

President's Message

Donna Dunlap



BUNKA-SAI WAS.....there are so many positive adjectives that I can't pick one!

TSCA did not make a decision until March whether or not to hold the festival because we could not predict the Covid restrictions for an April event. The event, which typically takes three months of planning, was planned and executed in just six weeks. Thanks to the efforts of many, Bunka-Sai was very successful, even after a two-year hiatus. I am grateful to all our members who worked so hard in such a short period of time to present a memorable event to the public. I am also grateful to the overwhelming response of the public that visited the festival.

When the festival began it was obvious that the booth chairs did an exceptional job planning and organizing the operations of their booths. **Werner Willoughby**, Bunka-Sai chairperson, was hard at work behind the scenes. **John Ito** supported the vendors as they arrived to setup their booths. John, along with the student delegates, organized a food delivery service to the vendors. **Aileen Willoughby** organized all the performers and with the help of stage manager, **Wendy Ito**, presented nonstop Japanese cultural entertainment all weekend. **Shirley Tanaka**, realizing that the BIG Raffle had to have more than three cash prizes, solicited an additional seventy prizes. Enjoy the many beautiful photos of the festival in this newsletter thanks to **Linda Kranz, Wendy Ito, Amie Komae, and Rae Ann Carr**.

A big thank you to the City of Torrance Central Services staff of **Carlos Romero** and **Allen Teng** for designing,

assembling, and printing the program flyers and tickets. **Scott Villalva** and his crew were responsible for setting up the venue, from the Mt. Fuji backdrop on the main stage, all the 60+ tables and hundreds of chairs scattered about the venue, to the whirly-gig atop the flag pole that showcased the koi flags during the festival. We had to say goodbye to our city liaison, **Michael Field**, but even though he was busy preparing for his new life on the east coast, he was a tremendous help whenever we asked for his assistance.

Once again, you could find **Mayor Patrick Furey** and his wife, **Terry**, selling tickets on Sunday for the yakisoba/curry rice booth. We appreciate all the volunteers including individuals from the community and the service club students from all the Torrance high schools. We are happy to give these students the opportunity to collect service hours as they provided helping hands.

A special Arigatou Gozaimasu to our own student delegates, **Abigail Trattner, Kaitlyn Kikuchi, Jake Diederich, Matthew Segovia, and Cole Moore**. They have been waiting patiently since 2020 to experience the TSCA sponsored trip to Japan. These five students and their parents worked tirelessly from Friday afternoon until Sunday evening, setting up Bunka-Sai, helping vendors unload their wares, covering tables with butcher paper, cutting up produce, cooking, serving food, delivering food to vendors, selling dango and raffle tickets, and picking the winners for the opportunity drawing at the end of Bunka-Sai. After the festival closed to the public, these students and their parents helped TSCA members pack and clean up the venue, then load a 15-foot U-Haul truck to take our supplies back to the storage unit. Their final

WHAT'S INSIDE:

President's Message
PAGE 1-2

Congratulations Emiko Kranz
Membership News
PAGE 2

Scenes from Bunka-Sai
PAGE 3-4

Anime Contest Winners
PAGE 5

Focus on Fifty: First Native
English Speaking Teacher Memories
PAGE 6-7

2022 Bunka-Sai Thank You's
PAGE 8-9

Three Days of Hard Work
PAGE 10

Cultural Performances
PAGE 11

English Teacher Report
PAGE 13

MAY 9

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

JUNE 13

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

JULY 11

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

SEPTEMBER 12

TSCA Association Meeting (7-9 pm)
West Annex

Membership News

Alyssa Yamauchi Membership Chairperson

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERSHIPS

Family (\$40/year)

Gunji Family, Nao

Individual (\$20/year)

Hayata, Nancy

Pigao, Christopher

Torrance Sister City Association

PRESIDENT

Donna Dunlap

VICE PRESIDENT

Stephanie Ewing-Warner

SECRETARY

Karen Wheeler

TREASURER

Mayoori Shetti

Newsletter Editor

Rae Ann Carr

Newsletter Distribution

Donna Dunlap

Comments or submissions?

