

KOKORO KARA

# HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

*"from our heart"*

Spring 2016



## In This Issue

- The Fabric of Memory: Textile Arts Exhibit
- A Kuwahara Family Story
- 2015 Year in Review



# Forging Ties Nationwide: Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi

Happy New Year and thanks to all of you for the support over the past year! In 2016, we build on the long-standing support within Wyoming by continuing outreach nationally. Heart Mountain and all of the confinement sites need a strong presence throughout our country.

Last October, I presented with my aunt Emily who shared her Heart Mountain confinement experience at Penn State University and the local Quaker retirement community. Throughout many discussions with the attendees, we were reminded that during World War II, Milton S. Eisenhower enlisted Quaker leader Clarence E. Pickett to help move thousands of incarcerated out of the camps and into colleges and communities. Eisenhower later became the Penn State President from 1950 to 1956.

During her talk, Emily described how her brother Kiyoshi removed the head of her doll to stow sewing scissors to take into camp because their mother knew she needed them to mend clothes. Kiyoshi's studies at San Jose State University were abruptly halted when his family was forced to sell their farm at a loss in the area now known as Silicon Valley.

Another distinct memory that Emily recalled was when Kiyoshi's former college friend visited them at the Santa Anita racetrack where they were temporarily confined before they were put on a train to Wyoming. During that brief meeting, a military guard lowered his rifle to separate her and Kiyoshi from their Caucasian friend. While I was growing up, Emily and I never talked about her life at Heart Mountain. Being asked to tell our family story together served as a catalyst for remembering what happened to our family during the war.

Evolving out of a 2014 national conference with judges that we hosted at our Interpretive Center, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) Board Secretary Aura Matsumura Newlin led a judicial training session with the D.C. Court system in Washington D.C. Held last December, the training focused on the Japanese American incarceration and its relevance today. Judges were touched by the stories that Emily, Aura, and I shared through personal photographs and images. We discussed what exemplified "true Americanism" for them and they remarked that "standing up for something you believe in," "promoting equality and fairness," and "treating others with respect" were some examples.

As we continue our outreach and collaboration, we hope to develop strong ties beyond Wyoming. An opportunity to do so arose when the Embassy of Japan asked that I present alongside my friend, Dan Sakura of Friends of Minidoka, and former Topaz incarcerated Jean Kariya on the "Past, Present, and Future of the Confinement Sites." As a young girl, education became a coping tool and a cornerstone of Jean's incarceration experience. Her presence helped the young people in the audience imagine what it was like to go to school behind barbed wire.

The Embassy event also gave the HMWF an opportunity to showcase the important work of the "All Camps Consortium." As you recall, the HMWF received a Japanese American Confinement Sites grant to support efforts to lead this initiative. We also highlighted our collaboration with the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) to identify high school students who will tell the personal stories of each of the 10 confinement sites inscribed on the Memorial Wall that stands in Washington D.C. In addition, these students, with other participants, will have the opportunity to attend our Pilgrimage

this summer and learn how to create digital stories during a workshop led by Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono. (See story on page 4).

The participants will interview former incarcerated and use video, photographs, drawings, and narration to tell these personal stories. It is hoped that some of the students' stories will become the center of an interactive companion website and be housed on a mobile app for visitors to access at the D.C. Memorial.

Looking ahead, Board meetings are scheduled on March 18–19 in Salt Lake City and on May 12 in Washington D.C. to coincide with our next Confinement Site Consortium meeting. Please mark your calendars for Friday and Saturday, July 29–30, to celebrate our 2016 Pilgrimage. In addition to having Jeff and David conduct the digital storytelling workshop with our Executive Director, Brian Liesinger, playwright Luis Valdez will serve as keynote. His play, "Valley of the Heart," brings a rich and multicultural aspect to the incarceration story as it delves into the relationship between a Japanese and a Mexican family in Santa Clara Valley following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

One of the ways you can ensure our legacy continues for generations to come is by supporting the Memory and Justice Endowment, a permanent fund dedicated to sustaining our Center. All of you should have received an endowment letter featuring current Board members Takashi Hoshizaki, Sam Mihara, Shigeru Yabu, and LaDonna Zall. These individuals, who represent our financial and moral base, have dedicated their lives to ensuring that our world-class Center stands at the very site where their lives were affected. As time is of the essence to capture the collective memories of the *Nisei*, we must continue to memorialize the lessons learned from this shameful period in our nation's history.

Please consider giving to this permanent fund in 2016. And thank you again for preserving the legacy of Heart Mountain. We look forward to seeing many of you at our 2016 Pilgrimage!

