



Okinawan Genealogical Society of Hawaii
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<https://matcha-jp.com>

e-Newsletter
 2021
 March

Joy's Word of the Month

“ Chimu tiichi”
 (noun- unity of purpose)

Haitai,

In February, HUOA partnered with Sun Noodles and Central Pacific Bank to distribute over 500 boxes of noodles to HUOA club members. OGSN participated in the “Kariyushi Family Noodle Packs” Project and received 12 boxes of assorted noodles. Kay Ikei, Jan Kobashigawa, Jackie Toma, Mike Schoonover and I picked up the noodles at the HOC and delivered them to several long time club members. It was so nice to see OGSN members that I have not seen in over a year. Thank you to Sun Noodles and Central Pacific Bank. The rapid progress of our COVID vaccination program has made me increasingly hopeful that we can return to in-person meetings this Fall and have an in-person Bonnenkai in November. I am also hoping that we can have at least a partially in-person Okinawan Festival this September. In the meantime, stay safe everyone and stay in touch with your family and friends.

Ippei Nifee Deebiru,
 Joy



<https://www.khon2.com/coronavirus/noodles-given-to-kupna-in-need/>

Membership Meeting
 Saturday, March 20, 2021, 9AM***New Time***

Zoom Meeting



February Report

Treasurer's Report: Income-Dues and Donations;
 Expense-none
 Secretary's Report: Newsletter

March Agenda

Treasurer's Report
 Okinawan Festival
 Library Expansion Project
 Committee Reports

Upcoming Activity

2021
 April 17 OGSN Zoom Meeting
 May 15 OGSN Zoom Meeting
 Speaker-Charlene Gima
 “Okinawan Literature”

Jane Takaesu

I just learned the sad news of the passing of Jane Takaesu, charter member. The memorial service will be at Hosoi Mortuary on April 9th, 2021, at 4 pm. Viewing from 3 pm. Services will be open with applicable social distances.

Mahalo,
 Rodney





Intro to Karen Oshiro

RE: Oral History for Kibei/Nissei women

My request is to search for Kibei/Nisei women who are alert, able to tell their stories growing up in Hawaii and/or Okinawa. I am flexible if they are nisei who lived in Hawaii only, then ventured out to the mainland or other foreign countries.

I was always interested in the emigration to South American also if you have any contacts. This project will only be for a year, hopefully to be presented online.

As a retired instructor from Kapiolani Community College, Occupational Therapy Assistant program, I am starting a project that I feel is meaningful to all young adults discovering the history of those who had many obstacles and memorable moments throughout their lives growing up in Hawaii.

My son did a personal interview of my 102 year old mother twice at age 95 and again 100. This inspired me to reach out to others and discover the lives of their own family, friends, or referrals of this project.

This project includes the following:

- 1) Research someone via phone call, Pre-Interview, and clearance of family members if needed.
- 2) PreInterview can be short 30 min. to obtain, name, place of birth, etc.
- 3) Develop questions such as: schools, jobs, family life.
- 4) Micah also has suggestions online under the Oral History project. Ethnic Studies, COVID
- 5) Duties are interviewing with 40 min.Zoom or audio files over the smartphone.
- 6) Free Zoom and Otter.ia is available for 1-3 participants.
- 10)Optional: if you enjoy creative arts, creating a song, drawing, or adding visuals, this can be included. (If you're not sure, please free to call or email me. oshirokc@gmail.com , 808 753 2107

Benefit: Enrichment and understanding of elders who experienced growing up the last decade. 1930s till 2021.

Purpose: Gain insight and appreciation of living with and without technology, how did the participants survive with limited resources.

Pat Miyashiro
HUOA President



Haisai everybody. My name is Pat Miyashiro. I am your new HUOA President 2021. Listening to Karen Oshiro was an eye opener. I've heard many times of people trying to open a program like this and to have someone do it is very refreshing. I think this program is a starter because a lot of people have stories to tell but nobody wants to capture it. Just listening to what she says is an inspiration to all of us. It can help to perpetuate the values of the Okinawan culture. Most of the information is stored with our Issei, Nisei population. They have a lot of stories to tell. Once they are gone, it will be hard to find. What Karen is doing, I really admire for perusing them.