Please send an email to
tscanewsletter@gmail.com

task was reshelving everything back in the storage unit. Thanks to the guidance of **Steven Ihde** and **Butch Ihde**, everything was returned to their designated spots in record time. A BIG THANK YOU to these dedicated new members of TSCA.

Bunka-Sai would not be a true Japanese Cultural Event without the constant hard work of the two most dedicated, tireless, energetic, and humble volunteers in our organization. **Werner Willoughby**, Bunka-Sai chairperson and former TSCA President, has found and communicated with all of our vendors over the years. Toyota Meeting Hall was a busy hub of activity all weekend with people admiring the beautiful products for sale. His wife, **Aileen Willoughby**, discovers the traditional Japanese dance and music groups to entertain us year after year. She writes a description of each performance for Dan Fichtner, the master of ceremonies, to share. This year she added more taiko performances due to public interest. Once again, the festival ended with a packed, standing room only auditorium as we closed another successful Bunka-Sai with taiko drums. There are no words that can express my heart felt gratitude to thank these two individuals.

I am sincerely thankful to all involved, working together to pull off the 2022 festival in such a short time. I admit I had moments of disbelief that we could do it in six weeks, but I was not going to give up and neither did you. We supported each other showing that the two years of being separated, did not affect our ability to work as one when a job had to be done. The community was also very thankful to join us once again for a weekend of Japanese food and fun. Mark your calendar now, for the 2023 Bunka-Sai: April 15th and 16th. It will be even better than 2022. You won't want to miss next year, the favorite things you were looking for this year will be back. See you then! ☘

CONGRATULATIONS TO EMIKO KRANZ

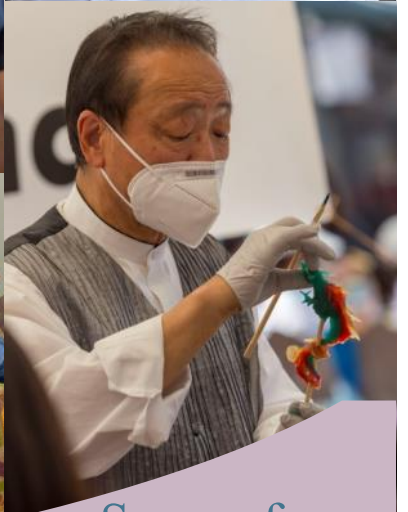
Emiko Kranz, 2013 TSCA Student Delegate, was honored as one of the 30 Changemakers Under 30 by the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) on April 30th. JANM recognizes 30 young people under 30 years old that are making extraordinary contributions to advance the Museum's mission through the arts, business, culture, education, politics, sports, and technology. As JANM looks to the future, the Museum celebrates the connection between the next generation and the Museum's past honorees, whose achievements have strengthened the community.



Emiko is in her third and final year of the UCLA Asian American Studies MA, Community Health Sciences MPH concurrent degree program whose research focuses on racial health equity and community-centered health practices, especially as delivered by cultural community-based organizations. She serves as a Director on the Board of Go For Broke National Education Center and student representative on the UCLA Community Health Sciences Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. ☘

Scenes from Bunka-Sai





Scenes from Bunka-Sai

Photos by: Linda Kranz , Wendy Ito, Amie Komae, and Rae Ann Carr

Anime Contest Winners

Summer Nagano Gray, Anime Contest Co-Chair

Congratulations to all of the talented artists who participated in TSCA's annual Anime Drawing Contest! This year, we received a whopping 83 entries from middle and high school students—the most entries ever submitted in the contest's six-year history!

The drawings, which could be hand-drawn or digital, color or black and white, were displayed during Bunka-Sai in the auditorium for all to admire. Although the judges had a difficult time selecting the winners due to the amount of amazing art received, in the end they reached a consensus and awarded cash prizes to six winners, three in middle school and three in high school:

Middle School – 1st place: **Evie Quan** (Sky Mountain Charter School), 2nd place: **Annabel Yoon** (Richardson Middle School), 3rd place: **Jaimie Cho** (Madrona Middle School)

High School – 1st place: **Haley Park** (Torrance High School), 2nd place: **Erika Novitsky** (Peninsula High School), 3rd place: **Aaron Yoon** (South High School)