*Shirley Ann Higuchi*



Shirley Ann Higuchi

## ON THE COVER

Naoko Yoshimura Ito's quilt, "Letting Go," to be displayed in our textile arts exhibit.

# What We Cannot Risk: Executive Director Brian Liesinger

This is a special issue of *Kokoro Kara*, with much packed on its pages, including recognition of our 2015 financial supporters, who I cannot thank enough. While I am fortunate to hold the position of directing the HMWF and the Interpretive Center, *you are the people who make it run*.

You will also find poetry in this issue. From Michel Kuwahara on page 6 and haikus below, crafted by visitors to our Interpretive Center. During a December Open House, we held a haiku contest and selected the following as winners:

By Rylee George, Cody, Wyo.,  
Age 7 (winner of youth category):

*Top of Heart Mountain  
Rylee lost her favorite hat  
And it flew way far*

By Marina Goffaux, Powell, Wyo.,  
Age 15 (winner in 13–17 category):

*Lightning Flash so bright  
Never striking one place twice  
Then the rain follows*

The winner in the adult category, Rod Gottula of Sheppard, Mont., continues to resonate with me:

*Timeless bigotry  
Man's eternal Enemy  
Yet we shall overcome*

In light of recent conversations on race, immigration reform, refugees, and Muslims in America, Mr. Gottula's poem struck a chord. On a daily basis, The staff here has the opportunity to shine a light on the grave mistake of unjustly incarcerating Japanese Americans during World War II and the racism that ruled the times. And on a daily basis, I assert that we cannot risk letting what happened to Japanese Americans happen again to any group. I make this assertion as political candidates across the country vie for leadership positions in which they all promise to "take America forward." Unfortunately, they all seem to have different perspectives on what that means. The worst of these perspectives have even pointed to the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans as a precedent to guide the future treatment

of refugees or immigrants or Muslims in America or all of the above.

America is a country still divided on the issues of immigration, refugees, and race. We are still haunted by our racism. During these times, I would like to see local, state,



Brian Liesinger

and national leadership unite us and remind us of our past prejudices. But when political positions and personal agendas are at stake, this has become less and less the case. That burden then falls on the nation's people. To work backward through the system and warn our leadership when they risk repeating past mistakes.

I'm not so naïve to believe our problems will be solved in short order—or that the HMWF has the power to heal all wounds caused by Japanese American incarceration, as well as tackle ongoing racism with widespread success. But I believe we can have an impact. With a dedicated board of directors, staff, and membership, we can educate with the hope of moving these conversations of conflict in a productive direction. Away from judgments and toward tolerance. Forward.

For our part, in this in this effort over the past few years we have:

- Hosted the annual meeting of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts.
- Hosted a naturalization ceremony for Big Horn Basin residents making the important step to citizenship.
- Had board members conduct diversity training for lawyers and the U.S. Navy.
- Hosted a conference for the Wyoming Psychological Association to explore multicultural diversity.
- Participated in an annual Crow tribal heritage ceremony held on Heart Mountain.
- And, in March, I will sit on a Wyoming Humanities Council panel discussion held at our Center and broadcast live on Wyoming Public TV to discuss refugee issues in Wyoming.

It is young people who have snapped the importance of these issues into focus for me recently. This winter, I have been leading school groups into the Heart

Mountain barrack we returned to our site last year. During the visit, I take them to a corner of the barrack featuring a special "artifact." One of the builders of the barrack in 1942 scrawled "A slap for the J-A-P-S" on its boards.

This racial slur was commonplace in pre- and post-WWII America. It is a powerful illustration of the racism of the times. It also provides an opportunity to talk about prejudice today. We are not yet cured of it. But my deep hope is that by addressing it, at least in the context of our work, future generations won't perpetuate it. They will have a conversation about it, rather than turning a blind eye. They will take up the challenge of moving us forward—to a nation of greater tolerance, equality, and compassion.

## HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

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# The Fabric of Memory: A Textile Art Exhibit

By Darlene Bos

On the surface, Jeanne Knudsen and Naoko Yoshimura Ito may not seem to have much in common. Knudsen was born and raised in Wyoming. Ito is from San Francisco, where her father owned the Hokubei Hotel in Japantown. At the age of 15, she and her family were forcibly removed from their home and sent to the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center.” It was here, behind barbed wire, that she spent her teenage years, eventually graduating from Heart Mountain High School.

What Knudsen and Ito have in common is their artistic work in a unique medium—textiles. And they both have been moved to represent Heart Mountain in their work.