Rather than expressing my goals, I want to hear from you, what you guys think we should do. Basically, it's your values I want to portray for the upcoming year because this year, like last year we have this Covid pandemic. It is very difficult to plan out events because we don't know if we can actually do it

because of guidelines like social distancing. However, my president-elect is David Jones. He's put together a plan for a modified virtual festival this year. I have four vice-presidents. Eric Nitta, in charge of club development and sustainment. He has a volunteer list of young people who are very enthusiastic. They are planning the Irei no Hi coming up in June. They are planning the Uchinanchu no Hi in October. These young people have great ideas. Gwen Fujii will be helping them. These things are being planned, but yet, normally we have this at the Okinawan Center, but it will be virtual. For those of you who do not know what Irei no Hi is the Battle of Okinawa and how we should always remember that our ancestors in Okinawa had a really traumatic effect in that battle. We don't want that to happen again and keep the tradition alive with the Irei no Hi project. The Uchinanchu no Hi project in October is a day that was proclaimed by a couple of Peruvians at the Taikai that we should have an Uchinanchu Day to express Okinawan values worldwide. This has gone on for the last three years. But, we had to go virtual last year. Johnny Tamura and his staff came up with a virtual plan. I'm an older guy so with all this new technology, I had to learn. It's not difficult, but doable. I'm just saying that what you guys are doing on Zoom is great. You can have people from Hawaii, Okinawa, and all over the world participate. It's a good venue.

First of all, I would to congratulate OGSB on it's 29th Anniversary. OGSB was started in 1992 by Rodney Kohagura. Next year, OGSB will be celebrating its 30th Anniversary. You guys have done very well. I started off in 1982, I think, when Akira Sakima asked the four of us, John Tasato, Rodney Kohagura, Warren Miyashiro, and myself to go to a leadership seminar at UH and I think Roy Kaneshiro was president of HUOA at that time. He wanted the younger guys to step up. I was really impressed by the leadership meeting because it taught us the values of the Okinawan clubs. Before, I had no idea what an Okinawan club would do. You had **shinenkai**, picnics and the only thing I was sure of was funerals. When people pass away, it is a very traumatic experience to lose a love one. They needed a lot of help and this is what the clubs did. So, I learned that it was one of the values of the clubs. It's difficult for a younger guy to go to a stranger and ask if you needed help with the funeral. When we did that, the people were so appreciative of the fact that the club came and would offer help. Now days, people are more well off they don't need that kind of help. I've seen a different change in attitudes. Families can take care of the funerals themselves. But, if you can offer them help, they are appreciative. If we can keep those traditions, it will benefit all of us because it brings all of us together. Back in those days, we didn't have iphones, no fax machines. I remember we had to use a mimeograph to print, which was messy. Now, we just type it out and print it right away.



I went to a meeting and Karen Takara was there at Jikoen. We were planning for the festival. John Tasato was going to be president in 1987. We were going to be at Thomas Square, our 3rd or 4th festival. I was asked what club I belonged to and said Ginowan. You got a big club and were put in charge of construction. I said, "What! I don't know how to do construction." I was told not to worry and I answered, "OK". We just did it. But, then again, I know Masa Shiroma from Gaza Club. He knew carpenters. He was a carpenter foreman. I asked him to help and he did. He knew what to do and he did. He then took over the festival construction for the next 30 – 40 years. It all comes together. What I am trying to say is that things happen for a reason. Out of the 4 guys that Akira Sakima asked to help, John Tasato was president, Rodney Kohagura was president and now I am president. I think he did a good thing. I never thought I would be president of HUOA. It is a humbling experience. Our club had no officers, so I said OK, I'll be president. I was president for 4 years, which was too long. So, I asked somebody to

take over because I was getting burnt out. Anyway, being president of a club is totally different from being president of HUOA. I told myself, "I'll try and do the best I can with the knowledge I have". The support of OGSB has been awesome. At the festival you keep the community alive. People want to know their history and background. I see what you guys do and it is a super job.



What led me down the path to president is that in 2007, I was a member of the Executive Council and David Arakawa was president. I was asked to be on the Advisory Board of HUOA, which I did for 4 years as a club rep for 2 years and as club advisor for 2 years. At that time, we had gone into the HOP project, the Hawaii Okinawa Plaza project. Some people from our Ginowan Club told me they were not able to put their names on the wall when they built the Okinawan Center. This would be a good time for when the Plaza is built. So I thought we could build a wall. In 1988, I thought if 10,000 people give \$88, we could have the \$880,000 to buy the land. But, we were not bringing in the donations. But with the wall, we were able to pay off the land after 5 years. With Covid, there were no activities at the Center. So, with a carpenter and a contractor, we were able to complete the wall. It was a long process but we were able to complete it.