All participants received a Certificate of Excellence for their fine work. Special thanks to judges **Lori Chong Eurich** (Co-Chair), **Hazel Taniguchi**, and **Jake Diederich** who did a great job with a tough task. ☸



*Middle School 1st Place: Evie Quan
Sky Mountain Charter School*



*Middle School 2nd Place: Annabel Yoon
Richardson Middle School*



*Middle School 3rd Place: Jaimie Cho
Madrona Middle School*



*High School 1st Place: Haley Park
Torrance High School*



*High School 2nd Place: Erika Novitsky
Peninsula High School*



*High School 3rd Place: Aaron Yoon
South High School*



Focus on Fifty

TSCA First Year Native English Teacher Memories

Dan Fichtner

Back in 1979, **Mr. Takata**, my Japanese 3 professor at El Camino College explained that the Torrance Sister City Association was looking for someone to teach English at the high school in Kashiwa. He knew that I wanted to take a leave of absence the following year to take a trip to Germany and Japan, but things were uncertain at that moment. In 1979, the dollar lost one third of its value and the money I had saved would not allow me to take a full year of absence from teaching. What luck, I thought. I can now travel to Japan, visit the Shibatas (my friends in Numazu), and also live and work in Japan. Mr. Takata said, “Dan you now know enough Japanese to get into trouble, but not enough to get out of it. So, go!” His words of encouragement sparked an experience that changed my life.

After a successful interview with **Mikko** and **Ben Haggott** to go over the specifics of the trip and the things I would experience in Kashiwa, I was ready to leave on the trip of a lifetime. In August 1979, I left a fortnight earlier than required so that I could visit my friends, the Shibata family in Numazu, and practice my Japanese before starting my English classes in Kashiwa.



My apartment after the shopping spree

Mr. Ushiyama, the English Department Chair at Kashiwa Ichiritsu Kotogakkou, picked me up in Numazu and drove me to my apartment in Toyoshiki. The settling-in process started right away. **Mayor Suzuki** and the principal of the school gave the approval to have the secretary to accompany me on a shopping spree to set up my household. Being a man, they didn't think I would need cooking equipment, but I told them otherwise. They believed that I would be eating out each evening. That experience was our first lesson in the cultural differences between males and females in the US and Japan.

I was lucky to be a Participant Observer in Kashiwa. I had a niche in the community and therefore blended into their society more than an ordinary traveler. The activities I encountered included picking up children's taunts from the Shibata kids; a weekend ski trip with the teachers where six or seven of us slept in the same room; a school-wide fishing trip where I learned that *shin* (four) is an unlucky number; a trip to the Japanese Alps, where I discovered the importance of *furusato* (home town); and the tutelage of **Tsukamoto Sensei** whereby I learned that parts of Japanese speech is gendered; there are certain speech patterns associated with male speech and others



A visit to the Shibata family in Numazu, Japan.

TSCA First Year Native English Teacher Memories (cont.)

associated with female ways of saying things. That was truly an embarrassing experience.

The duration of my contract was six months to allow TSCA to find another teacher who could work a full year contract. **Jean Biles** was selected to replace me at the high school, but the City Council chose to create another Native English Teacher Program at the junior high level and I eagerly accepted the position. During this time, I visited different junior high English classes to work on beginning English skills. I often had exchanges with the classes about songs that they as Japanese learned, and in return, I taught them a few Stephen Foster melodies and Beatles songs. One class in particular was a feisty bunch with an equally feisty teacher. They taught me the “lyrics” to a very popular song at that time, *Kitaguni no Haru* (Springtime in My Hometown). They, with the permission, and most likely the behest of the teacher, switched the words of the introduction to be a bit off-color for me as an American. But it was obviously okay with the Japanese teacher and was a source of embarrassment when I sang it at a karaoke bar with Mayor Suzuki. I practiced the song diligently so that I would be able to sing it for the class. [The syllabary allowed some crazy changes to the song. “*Shirakaba, Aozura*” (white birch, blue sky) became “*Shirabaka, Ahozoura*” (white crazy person, jackass or worse).] When I started the song with this line, Mayor Suzuki almost dropped his drink, and I had no idea why. Later I learned that the class played a trick on me, and when I next visited them, they all laughed and applauded. What a cultural difference! Japanese society certainly does not follow the original Puritanical culture of America.