Knudsen, along with fellow artist Kathy Lichtendahl, formed the Textile Artists of the Greater Yellowstone (TAGY) five years ago. Inspired by well-known and talented members of a fiber arts group in Billings, Mont., Knudsen and Lichtendahl sought out local artists to form their group. Now over 15 members strong, TAGY creates works that have been exhibited locally as well as internationally.

Each year TAGY conducts a challenge project. This year the group chose to visit the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center for their inspiration. “Here in Wyoming we have a lot of opportunity to say things with our art,” Knudsen noted. Heart Mountain proved that sentiment true. The group enthusiastically took on the challenge of creating textile arts inspired by the Japanese American incarceration experience at Heart Mountain during World War II. Members of TAGY created pieces for a new exhibit, titled *The Fabric of Memory*, that is unlike any other displayed at the Interpretive Center before.

One piece created by Jan Wilbur of Cody, features barbed wire, suitcases, and luggage tags with the names and numbers of actual Heart Mountain internees.

“Each time I visited the Heart Mountain

Interpretive Center, the piles of luggage in various locations in the museum have remained in my thoughts,” Wilbur said. “Only what you can carry’ echoes in my mind as I consider the limited time the internees had to make important decisions with very

little information about the future.”

In addition to pieces created by TAGY members, the exhibit will feature a “story quilt” by Ito. She created the quilt titled “Letting Go” in 1990. It depicts an image

of Ito and her brother freeing the pet bird they had at Heart Mountain. It also speaks of a childhood severed by injustice and loss. Ito donated the quilt to the HMWF at the 2015 Pilgrimage. The quilt was previously featured by the Southern Poverty Law Center for one of their national outreach campaigns.

This special exhibit not only showcases local artists and their reflections on Heart Mountain, but it also brings together those artists with an artist formerly incarcerated at Heart Mountain.

*The Fabric of Memory* will run from March 2 to May 20 in the gallery at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. Entrance to the exhibit is included with admission to the museum.

A free Artists’ Reception open to the public will be held on April 7 at 6 p.m. Ito and her daughter, Pat, will be in attendance along with Wilbur, Knudsen, and several of the featured TAGY artists.

***“‘Only what you can carry’ echoes in my mind as I consider the limited time the internees had to make important decisions with very little information about the future.”***



Photos by Claire Cella

Top of page: barbed wire used in a quilt crafted by Jan Wilbur for the exhibit.

Above: Also an image from Wilbur’s quilt, which she said was inspired by the phrase, “Only What You Can Carry.”



# DIGITAL STORYTELLING TO BUILD CONNECTION BETWEEN CAMPS

—By Helen Yoshida—

Washington D.C. has many memorials but the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism in World War II is the only one that commemorates the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans and their families. It contains panels representing 10 World War II confinement camps in the remote places of Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming.

To strengthen the connection between this Memorial and the places of incarceration, the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) is partnering with the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) on a digital storytelling project that will shine light on the Memorial through powerful personal narratives about each of the confinement camps.

The digital storytelling workshop will be part of the 2016 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage in Wyoming from July 29–30.

Digital storytelling is a process of story creation that involves crafting a narrative with still and moving images to create a compelling digital video. The workshop will be led by multi-E Emmy Award-winning filmmakers Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono, as well as Heart Mountain Executive Director Brian Liesinger.

From research, reflection, writing and producing, the project will provide a profound educational opportunity for all participants, regardless of age or technological ability. At the conclusion of the workshop, some stories will be aired during the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage banquet dinner on Friday, July 29.

NJAMF's role involves recruiting and funding high school students to participate. They will provide financial support covering travel and expenses to attend the two-day workshop at Heart Mountain. These students, under the direction of their history teachers, will research one of the 10 confinement sites and create a digital story conveying unique and moving aspects from their research.

Follow-up work will also be conducted



An image from "Rock Collecting," a digital story created by Hana Maruyama. Maruyama created the story in a pilot digital storytelling project at Heart Mountain led by Executive Director Brian Liesinger. The video debuted at the 2015 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage and can be viewed online at <https://goo.gl/hD2eMx>.

by the filmmakers, which includes post-production of the digital stories. Once the stories are finished, they will become the center of a companion website. In concert with the interactive website, a mobile app will be developed for use by visitors to the D.C. Memorial.

Cal Shintani, Chair of NJAMF, said the Memorial "symbolizes sacrifices made by thousands of Japanese Americans and their families and attracts visitors from around the world. By creating these digital stories to accompany the Memorial, we hope to give them and online viewers a greater understanding of this dark chapter in our nation's history." NJAMF has identified the review committee, which includes Shintani, NJAMF administrator Beth Kelly, and HMWF Board Chair and NJAMF Board Member Shirley Ann Higuchi.

