



The Albany Historical Society

Volume 5, Number 1

January - March 2015

You're Invited

Sunday, January 11, 2015

Albany Historical Society Annual Meeting in the Edith Stone Room

1:45 – 2:00 PM Business Meeting

2:00 – 3:00 PM Historical Photo Presentation

SPOTLIGHT

On October 31, 1928 (Halloween), the city of Albany was given a treat that lasted for more than 84 years, Jewel Nishi Okawachi. Jewel would spend her years dedicated to family, friends, animals, education, and all aspects of the Albany community.

After her birth in San Francisco, Jewel moved into her family's Curtis St. home that was designed by her father. She would spend her entire life there with the exception of three years starting in 1942, when she and her family were interned at the Gila River War Relocation Center in Arizona. A proud Japanese American, Jewel gently reminded us of the pains endured by many Japanese families during this dark period.

Jewel was an Albany business owner. For over 20 years, she owned D&S Composing in Albany, type setting the *Stories of Albany*, numerous fliers, brochures, and political pamphlets.

A single parent, Jewel raised three boys, David, Stan, and Mark who followed in her footsteps through Albany schools. Always available for her boys' diverse activities, Jewel was the consummate parent volunteer in school, scouting and athletics.

Jewel's volunteer efforts were legendary as she diligently cared for her Albany community. She was a member and often an officer with many groups: the Albany Historical Society, the Albany Education Foundation, the Police Activities League, the Youth Task Force, the Prevention Council, the committee to restore Albany High School Track & Field, the Drug & Alcohol Task Force, Albany Little League, the Boy Scouts, the

first Teen Center, Albany High School Athletic Boosters, the Albany Community Foundation, the Albany Chamber of Commerce, the Solano Avenue Association, the Friends of the Albany Library, the Friends of the Albany Seniors, and Soroptimist International. Jewel was named Albany Citizen of the year twice and received the PTA Honorary Service Award.

Whenever any Albany group hosted a pancake breakfast, concert, book sale, athletic event, bake sale, play, dinner, dance, or other event, you would see Jewel. While she was often involved in organizing the event, she could also be found quietly cleaning up after the event was over.

Jewel was also involved in Albany City Government. She served on the Parks & Recreation Commission, the Waterfront Committee, the Albany Library Board, and the Pension Board. In 2000, she was elected to the Albany City Council, where she served two terms, including one year as mayor (2002).

An Albany City Council resolution in 2009 renamed Terrace Park in Jewel's honor. A fitting tribute to one whom through her many volunteer efforts diligently cared for Albany.

Jewel had an uncanny knack for making everyone she knew feel special; she remembered your pet's name, birthday, a child's interest, favorite flowers, foods, and concerns. When you found a card or a treat on your doorstep, you knew who left it. Jewel had been out for a walk with her dog (over the years Pepper, Brie, or Sammy).

We remember our friends, neighbors, and community members whom we lost in 2014.

Marilyn Cecilia Ward Blackburn
Former Albany resident

Jordan Brinkman
Albany High Class of 1999

Russell Clay Brush
Born in Albany in 1962

Bill Cain
Former mayor and member of the Board of Education, East Bay MUD engineer

Caroline Rose Motta Camozzi
Albany High Class of 1954, West Contra Costa County teacher

Marilyn Chamberlain
Marin and Cornell teacher, music-lover, and volunteer

Michael John Coggiola
Born in Albany, Albany High Class of 1965

Leah Kellogg Dobyne
Attended Albany High about 1950

Jeff Eichner
Albany High Class of 1953, father of two Albany High graduates

Robert Fischer
WW II veteran and Lawrence Berkeley Lab employee

C. Errol (Bud) Fletcher

Albany resident since 1929, Albany High Class of 1939

Steven R. ("Steve") Foss
Albany Police Officer, Albany High Class of 1981

Elizabeth Hoggatt
Albany resident since 1965

Hal Hoffman
Solano Avenue notary and realtor

Robert Leroy Kaiser
Gardener, cat-lover, and Albany resident

Helen Geurts Jenssen Guay Kalantar
Albany High Class of 1938, Real Estate professional

Marjorie Pfister Keck
Volunteer for PTA, schools, and the YMCA, hosted two AFS exchange students, Girl Scout leader

Vivian G Madrid
Mother, gardener, and telephone operator

Lorand Manhart
Long-time Ordway St. resident

Masami Mayeda
Army veteran, landscape gardener

Jules Frederick Mayer
Former Chairman of the Board of the Berkeley-Albany YMCA

Clyde McAdams
Born in Albany in 1938

Allan ("Bill") Moore
Founder and CEO of sign company

Billy Ray Moore
Albany resident

Mary Oliver
Masonic Avenue resident since 1953

Arthur Jack ("Butch") Pagliero, Jr.
Born in Albany, part owner of TEPCO porcelain
chinaware

Patricia L Papachristos
Born in Albany

Clay E. Pardo
Long-time Albany resident

Felix Rivera
Professor, bonsai-lover, and author

Estaleen Rossi
Cornell School crossing guard for 35 years

Marilyn Dewey Sharp
Albany High Class of 1947/48

Herman Shum
Vice Principal, Saint Mary's College High School

William (Bill) Souza, Jr.
Born in Albany in 1939

Nadine Starbuck
Long-time Albany resident

Christine Stone
Albany High Class of 1962 and lifelong Albany
resident

Peggy Thomsen
Mayor and former member of the Board of
Education, teacher and volunteer

Albany High Class of 1975

George Yoshida
Berkeley teacher and Vice Principal
yoga, tai-chi instructor

Cjing ("Mike") Yu
Jackson St. resident and owner Great China
restaurant in Berkeley

Lewis Albert ("Al") Young, Jr.