In 2000, we celebrated 50 years Chimugukuru Teachings and we had a book. I was researching this book. In that time, Jimmy Iha was the president of the club. His theme was 'Uchinanchu Spirits with Hearts Together'. My theme was 'All Hearts Unite as One'. Same principle. I was reading this thing that HUOA consists of 50 member clubs and OGSB is one of those clubs. One of the things is that HUOA consistently strives to ensure the memories of Okinawa and Hawaii's immigration is not forgotten and that Chimugukuru, Heart and Soul Okinawan Spirit will guide HUOA for the next 50 years. Chimugukuru comes from the heart. When I asked for my team for this year, I originally had planned 'Heartfelt Reap and Weep' because we are going to Taikai 2021 where you meet people with good hearts. When we canceled the Taikai, I was at a lost. What am I going to do now? I asked Mark Higa to translate the theme I had. He said to ask Grant Murata. He suggested a 5 word theme, which was a tongue twister and hard to say out loud and to remember what it means. I needed something simple. Next day he came up with 'Chimugukuru Ichi' which means 'all hearts unite as one', which was great. This is a constant theme with Okinawans where everyone pulls together. I've often time seen this happen when I was put in charge of construction. I seen this at the festival. It is so heartwarming when we all work together for one goal to promote Okinawan spirit and values. Okinawan values are so strong. It lingers and carries on.

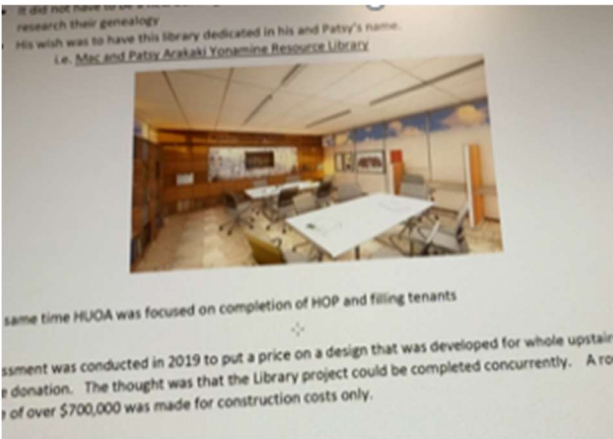
In preparation for today's presentation, I have a 1987 Pacific Press newspaper that talks about the first Festival at Thomas Square. I was the president of the club, so we had to help with this event. The generosity of the clubs were so awesome. Through the generosity of the isseis, they helped in the building of HOC. What I am thankful for is that the lives of the people are not forgotten. I'm often asked, "How can we remember what happened?" If you want to know about Okinawan history, you can go to Youtube and you can also Google it. Technology is there, so it can be at your fingertips. What is really nice is that I have a book that is the 50th Anniversary of the 50 member clubs. If you want to know what year your club started, it is in this book.



Mark Higa
OGSH Library Project

Our next speaker is Mark Higa. As you know he has been involved in the OGSH Library project that Mac Yonamine so generously made a donation a few years ago. So, OK Mark I am handing it over to you.

Haisai everybody. Thank you for having me. It is great to reconnect on this project. It's probably a year and a half to 2 years in the development in the upstairs in the Higa building. I asked some of my staff at my architectural firm to do a cost analysis. It was a real rough order of what was drawn. It wasn't drawn by me. Looking at the floor area of what might be needed and cost per square foot. The cost became pretty significant. So that was kind of left at that point in 2018/2019 for further thought and discussion on both the OGSH and HOP side on how to proceed forward. From there, I focused on some other things on Hawaii Okinawa Plaza and HUOA. But, I kept my eye on this. When Joy had reached out after the last meeting when she said we should do an update to find out what is going on. It re-sparked this effort. What I did was to touch base with a few people, Johnny Tamura, Rodney and others. I wanted to gather information.