The project aims to tie the separate confinement sites together and to the nation's capital, as well as deepen the connection between the confinement sites and Los Angeles through MacIntyre and Ono. MacIntyre, owner of Content Media Group, and Ono, ABC7 Eyewitness News reporter, are well-connected within

the Los Angeles-area Japanese American community and are deeply invested in engaging people through storytelling. They bring a wealth of energy and experience in creating profound narratives through digital media.

"This is an opportunity for a younger generation to learn more about this story, which continues to be relevant today," said Higuchi. "The high school students will personally interview the *Nisei*, which will allow us to create an online space for these stories so that future generations of Americans can discover and share them."

The NJAMF application is open to high school students across the nation who have an interest in the Japanese American incarceration experience or civil rights. For more information on how to apply for this experience, contact Beth Kelley at [NJAMFstudentproject@gmail.com](mailto:NJAMFstudentproject@gmail.com).

The HMWF will have a separate registration process for all others who wish to participate. These slots are not restricted by age but will be limited. More information on the registration process will be released on the website at [www.heartmountain.org](http://www.heartmountain.org).



# A BROTHERS' RECOLLECTION:

By Darlene Bos

Michel Kuwahara remembers being a happy boy at Heart Mountain. He was surrounded by family, all living closely together in one room of a barrack in Block 24. Because he was only 18 months old, he knew nothing of life outside the barbed wire; he had no understanding of what his family had lost.

"After camp, I frequently talked about Heart Mountain with my parents and brother, but they never even hinted that they might have negative feelings about the experience," Michel said.

Life before Heart Mountain had been good for the Kuwaharas. Michel's father Shin Rokuro Kuwahara, whose name was changed by government authorities to Robert, was an animator who had worked with the emerging Walt Disney Company on its first ever full-length animated feature *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, as well as Academy Award-nominated shorts.

At the time of evacuation, he had been working for MGM Studios and was an up-and-coming director and animator.

Michel's mother, Julia, was an accomplished musician as well as an artist and graphic designer working for the *Rafu Shimpō* newspaper. Julia's sister, Louise Suski, was that paper's first English language editor-in-chief.

Finding themselves unjustly incarcerated at Heart Mountain did not stop this talented family from continuing their work. Louise wrote for the *Heart Mountain Sentinel*, and Julia and Michel worked in front of the camera, appearing in propaganda films used by the WRA to provide a rosy picture of life in camp.

Julia and Louise's father, Peter M. Suski, had also been an artist—a photographer specializing in retouching. But he turned to medicine as a way to support his growing family in Los Angeles. Dr. Suski continued

to practice at Heart Mountain, delivering 240 babies during his time there.

Robert joined fellow artists such as Hideo Date, Benji Okubo, and Riyo Sato, holding art classes and exhibitions at Heart Mountain.

Following incarceration, the family moved to Larchmont, New York, where Michel and Denis found themselves readily accepted in the mostly white suburban neighborhood. Robert, who used the name "Bob" professionally, returned to work as a cartoonist. He established a syndicated comic strip whose title character Miki was based on Michel. Within three years, the cartoon was in 23 daily newspapers, and in 1951, it was awarded the "Freedoms Foundation Award."

In 1950, Bob returned to animation, joining Terrytoons, a studio known for *Mighty Mouse*. He may be best known for creating the character *Hashimoto-san*, a

## SAVE THE DATE

For our Annual Pilgrimage in  
Cody & Powell, Wyoming on

**July 29–30, 2016**

Register online at [www.heartmountain.org](http://www.heartmountain.org)  
or by phone at 307.754.8000

## PILGRIMAGE 2016



# REVISITING HEART MOUNTAIN

Japanese mouse. Hashimoto was a judo instructor and family man, living in Japan with his wife Hanako, son Saburo, and daughter Yuriko. In addition to appearing in comics with the likes of Deputy Dawg and Heckle and Jeckle, Hashimoto was also featured in a series of cartoons, all directed by Bob Kuwahara. Hashimoto is considered the first positively portrayed Asian animated character.

The Kuwaharas' extraordinary family legacy is punctuated by three years of unjust incarceration at Heart Mountain. It was Denis who first became interested and involved in the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, attending meetings before the Interpretive Center was even built. He and his wife, Helen, attended the Grand Opening in 2011. For the 2013 Pilgrimage, he took his children and grandchildren to Heart Mountain to talk to them about life there. A video recording of that talk was made and when Michel saw it later, he was moved to make his first Pilgrimage in 2014, along with Denis.