Jean Biles (the second Native English teacher) and Dan Fichtner in apartment

All the differences between our cultures that I experienced fostered in me the desire to pursue a PhD in cultural differences. The difficulties returning students had when they return to Japan from an overseas stay with their parents led me to study that phenomenon upon my return to California in 1980. The returnees were often called *Han Japa* (half Japanese) or *Hen Japa* (strange Japanese) by many in Japanese society because they had been acculturated to a foreign culture and were not *Jun Japa* (pure Japanese). My dissertation examined the difficulties Japanese returnees faced when they returned to Japan. After interviewing 25 returnees and surveying 120 returnees, I found that the students themselves felt no real problems returning, only cultural ones. Many said that they were eager to return to Japan even though they might be seen as “different” by society as a whole. One young man commented that he was “Japa Plus,” and he loved being Japanese and living in Japan. Most of the interviewees mentioned they especially liked the Japanese idea of *giri* or returning a favor. They often missed that experience when living in a foreign land.

My one and a half year adventure ended in 1980. Much good has happened since then and is continuing to happen. TSCA has altered the lives of many, thanks to the great efforts of Mikko Haggott Henson and all the TSCA volunteers. It has definitely impacted mine. ☸



**Bottom row: Sensei, Ushiyama, Yamada, me, Nishino
Top row: Tsukamoto, Kono, Itoh**

Bunka-Sai News

2022 Bunka-Sai Thank You Werner Willoughby, Bunka-Sai Chairperson

As the 2022 Bunka-Sai Chair, I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to the committee chairs and volunteers for all the effort they extended that led to the success of this major fundraiser.

In the past, three months to prepare for Bunka-Sai was a challenge, but this year, we just had six weeks, and it took a supreme effort by all those involved to make all the pieces come together as we made adjustments and cutbacks after some tough decisions.

From the rhythmic beats of the taiko drums at 11:00 am to a crowd of visitors in Torino Plaza on Saturday morning, one had the feeling that something special was about to happen. Little did we know that by the 5 pm closing time on Sunday, when the fantastic taiko performance put the exclamation point on Bunka-Sai for 2022, the answer was, Yes!! As a team, we pulled off a major comeback after sitting out two years due to COVID. A dozen or so parents, students, and TSCA members who were involved in the clean-up operation on Sunday broke into applause as **Steven Ihde** turned the key, locking our storage unit Sunday evening, bringing Bunka-Sai 2022 to a close.

Yes, the stress, many emails, phone calls, and last-minute effort during the past six weeks was over. It was a relief and a great sense of accomplishment...We did it!

So many individuals and groups stepped up to the challenge. Thank you to the “kitchen warriors” — BBQ, yakisoba, curry and rice, dango, and cotton candy booths chaired by **Bryce Yamauchi**, **Mariko Namimoto** and **Sumi Ueki**, **Dave Kranz**, **Stephanie Ewing-Warner**,



BBQ Booth Food Service Volunteers

and **Deanna Diederich**, respectively, who were supported by dozens of volunteers. **Shirley Tanaka** took the initiative to solicit raffle prize donations to add to the three monetary prizes that were from TSCA. Thank you, Shirley, for taking this on.

John Ito worked all three days in many capacities. He supervised and assisted the Arts and Crafts booths during the entire festival, and was always ready to help with any task that needed attention, including setup and take down. I received many compliments and messages of appreciation from vendors regarding his patience and assistance. Thank you, John!

As a music teacher by profession, **David Gelbaum** provided much needed technological knowledge and expertise with our sound system. He is a former adult leader as well as a student delegate and has volunteered at Bunka-Sai for many years, this year ably assisted by his children.

Chair of our own gift booth was **Karen Wheeler**, our Association Secretary, who organized and coordinated the sale of donations to TSCA, which involved the tedious task of pricing and ensuring safe storage of the hundreds of items.