Today, I want to show you where we've progressed from when Mac originally told me about it. Where we are now with the finances. What we need to look at in terms of looking forward. I've assembled some historical information. I wasn't around in the beginning of the project. It was something that Mac had been discussing with others. But as we know, our beloved Mac had a passion to share his knowledge on history, culture, and genealogy research. He was so generous with his knowledge, always sharing. We all loved and miss Mac. He was also very passionate about providing opportunities for people to learn and grow. As Joy also

mentioned, he was generous in sharing his knowledge and monetary donations to help. As we can see at the center now with an accessible lift. He provided significant funding for OGSH and HUOA facilities.

So, some background from my perspective. In 2017, Mac had shared with me these ideas. He was working with Maurice Yamasato. They developed drawings for a new library. There was a partial space above the chaya. There was an area above the chaya designated for a library, about 1/3 the size of the chaya. I'm not positive, but there is an outdoor walkway. It goes around from the front. That might be the way to enter the room. That is about the time Mac had approached me and he understood his initial donations wouldn't cover the cost and that he will be donating more. He explained that he contributed about \$100,000 for the library and that he will be donating over \$50,000 more.



At that time, I had chatted with Maurice and others. Construction was going pretty crazy in Kakaako and town. A rough order estimate for construction showed that this might cost between \$250,000 and \$300,000 more. I think there's ways to cut down cost but at that time building cost were expensive. So, we were trying to figure a way to get it done, for either for less or find another

alternative. In the architectural or construction world, if you have to cut down significantly, you usually cut out 'scope', which means you make the space smaller. In this case, it was only a room. You couldn't that much smaller. In discussing that, OGSB opened it up to accept other donations and donations from the clubs providing whatever contributions they could.

You know, Mac got ill. It was pretty quick in how sick he got and pass away. So, I spent a lot of time with him, just talking story. It was great to become a friend, a good friend. I asked him to share what was important for the space. He knew that was a struggle to come up with the funding. I was trying to find what he would find acceptable. So he said it didn't have to be a new building or structure but be a defined space where people could research their genealogy and not necessarily a mixed-use space. He wanted something dedicated to a library and genealogy research. He felt that, that was important. It could be a repurpose space that you could make into a dedicated space for these kind on interaction and research. Another thing that he wanted was that the library to be dedicated in his and Patsy's name. He talked about how he wanted it worded, 'The Mac and Patsy Arakaki Yonemine Resource Library'. I wished he could have seen this come to fruition, but he was actively looking at ways, until he pass away, at contributions to make sure it was done. In that time, he had the sketches that were developed before. But to others, they might not understand plans, elevations, and architectural drawings. I talked to some of our designers at my firm to develop a rendering that I could share with Mac. It might not be the final design. It might not be what Maurice envisioned, but I wanted Mac to visualize what this could be. I shared this with Mac and he was very happy. He provided some comments. Maurice saw it too. He had different ideas. I thought it would be nice if Mac saw something. At that time in 2018, HUOA was very focused on completing HOP and filling the tenants in there.

He was very passionate about providing opportunities for people to learn and grow. As Joy mentioned, he was very generous in his contributions, not only from his knowledge standpoint but also contributed monetary donations, as evidenced by the accessible lift at the center and also to OGSB and HUOA facilities.

Some background from my perspective, in 2017 Mac had shared with me these ideas and working with Maurice Yamasato, we developed some drawings for a new library. There is a partial space above the chaya, about 1/3 the size of the chaya, designated for a library. This is about the time Mac approached me and he understood that his initial donation did not cover the cost. At that time, conservatively speaking, rough cost was \$200 a square foot which is very small. It was \$700,000 for construction alone. That was kind of where it was left off.

I'll talk about the current status. Due to COVID, we haven't been able to see the improvement to the Higa Building. In 2019 and 2020, HUOA applied for grants and what this provides are grants for long term maintenance, capital improvements for life safety, and critical repair and maintenance. It doesn't provide for new construction. But anything that applies to long term maintenance of the building, we can apply for.

Johnny Tamura and Gwen led a charge to clean up the center and to look at what we have. From an architectural standpoint that is what you want to do. You want to access what we have and the space we have and is it being utilized for its best use. Then to look at its future goals and needs for the center. With additional space, there is added cost like utilities. That is factored in when crunching numbers. It also increases building value and property tax. Currently there is a balance of \$176,838 in the HOA general operating account. This is identified as a restricted account for Mac Yonamine OGSB Resource Center. This is a kind of history and current status.