Michel and Denis took a moment during that trip to pose with a life-sized photo cutout of their grandparents, Dr. Peter and Koharu Suski, dressed in their

finest attire prior to the war. It was during the 2014 Pilgrimage that Michel decided he would return the following year and climb Heart Mountain—which he was able to do successfully in 2015. That year, he was also able to see the historic barrack his family generously helped support in its move back to the Heart Mountain site.

A few weeks later, Michel took the pictures of his hike up Heart Mountain and the barrack to his brother's hospital bed. Even though Denis was no longer able to speak, he expressed himself with movement and the emotions on his face.

"He had never said it in words, but here was a demonstration of how deeply he held his memories of those three years in camp," Michel said.

Denis, an aerospace engineer who contributed significantly to projects that revolutionized today's technology, died September 27, 2015. He will be deeply missed by family and the Heart Mountain community. Michel, now retired from a successful career in music management and graphic design, has flourished as a writer and poet. Printed to the right is a poem Michel wrote after his first return to Heart Mountain for the 2014 Pilgrimage.



Photo courtesy of Michel Kuwahara

Denis (Left) and Michel Kuwahara (Right) stand beside an image of their grandparents, displayed in the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, during the 2014 Pilgrimage.

**Returning to Heart Mountain  
Took a courage now  
That I am older and more  
Susceptible to  
The kinds of hurt that the young  
Shrug off like rain drops**

**Could these green fields & meadows  
Be the arid plains  
That blew up gritty dust storms  
And when it rained  
Pooled up lakes of sticky mud  
Sucking at your feet  
My brother's recollection  
Horizontal snow  
My father remembered his  
Hair frozen solid  
My mother refused to have  
Memories at all**

**Returning to the Camp site  
Took me beyond all  
My family's hurt & pain  
I felt a kinship  
With perfect strangers who had  
Been inmates with me  
What kind of feeling is it  
When there is a bond  
With those you have never met  
But whose feet once stepped  
Into the stream of that life  
That only a few  
Of us had ever shared and  
Always remember**

**Ambiguous feelings wake  
These mixed emotions  
Returning to the place of  
Incarceration  
Why should it feel so like  
Finally returning home**

© Michel Kuwahara



# Digging Up History

By Darlene Bos



Photos by Brian Liesinger

Have you ever wondered what is beneath the surface of Heart Mountain? Or what tales are to be told by objects that lie buried in the ground, waiting to be uncovered? The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) is partnering with the Park County Historic Preservation Commission (PCHPC) to find out.

A series of preservation and archeology activities will be completed on the Heart Mountain root cellar and the grounds surrounding it, with participation from the community. PCHPC Chairman Larry Todd and PCHPC Board Member Dr. Greg Smith of Northwest College will be helping to lead the project with HMWF staff. Both Todd and Smith also led an archeological survey at Heart Mountain in 2015 prior to the moving of an original Heart Mountain barrack back onto the property.

The project is made possible by a grant submitted by the PCHPC on behalf of the HMWF to the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office. Todd drafted the grant with Heart Mountain Executive Director and new PCHPC Board Member Brian Liesinger. The funding provided includes materials to preserve the Heart Mountain barrack in addition to public education related to the archeology effort.

The project kicks off in June with a week of events to engage the public. The activities will focus on the three-acre root

cellar property, on which one root cellar remains intact and another has collapsed.

Volunteers, led by PCHPC archeologists, will engage in hands-on fieldwork including surveying, inventory and monitoring, and subsurface testing. The program will identify the types and locations of historic artifacts found in the root cellar area, providing important clues to the agricultural use of the area by the War Relocation Authority (WRA) and the Heart Mountain incarcerated. In addition, the program will provide opportunities for volunteers to participate in important historic preservation work.

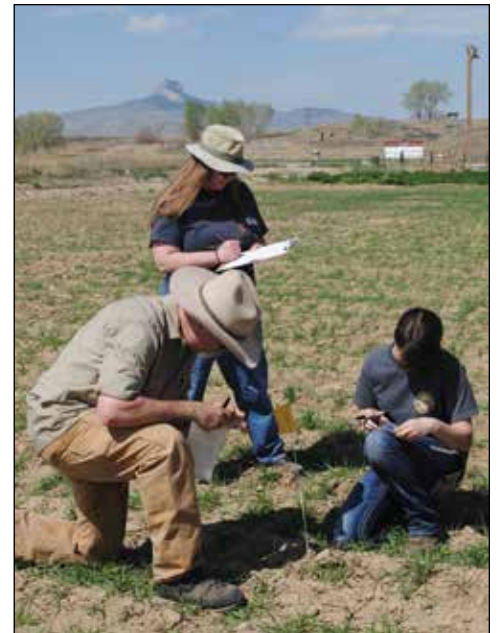
"It's a great opportunity for the community to contribute to the preservation of a unique historic site," said Liesinger. "And it's important work to conduct as we plan for stabilization work on the cellar."

