testimony, no documentary proof, no admissions, not even a plausible theory" to back up their claims that the sisters were traitors and acted with the specific intent to "hinder American's cause and advance that of the

enemies". Yet because the three sisters were "born to Japanese parents and that they were adulterers", the twelve jurors found them guilty of betraying the U.S. beyond a reasonable doubt. Thereupon the presiding judge upheld the jurors' findings, sentenced Flo Otani, Toots Wallace, and Billie Tanigoshi to two years in the penitentiary on the conspiracy to commit treason charge, but not for treason per se.

Prof. Muller argues that this case, and the subsequent case against Iva Toguri in 1950, is that of presumed disloyalty, that which affected every citizens of Japanese ancestry after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It was their ethnicity, and as Gen. De Witt put it, the "undilated racial strains" of affinity to Japan, and thus the presumed disloyalty and racial prejudice that convicted the Shitara sisters.

As we face the danger of further terrorism in America, will America judge all Muslim Americans to be disloyal until proven otherwise? Let us hope not and that history will not repeat itself.

## Trekking to See Mr. Obama

By Timothy Ito

Washington, D.C., is one of those cities that can easily make you cynical. Traffic is horrible no matter what day or time of year it is. To play golf or go to a decent restaurant one often has to make reservations weeks in advance.

And of course, worst of all, we're the city whose business revolves around politics.

Politicians and each administration's top appointees are like our strange version of celebrity, only a lot less exciting. We see them everywhere around town. We hear about their flaws night after night on the "local" news, read about their across-the-aisle attacks on each other and, perhaps for that reason, they sadly never seem to rise to that larger-than-life ideal we have for our best and brightest.

I remember once being at a local Chinese restaurant in the 1990s and sitting at the table next to my wife and me were then-Secretary of Labor Robert Reich, his counterpart in Health and Human Services, Donna Shalala, two very bright and accomplished people. But I remember watching them, fumbling with their chopsticks thinking: "Somebody *please* get these two some forks!"

Given that we Washingtonians tend to be pretty jaded about our public officials, I found myself in a strange position this year – I was actually excited to go to an inauguration. Sure, I understood that it would be historic – the nation's first African-American president, overcoming a huge race barrier that had kept the presidency an exclusive, white-male club for more than 220 years. That fact alone, along with the celebrations surrounding it, would probably warrant a reason to go.

Yet, to me, it meant more than that.

I should note, in terms of disclosure, that I belong to neither party. I've been voting in elections since 1988 and in all that time, never felt moved enough to do anything to help any candidate of either party for our highest office. In the back of my mind, I always seemed to vote for the *least objectionable* of the two major party candidates. In some years, I didn't even vote for a major party candidate and never did I feel it was worth it to attend an inauguration.

This year, though, I have to admit that I felt this connection to the campaign of Barack Obama that I had never felt with any candidate before. Unlike so many others, Obama, to me, *got it*. He had sound-bites, of course, and great oratorical skills, but behind that, I also sensed someone who had given real *thought* to issues and problems of the day. Unlike most other politicians who may have talked about 'hope,' it was clear he had actually taken the time to think about what hope really meant to people -- how cynical and belligerent we had become as individuals, and as a society and a nation.

In a very real sense, I began to see myself in his description. After all, most of us tend to model ourselves on what we see as norms in our world. In D.C. especially, we value the wit and intelligence of the cynic who cuts through to see

people as they really are and expose them as such. Yet, the truth about cynics is that they rarely create anything useful, they mostly destroy. Sometimes that's necessary, but hearing Obama talk about hope made me wonder if I, in particular, believed in anything at all anymore, except perhaps disbelief.



So I did something I had never done before – I volunteered for the campaign, registering voters in a Vietnamese enclave of Falls Church, Virginia, which is actually a heavily Republican stronghold. That day, despite one woman trying to rip one of my Obama signs away from me, I registered one new voter -- and also gave money to the campaign. It wasn't much but I felt like I had made a positive contribution to something a little more "hopeful."

Like everyone else in the country, I followed the Election Night coverage closely. And what struck me – and I'm sure most everyone else who had been through a few elections -- was seeing the joy on people's faces when the West Coast results came in. In my life, I had never seen such emotion over a national election -- people crying, celebrating, and screaming. My wife Julie and I both turned to each other at that moment and said we *had* to go to the inauguration.

The weekend before the inaugural was quite a surreal time. D.C. was abuzz with a kind of energy I had never seen before. Hotels were booked everywhere, celebrities were in town filling up the restaurants and the clubs and residents were renting out their houses to strangers for \$2,000 a week. Julie and I took the kids for a test-run – well, a walk -- into the city the day before and passed Tom Hanks on the street in Georgetown as well as Vanity Fair writer Christopher Hitchens near the White House. We called friends that evening and made our plans to head into the city together the next day.

On Inauguration Day, like many others across the city, we woke up early, flipped on the morning news to hear the forecast and watch the news of all the masses of people that had already gathered. On any other day -- with any other new president -- the prospect of trekking two and a half miles in 22-degree cold with two young kids to go stand in front of giant Jumbotron, far away from the actual swearing-in would seem ludicrous. But for this guy – this once-in-a-lifetime politician who had somehow managed to capture the imagination of the nation -- it didn't seem so far-fetched.

Our friends came over later that morning and we bundled the kids up in as many layers as they could handle, along with blankets, food, and games to amuse them for the hours they would be waiting until his noon speech. To our surprise, the walk was quite uneventful (all major bridges from Virginia to D.C. had been closed to most vehicular traffic for the day) and, despite the steady stream of people we had passed on the way in, we were able to find a space in the exact spot we wanted. We were situated near the Washington Monument and the World War II memorial, where we could watch the speech on one of the giant screens.

It was crowded – and definitely cold -- but the shared sense of excitement, anticipation and the sense of camaraderie among the crowd seemed to make everyone forget how long they would be waiting until the ceremonies started. I put my oldest son on my shoulders and he began taking pictures of the crowd with our camera. People around us seemed to be from every walk of life – a mix of white, black, Latino, Asian, foreign and domestic – and everyone seemed to bend over backwards being polite and courteous to their neighbors.

After a couple of hours, with our toes and fingers slightly frostbitten, the moment finally arrived and we watched Obama get officially sworn in on the Jumbotron by Chief Justice Roberts. The crowd whooped it up, as expected, and some people around us cried. You could feel the reverberations from each point along the National Mall, as people shouted “O-Ba-Ma. O-Ba-Ma.” When the new president spoke, I had never heard 1.8 million people so quiet all at once.

Overall, I thought his acceptance speech was eloquent although somewhat somber, perhaps his personal acknowledgement of the country's hard times ahead.

And just like that, it was over. We packed up the kids and headed home. As we walked over the Memorial Bridge to Virginia, I began thinking that it would take more than one man to change the country for the better, but having a little hope probably wasn't a bad place to start. Even a cynical Washingtonian could see that.

*(Tim Ito is a resident of Arlington, VA and a director at an education association in Washington, DC)*

Recipe of the Month

**Spinach Salad**

1 bag (3 c.) baby spinach  
1 medium red onion, sliced  
2 hard boiled eggs, chopped  
½ c. bacon bits  
1 can bean sprouts, drained  
1 can water chestnuts, drained  
1 can mandarin oranges, drained

Dressing: (makes enough for several servings)

1 c. oil	2 t. salt
2 ½ c. sugar, more/less to taste	1/3 c. catsup
½ c. cider vinegar	

Add dressing just before serving salad

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**Send articles, comments and  
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**THE CLEVELAND JACL  
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