Speaking of setting records, all of our 4,500 raffle tickets were sold, and the majority were sold by our exchange students and their adult leader, **Cara Ihde**. Hats off to them and to all who bought tickets!

Another record set was with the Anime Contest, chaired by **Lori Chong Eurich** and **Summer Nagano Gray**.



Raffle Ticket Volunteers



Anime Contest Judges

They received the most entries since the contest began and found that the quality of artwork reflected such remarkable talent that selecting the winners was challenging.

Our exchange students, wearing purple happi coats — **Jacob Diederich**, **Kaitlyn Kikuchi**, **Cole Moore**, **Matthew Segovia**, and **Abigail Trattner** — and their parents were worker bees for three days. They covered tables with butcher paper, sold raffle tickets, took meal orders from vendors, assisted with the movement of equipment and supplies, helped in booths, worked in the (hot) kitchen, and much more.

Thank you to **Brian Diederich** who picked up and returned the BBQ grill to Andy's Termite, and to **Butch Ihde** who assumed responsibility for picking up, driving, and returning the U-Haul truck.

Our TSCA Treasurer, **Mayoori Shetti**, was on site both days, distributing and collecting the finances for the festival. Her job is still active as checks and monies are still being collected and issued. Thank you. Mayoori!

Each year, we thank **Shun Kohrogi** for his role in displaying the artwork from **Saga Art Center** and having children's art activities.

There were 23 craft/vendor booths, and among them were long-time TSCA supporters, **Joan and Ed Shiosaki** of **South Bay Judo Club**. They had whopping sales of shave ice and were always ready to help TSCA in any way they could. Thank you to candy artist, **Shan Ichivanagi**, for making a special appearance at our festival, as he is much sought after for his unique talent. And we were fortunate to have children's author and illustrator Sunny Seki as a

vendor as well.

The Torrance City staff were amazing in their support—from **Allen Teng**, **Gail Shota**, **William Urquilla** of Central Services Printing to **Scott Villalva** of Facility Support, and Torrance City officials—**Mayor Furey** and **Mike Griffiths**— who both spoke at the Opening. Mayor Furey and his wife even helped in one of the booths.

Special thanks to supporters who have donated supplies and equipment: **JSL Foods** (noodles); **Andy's Termites** (BBQ grill); **Mishima Foods**; and **Otafuku Foods, Inc.** (yakisoba sauce).



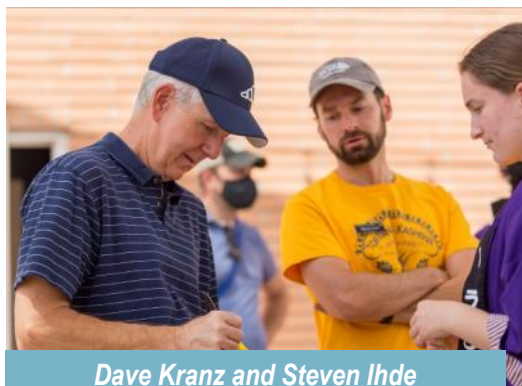
Cotton Candy Booth Volunteers

And last, but not least, I'd like to give our fearless leader, **President Donna Dunlap**, a HUGE thank you for having such dedication and persistence in assuming the multitude of tasks associated with being the president as well as overseeing the Bunka-Sai. It was a tremendous pleasure working with her in making this event a reality.

I bow very deeply to all those who made this Bunka-Sai one of the most challenging but most rewarding that I have been involved in.

Doomo arigatou gozaimashita—Thank you very, very much.

Please save-the-date — April 15-16, 2023 for the next Bunka-Sai! ☘



Dave Kranz and Steven Ihde



Calligraphy Booth



TSCA's Gift Booth

Three Days of Hard Work

Aileen Willoughby

The 2022 Bunka-Sai on April 23 and 24th came and went by in a blink. With record crowds, the fundraiser that supports the Torrance Sister City Association's student exchange program seems to have been a great success.

As I reflect back on the days and very late nights when many of us were involved in the details of the planning process, the fatigue and stress seemed to melt away when everyone came together as a team that weekend, starting from set-up on Friday, April 22nd.