In addition to the summer fieldwork, there will be special programming during September, to coincide with "Wyoming Archaeology Month." The keynote event will be a presentation by Dr. Bonnie Clark of the University of Denver. She will visit Heart Mountain to report on work she and her students have been doing at the Amache Camp in Colorado.

This year, Dr. Clark leads her fifth Amache Research Project field study on the site of "Granada War Relocation Center"

(better-known as Amache) in southeast Colorado. She also works closely with the Amache Preservation Society ([www.amache.org](http://www.amache.org)) to maintain and preserve the Amache site.

More information about the volunteer program and a schedule of events, including the Dr. Clark lecture, will be forthcoming.



Top: An inside view of the root cellar  
Above: Volunteers crouch over an artifact discovered during an archeological survey conducted in 2015, while HMWF Archivist Nicole Blechynden catalogs the find.



# HMWF Elects Three New Board Members

By Helen Yoshida



Damany Fisher



Marc Sugiyama



Jack Ybarra

*The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation recently elected three new members to its board of directors. Assuming their board positions in 2016 are Damany Fisher, Jack Ybarra, and Marc Sugiyama. We offer them a warm welcome to the HMWF and thank them for committing their service to our mission.*

## DAMANY FISHER

A native of Sacramento, Calif., Fisher is a scholar and teacher within both secondary and post-secondary education. After receiving his doctorate in history from the University of California at Berkeley in 2008, he taught for four years at Mt. San Antonio College, a community college in Walnut, Calif. While there, Fisher developed a relationship with Bacon Sakatani, a Mt. San Antonio College graduate and former Heart Mountain incarcerree.

"I met Bacon and asked if he would speak to my students about his experience," said Fisher. "Bacon spoke to my U.S. history classes, and he shared his stories and resources about his experience. From there, we developed a good friendship."

After meeting Sakatani, Fisher developed a deep interest in learning more about the Japanese American experience during World War II and discovering innovative ways to engage students on that topic. In 2013, Fisher began teaching at Phillips Academy Andover, in Andover, Mass., one of the oldest and most prestigious boarding schools in the nation. In addition to teaching, Fisher has a wealth of knowledge and experience in designing curriculum, particularly around issues of race and social justice.

## MARC SUGIYAMA

Marc Sugiyama is a Senior Software Architect at Erlang Solutions, Inc., where he works with customers to design, develop, review, and troubleshoot software systems written in Erlang. A native of

California's Bay Area, he is the son of former Heart Mountain and Topaz incarcerees. His uncle, Takashi Hoshizaki, also sits on the HMWF Board. Growing up, he heard many stories about the incarceration but did not get the opportunity to visit until he attended the 2011 Grand Opening of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. For Sugiyama, the experience was educational, eye-opening, and provided an opportunity for his parents and relatives to discuss their experiences in more depth.

"I knew little about the experience, and the Interpretive Center did an excellent job of describing it," Sugiyama said. "When my uncle asked me about joining the board, I saw it as an opportunity to continue the mission of the Foundation."

Prior to joining the HMWF Board of Directors, Sugiyama served on the Board of Trustees of his alma mater, The College Preparatory School in Oakland, Calif. During his time there, he served on several committees related to strategic planning, governance, diversity, compensation, and more. He continues to serve on The College Preparatory School Advisory Council. He holds a Bachelor's of Science in Engineering and Master's of Engineering from Harvey Mudd College, part of The Claremont Colleges in California.

## JACK YBARRA

Jack Ybarra is the Founder/President of Transmetrics, Inc., a civil engineering firm based in Campbell, Calif., that serves public entities by designing various rail service facilities.

Born in Newman, Calif., Ybarra worked

with Cesar Chavez and the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) in the 1960s. Later, he became the leader of the Confederacion de La Raza Unida, a coalition of 64 Mexican American civil rights organizations in San Jose, Calif.

During the early 1970s Ybarra worked with then-Mayor Norman Mineta to convert the San Jose Municipal Airport to an International Airport by adding AeroMexico service to San Jose. He also served as a Santa Clara County Transportation Commissioner and as its Chairman for two years.

Ybarra's involvement with the history of the incarceration of Japanese Americans began when he married Grace M. Kubota, a San Jose attorney and former Heart Mountain incarcerree. Kubota's parents were both active supporters of the Fair Play Committee and the resistance movement. Her father, Guntaro, served time in Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary along with other Fair Play Committee members.