Upcoming Events

Friends of the Albany Library Meeting, January 2015 Meeting

Local historian, Catherine Webb, left a treasure trove of stuff, from old McCarthy campaign buttons to her personal correspondence with local politicians. Languishing in file cabinets and cardboard boxes, it was not available to scholars or the public. Last year, the Friends of the Albany Library agreed to fund an intern who, under the supervision of library staff, has been working in the basement to bring some order to this collection. He will be discussing his progress at the next regular meeting of the Friends of the Albany Library Meeting:

Wednesday, January 14th
@ 7 PM in the Edith Stone Room of the Albany Library
1247 Marin Avenue

Interested guests are welcome to attend.

Albany FilmFest

This year AHS is pleased to be providing the Albany FilmFest (5th annual) with some Albany historical photographs and videos, which will be shown during the festival and Gala. Save the dates: March 20, 2015 Gala and March 21, 2015 Film Festival. Check the Albany Film Fest website (<http://www.albanyfilmfest.org>) for more information.

AHS Monthly Meetings

The Albany Historical Society Board meetings are usually held on the first Friday of each month at 9:30 AM in the basement of the Community Center. Meetings are open to the public. The third Fridays are set aside for cataloging the AHS collection at the same location. Please contact Joan Larson, (510) 526-7769, for confirmation of meeting dates and more information.

Library Collection of Albany Newspapers

Better access to the library's collection of Albany newspapers is a possible future upcoming event. For some time, the Friends of the Albany Library have paid to have back issues of the Albany Times and the Albany Journal microfilmed. The collection is not complete, but an appointment can be made with library staff to view the microfilms that are available. Currently, the content is difficult for the public to actually use and cannot be searched by topic or keyword. Library staff has applied for grant funding, which it is hoped will allow for scanning these back issues so that the public can more easily use them. We will keep you informed about the progress of this effort.

President's Message

A very Happy New Year; may 2015 be filled with health, happiness and Albany History.

Last year in review:

On January 26th at the Albany Historical Society's Annual Meeting, two new Board Members, Sherry Parrish and Donna Butcher, were installed. Continuing as Board Members were Marsha Skinner, Jack Rosano, Peggy McQuaid, Kim Denton, and Joan Larson. Following the annual meeting we cohosted the Albany Library's Centennial Celebration. The celebration was a great success. Thanks to the Friends of the Albany Library for their generous financial support for the event, the City of Albany for the use of the Community Center, the Alameda County Library for the commemorative bookmarks and programs, the Albany Library staff for the fabulous youth activities and my fellow AHS Board members for the scrumptious desserts. And finally, a special shout out to the our local, state, and national officials or their representatives who spoke at the event: Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner, Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, State Senator Loni Hancock, and Albany Mayor Peggy Thomsen. Friends of the Albany Library President Marsha Skinner and Alameda County Librarian Jean Hofacket also spoke at the event and discussed the history of the Albany library. This was another only in Albany event that brought together many folks for the best of reasons, to Celebrate Albany history.

At our February Board meeting, we elected Joan (Pres.), Jack (Veep), Peggy (Treasurer) and Marsha (Secretary). Kim and Donna took on the daunting task of setting up a database and crafting a policy for public access to photos and archival material. Sherry provided advice and expertise on preservation.

We discussed a new historical plaque placement at several meetings, but we encountered difficulty with plaque placement. We look forward to a placement in early Spring 2015.

Throughout the year, AHS board members worked on accepting Albany Historical donations, cataloging its existing collection, and responding to requests for historical information.

Many thanks to those who continue to donate and share their Albany history. This past year we

received copies of Albany High yearbooks, Classes of 1936, 1937, and 1938, and a 1936-38 Albany High class photo. We also received a copy of a book, The Story of the City of Albany 1947, from Maryann Finn, widow of Bob Finn, AHS class of 1938 (thanks to Betty Shinnerer for facilitating this donation). Paul Grunland donated a 1923 City of Berkeley Fire map and Doug Donaldson provided a photographic record of the demolition of MacGregor school.

In the Fall, we had a series of transitions, with Sherry and Jack moving off the Board. We thank them for their service to the Albany Historical Society Board and wish them well. Thankfully, we have a new prospective Board member, Liz Keiley-Roark, who hope to elect at our January meeting.

– *Joan Larson*