The student delegates and their families all were required to devote Friday, Saturday, and Sunday of Bunka-Sai weekend in various tasks as their contribution to fundraise for their students' trip to Japan. Those of us who have had children benefit from this trip-of-a-lifetime and continue to work Bunka-Sai know very well what the exhausting weekend entails.

There are so many unsung heroes behind the scenes, and they are recognized in the Bunka-Sai program as well as in another articles in this newsletter, but I wanted to take a moment to give a shout-out to the BBQ, Curry Rice, Yakisoba, and Dango food booth chairs. I especially found it inspiring and admirable that these booth chairs have spent years in their roles, giving those three days their total commitment, well past the time when their children completed the student exchange program or their commitment as adult leaders were over.

Mariko Namimoto and **Sumi Ueki** have been yakisoba booth chairs for 22 years. Mariko and Sumi have each had three children experience Kashiwa as student delegates, beginning with their first children in the 2000 year student exchange. Each year, Sumi arranges for the donation of yakisoba noodles from a source she is familiar with. For this article, she submitted a copy of a flier from the year 2000 when yakisoba was only \$3.

Bryce and **Cheryl Yamauchi**, BBQ booth chairs, have spent three days each year immersed in Bunka-Sai, plus hours beyond that as board members. Their involvement began in 2005 when the first of their two children became a student delegate, and they have been actively involved for the past 17 years since then. Their work in the BBQ booth began in 2006 with a group of parents, but today,

only they have remained committed from that original group. Their daughter **Alyssa**, former student delegate, is now on the Board and continues the Yamauchi legacy.

Dave and **Linda Kranz** have been curry booth chairs for the past seven years, after their daughter was a student delegate in 2013.

The popular dango booth was chaired this year by **Stephanie Ewing-Warner**, whose involvement began in 1982 as a student delegate, then in 2000 as adult leader. **Butch Ihde** has been the dango booth chair for decades, and he was an adult leader in 1990.

My husband **Werner** and I have been involved since 2007 when our son **Kevin** had the trip of his lifetime to Kashiwa and has been living in Japan for the past eight years.

And present everywhere at 2022 Bunka-Sai was the entire **Ihde family**—**President Donna**, husband **Butch**, son **Steven** (2013 adult leader) and his wife Yuki (2007 student delegate from Kashiwa), and daughter **Cara** (adult leader this year and 2006 student delegate)—all holding significant roles at the event. This was Donna and Butch's 35th Bunka-Sai festival, and they have been TSCA members continuously since Donna was selected as an adult leader in 1983. Imagine that!

So there must be something very special about TSCA and Bunka-Sai that brings these individuals back year after year, well past the time when their children were student delegates or their time as adult leader was over. This completely volunteer organization, supported by donations, membership dues, and fundraisers provides experiences that have changed lives. And thanks to these and all the volunteers, we are fortunate to have such a strong Sister City program, one that is envied by other cities with somewhat similar programs. The student exchange activities, the English teacher program in Kashiwa; sister-school programs; Goodwill Anniversary visits (every five years)—foster incredibly long-lasting friendships between the people in Kashiwa and Torrance, even between the city governments, strengthening cultural ties that bridge our communities and countries.

TSCA depends on volunteers, and many long-time leaders look to the younger generation to continue this important program. Please consider committing one, two or three days, or even a few hours as volunteers at the April 15-16, 2023 Bunka-Sai. Together we are strong! ☘



Yakisoba Flyer from 2000

Cultural Performances

Aileen Willoughby

As this year's 2022 Bunka-Sai Cultural Performance stage coordinator, I took great joy in selecting performers for our outdoor and indoor stages, and I added demonstrations/lectures to our usual events in the Assembly Room.

In an important role as emcee for both days, **Dan Fichtner**, TSCA's first English teacher in Kashiwa (1979-1980), applied his knowledge of TSCA and his Japanese language skills to pronounce performers' names and skillfully integrate interviews of current exchange students between performances. He is one of ten lifetime members of TSCA. Doomo arigatou, Dan.