"Guntaro went from barrack to barrack talking with *Issei* about what *Nisei* were trying to do and gain support for the Fair Play Committee to pay for expenses such as paper and leaflets," said Ybarra.

According to Ybarra, Kubota's mother, Gloria, was the only family member willing to talk about incarceration. He and his wife had the opportunity to take Gloria to Heart Mountain twice, including attending the Grand Opening of the Interpretive Center.

Grace and Jack are regular attendees at the Heart Mountain Pilgrimage and have traveled independently to several other confinement sites.

# Heart Mountain Welcomes New Staff Members

On the cusp of the new year, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation added two key staff members: Darlene Bos as marketing and development manager and Claire Cella as programming and communications coordinator. In these newly-created positions, Bos will spearhead program and fundraising development and outreach for the museum, while Cella will take the lead on planning the museum's exhibits, producing engaging content for print and the web, and coordinating visitor services.

Bos has lived and worked all over the Rocky Mountain West including Montana, Utah, Arizona, and in Yellowstone National Park. Her passion for the people and places of the west is matched only by her desire to share the rich stories that make them relevant today and in the future.

"I've spent my life learning about, exploring, and teaching culture and history," said Bos. "The Interpretive Center at Heart Mountain is rich and varied in what it provides to the public, with a message that is as poignant today as it was 70 years ago. It is a dream come true for me to work at this amazing site."

Bos earned a Master's degree in Anthropology from Western Michigan University before

embarking on a career that included work as a college professor, the director of a children's museum, a fundraising consultant, and National Park Service interpretive staff. She continues to teach anthropology remotely for Great Falls College.

Cella earned a Master's degree in Information Science from The University of Texas at Austin. She devoted the past three years to working with organizations and institutions that serve Asian American communities through historical preservation and community engagement, including the Asian American Resource

Center in Austin, the Southeast Asian Archive in Irvine, Calif., and the Chinese Culture Center in San Francisco, Calif. She also spent a year and a half teaching English in Thailand as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant.

"I feel so fortunate for the opportunity to contribute to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, and my position here is the ideal alliance between my personal passions, my professional expertise and the needs and goals of the Center," said Cella. "I am eager to apply what I have learned and dive into the thrilling work that leverages this social justice mission and continues to make the HMWF an impactful institution."



Claire Cella (Left) and Darlene Bos (Right) stand with Executive Director Brian Liesinger.

## *A farewell and thanks to Bethany Sandvik*

What started as a part-time, seasonal job in 2012 for Bethany Sandvik soon became an enriching vocation at the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF). Since then she has served the organization with unwavering dedication. It is her commitment and hard work that will be sorely missed, as she has chosen to leave the HMWF in pursuit of her passion for the theatre arts.

"This decision has been extremely difficult to make, but I have been presented the opportunity to apply my talents to the Cody Center for the Performing Arts, where I will become part owner of the business," Sandvik said. "This is an opportunity that I simply cannot pass up, as it aligns with my lifetime goal of starting my own theatre company."

Sandvik was hired nearly four years ago as a receptionist. However, then-Executive Director Stevan Leger, recognizing her experience in non-profits, promoted her

to Executive Assistant almost immediately. Not long after, she rose to the role of Operations Manager.

Sandvik's hard work and commitment were vital to the success of the Interpretive Center during its first crucial years of operation. She has been a driving force for grant writing and reporting, fundraising, creating education curriculum, exhibit development, member relations, and the annual Pilgrimage.

Much of the funding she has helped bring in has been directly applied to education efforts, including an effort to enable school groups to visit the Interpretive Center at little to no cost.

"It was truly a joy to see Bethany's passion for performance and Heart Mountain history come together when she served school groups," said Executive Director Brian Liesinger. "She had a knack for engaging children—a skill that I know will translate well to her new vocation."

Along with Sandvik's dedication has also been the constant support and volunteer efforts from her family: her husband, Jeff, her son, Jake, and her daughter, Beatrice.

"It is impossible to replace someone who has been so instrumental to Heart Mountain's success," Liesinger said. "However, we've got a great team in place with new people that will continue on, as Bethany did, to advance the HMWF locally and nationally."

In her new role as co-owner of the Cody Center for the Performing Arts, Sandvik will teach acting and dance, lead marketing efforts, and present theatre programming.

"It has been extremely rewarding to work for the HMWF," she said. "I have so appreciated the trust that the board and staff have put in me. I will miss all of them, as well as the many visitors, local community members and former incarcerated individuals I had the opportunity to serve."