*Wendy Ito, Stage Manager, and
Dan Fichtner, 2022 Master of Ceremonies*

The taiko groups which opened and closed each day's events were chosen by our stage manager, **Wendy Ito**, who was indispensable in directing stage activities before and after each performance. Big KUDOS to Wendy for her taiko expertise and professionalism in making sure staging went smoothly. Her keen eye gave us insight into how our stage performances can be improved even more in 2023. Mahalo, Wendy, for all that you did in contributing to our successful presentations.

While performing groups received nominal honorariums, we recognize that many normally receive compensations far beyond what TSCA is able to provide. Their community service and commitment to our fundraising efforts and sharing of cultural arts are deeply appreciated. Many groups have participated for years (decades) and are seasoned Bunka-Sai performers: **South Bay Judo Club**; **Matsutoyo Kai** folk singing group; **Bando School** dance teachers; **Torrance Naginata Dojo**; **Beikoku Shodo**

Kenkyu Kai (ink brush calligraphy); and **Yoko Awaya Koto Music Conservatory**. Many of the dance and music groups were led by teachers who obtained their teaching certifications from Japan and are recognized artists in our community and even in Japan. Those wearing traditional kimono, especially the dancers, spent hours preparing for their short time on stage, and we thank them for their immense dedication to their art and to our organization. And it was amazing how far some of these performers drove to Torrance to participate (though their lessons may be in or near Torrance): Lake Elsinore; Simi Valley; and Irvine.

While some of the cultural arts are finding fewer students to take lessons, even in Japan, I feel immense gratitude to those instructors who teach the cultural arts to students in the United States in an effort to preserve, promote and present it to all of us.

THANK YOU TO: **Dai Ichi Bonsai Kai**; **Minamitani Semho** (*ikenobo*); **Seigyoku Kihara** (Japanese handicrafts); **Lori Chong Eurich** and **Amie Komae** for *kamishibai* readings; **Bando Hidesomi** for the lecture on dance props; **Lori Chong Eurich** for coordinating origami hands-on activities; **Beikoku Shodo Kenkyu Kai** for ink brush calligraphy hands-on lessons; **Hachijo Aikoukai** and **LA Miyake Kai** taiko groups; **Urasenke Tanko Kai Los Angeles Assn** (tea ceremony); **Matsutoyo Kai** (folk music); **L.A. Kimono Club**; **South Bay Judo Club**; **Wakahisa Kai** (classical dancers); **Torrance Kendo Dojo**; *shakuhachi* by **Shawn Schroeder**; **Taiko Effect**; **Asano Taiko US Advanced Youth Group**; **Wado-Ryu Karate Do Renmei**; **Yuki Yasuda** and **LA Koto Ensemble**; **Mai No Kai** (instructor) **Bando Hiromiya** (traditional dance); **Beikoku Shodo Kenkyu Kai** (calligraphy); **Fuji Japanese Music**; **Torrance Naginata Dojo**; **Yoko Awaya Koto Music Conservatory**; and the rousing taiko finale by **Los Dokos, Unit Two & Unit One of Asano Taiko US**.



*Wado-Ryu Karate
Do Renmei*

See you in April 2023! ☸

Creative EXPRESSION in the Time of Pandemic

By Summer Nagano Gray and Lori Chong Eurich



Calling all creative souls... that means YOU!

Whether you are a karaoke queen, weekend gardener, or beginning piano player, TSCA and KIRA need your creative submissions for an exciting, new cross-cultural project titled "Creative Expression In the Time of Pandemic."

This project is meant to provide a window into your life during the pandemic, share something that sparks joy in you, and showcase your creativity. We all have been affected by a shutdown of our normal lives, but not a shutdown of our creativity!

So please send in your creative written works, photos of your creations, or videos. We will be compiling them into a book and/or audiovisual presentation that will be displayed and shown at future events.



Creative Expression Ideas

Although your creative expression submissions may take any form, here are a few ideas to spark your creativity: haiku, poetry, spoken word, cooking/new recipes, cute bento box lunches, origami, singing, funny videos, photography, playing a musical instrument, composing a song, crafts like knitting, crochet, painting, drawing, fabric arts, pottery, sports, paper mâché, cross-stitch, traveling, hiking, journaling, calligraphy, writing on a grain of rice, soap making, candle making, book making, washi tape art, videos of your cat or dog doing tricks, juggling, hula hooping, doll making, Lego art, salsa dancing, Zumba, yoga at the beach, Ikebana/floral design, hula dancing, line dancing, rock painting, gardening/landscaping, kite flying, Cosplay outfits, martial arts (such as Judo/karate), Tai Chi, weaving, home organizing (such as KonMari), etc.

GUIDELINES

- Limit of 3 submissions per person
- Video submissions should be no longer than 90 seconds and in a horizontal/landscape position. Videos taken with your mobile phone work great!
- Submissions should have been created after the pandemic and shutdown began (March 2020).
- Please keep submissions positive and uplifting.
- Include your name and any comments about your submission that provide further detail.

HOW TO SUBMIT

Please send submissions to the TSCA Creative Expression Committee by

- 1) Clicking our Google Drive link and uploading your submission at <https://bit.ly/3jWW9mi>, or
- 2) Sending an email to 4summer@gmail.com, or
- 3) Mailing your submission to the TSCA Creative Expression Committee c/o Community Services Department, Cultural Services Division, 3031 Torrance Blvd, Torrance, CA 90503.

DEADLINE

June 30, 2022 (could be extended). Please feel free to send in your submissions now, as we would like to begin compiling them into audiovisual and hard copy formats.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this project, please contact Summer at 4summer@gmail.com or call (310) 804-5191.



English Teacher Report

Top Spots in Japan by Brandon Matsumoto

In Japan, cherry blossom season is known as the busiest time of the year with tourists visiting from all around the world. In areas like Ueno or Meguro in Tokyo, you can be caught in gigantic crowds of tourists where you can only move a couple inches every second, kind of like the traffic on the 405 back home. However, for the last couple years, no tourists have been able to visit Japan due to covid. But that is fantastic for me. The busy areas and spots were now clear of large crowds. Instead, some of the cherry blossom areas were empty and I was able to take pictures without tourists photo-bombing in the background. But everyone knows the best spots in Tokyo, and it's very easy to look them up on google. What about Kashiwa? I couldn't find a good list of top spots. So, as a TSCA newsletter exclusive, today, I present to you, the BEST guide to all the great cherry blossom spots in Kashiwa so you can make sure you can hit all the spots on your visit there.

My favorite spot has to be Oohori Riverside Park. This is a river with cherry blossoms that stretches for miles. People jog and walk their dogs alongside it. In my opinion, it is the best place for photoshoots and video shoots.

Furusato park is also a wonderful place to relax and enjoy the cherry blossoms. This is a big park where many children come to play. If you are lucky, you may have the chance to see the swans with their babies. It's also a perfect place for a picnic! There were several years where I would have a picnic with friends and be completely surrounded by beautiful falling petals. It is a dream-like environment.

Akebono Yama has the most cherry blossom trees! This spot is located on a tiny mountain and you can enjoy walking on the pathway through the trees. It is very popular and I usually see many of my students there playing with their friends.

Hokusei Jinjya has the biggest cherry blossom trees I have ever seen. Located next to a busy street, this temple is very hard to miss with towering trees visible by any car passing by. I discovered this one by accident but I was so glad I was able to come across it.

Lastly, I recommend going to Masuo Joshi Park. This is a very unique park where you can BBQ and enjoy the cherry blossom trees. On top of that, it is next to a beautiful forest of pine trees that you can walk through. It never fails to surprise me that I can be surrounded by peaceful nature right in the city I live in. I love taking deep breaths in and feeling the crisp fresh air.

Yes, Kashiwa is not necessarily famous for cherry blossoms. But I believe there are hidden gems here and there that you can enjoy. Hopefully this guide can give you a good start to find your favorite cherry blossom spot in Kashiwa.

This video is from last month during cherry blossom season. Enjoy!

<https://bit.ly/3lcpw52> ☞



Thank you for your support.

The proceeds of Bunka-Sai help to fund the student delegate exchange program



2022 TSCA Student Delegates
Matthew Segovia, Abigail Trattner,
Kaitlyn Kikuchi, Cole Moore, Jake Diederich,
and Adult Leader Cara Ihde



**Torrance Sister City
Association**

3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA 90503