# 2015

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

The Heart Mountain Interpretive Center was buzzing with activity throughout 2015, with 14,202 people paying a visit. And thousands more came to the National Historic Landmark site to visit the Honor Roll Memorial and tour the grounds.

2015 also saw the addition of two historic buildings. An original barrack—the only one that remains on site—was donated and moved from Shell, Wyo., back to its home at Heart Mountain. Located a few hundred yards from the Center, the barrack now stands as an important artifact of life at Heart Mountain. An original root cellar and the land it sits upon were also donated to the HMWF by the Rudy and Dawn Jolovich. The 312 by 34 foot structure played an important role in agricultural development and innovation at Heart Mountain.

In addition to the structures and award-winning permanent displays in the museum, visitors saw diverse and poignant temporary exhibits in the Ford Foundation Gallery. This past spring the artwork of Hatsuko Mary Higuchi was featured in the exhibit *GAMAN: Surviving the Nikkei Gulag and Diaspora in World War II*, and included paintings and prints depicting scenes from the 10 confinement camps. That exhibit was followed by *Colors of Confinement*, which featured Kodochrome photos by Bill Manbo. The display, curated by HMWF Advisory Council member and leading Heart Mountain scholar Eric Muller, was a stunning and rare look at camp life in vivid color. Wrapping up a year of exploration, we hosted a traveling exhibit from the Smithsonian, *I Want the Wide American*

*Earth: An Asian Pacific American Story*. This exhibit celebrated Asian Pacific American history and explored how Asian Pacific Americans have shaped and been shaped by the course of the nation's history.

Special programming was extended to a variety of groups throughout the year. A total of 2,342 visitors came with groups, including 1,384 students who attended as part of school trips. School groups came from Montana, Utah, Colorado, and throughout Wyoming.

To bolster community engagement, the HMWF hosted and participated in several special outreach activities. In February, free admission was offered to all First Responders. The annual Holiday Open House event in December was immensely popular in 2015. Heart Mountain played host to the Wyoming Psychological Association's annual fall conference, a session for Wyoming judges, and a professional development seminar for teachers from across the state focused on constitutional rights and civic issues.

Special events featuring Heart Mountain were held offsite as well. Several Heart Mountain board members and former incarcerated spoke at events across the country on behalf of Heart Mountain. In addition, Heart Mountain staff gave special presentations in Wyoming, Idaho and Montana.

One particular highlight of the year was the participation by many of the Heart Mountain family in the Smithsonian Institution's Day of Remembrance program on Feb. 19, 2015. The Smithsonian screened the film *The Legacy of Heart Mountain* and

held a panel discussion to an audience of over 300. HMWF Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi and HMWF Honorary Advisor and former Heart Mountain incarcerated Secretary Norman Mineta sat on the panel.

The 2015 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage was held August 21–22, with too many highlights to mention. Secretary Mineta and former U.S. Senator Alan Simpson were among the distinguished speakers, and the program was punctuated by National Poetry Slam Champion, G. Yamazawa. Included in this year's event was an inaugural meeting of the Japanese American Confinement Site Consortium, which included representatives from several "camps" as well as the Asian Pacific Institute for Congressional Studies, the Japanese American Citizens League, Densho, Embassy of Japan, Japanese American National Museum, and the National Park Service.

Finally, 2015 was a year of steady support. A groundswell of funding from individuals to organizations made the barrack move possible. The Heart Mountain Memory and Justice Endowment continues strong growth. Charitable grantors also helped to begin, advance, and complete important projects—growing the effect, the impact, and the legacy of Heart Mountain.

On the following pages are the names of the generous individuals, families, organizations, businesses, and grantors who provided financial support to the HMWF from January 1 to December 31, 2015. We extend our gratitude to each of you, and to everyone who has supported Heart Mountain in any way.

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 Agnes (Akizuki) Yoshioka  
 In Honor of Emily Filling  
 In Loving Memory of Margaret  
 Kazume Kawasuna Nagakura 



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Naoko Yoshimura Ito

## ***The Fabric of Memory***

### **Artist's Reception**

**April 7, 2016, 6 p.m.**

## ***Join Us!***

for a special reception to celebrate the artists who created the “fabric arts” featured in our upcoming exhibit, *The Fabric of Memory*. The reception will include access to the special exhibit as well as all other museum exhibits at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center.

The Textile Exhibit at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center runs from March 2–May 20. The exhibit was spearheaded by by The Textile Artists of the Greater Yellowstone (TAGY) and will feature works by many of its members. The exhibit also includes a quilt made by former incarcerated Naoko Yoshimura Ito, and donated to the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. She will be present along with TAGY artists from the exhibit at the Artist's Reception April 7.

