



Newsletter

Honoring & Carrying On the Legacy • Honoring the Past, Educating the Future

February 2024 • Volume 74 • Issue 2

February Nisei Lunch Report By Keith Yamaguchi

The February Nisei Lunch is but a memory, and as we look ahead to the March lunch, I have some thoughts I wanted to share with you. As with any of the programs and events offered by the NVC and Foundation, we rely heavily on volunteers to help carry them out. In this article, I wanted to give special recognition to the volunteers who have made the Nisei Lunch such a special occasion.

Since the Nisei Lunch began in 2015 there have been many volunteers that have come and gone, but there has always been a core group of volunteers that have given their time and effort to the program on a regular basis. I want to acknowledge these very dedicated volunteers and express my gratitude for their efforts. These volunteers include: Shiz Kaku, Sue Beeson, Jim Shinbo, Nancy Nakatsu, Carole Remme, Janice Kunitsugu, Ed Shinbo, Liz Olschefski, Kathy Yee, Paul Murakami, Kurt and Candace Nogaki, Joan Hall, Ruth Shimano, Lisa Kunihiro, Mel Inouye, Nadine Miyahara, Carla Kohler (Mizuta), Barbara Andersen

There is one other group of volunteers I would like to recognize as well. This group performs a very important part of our lunch program. They deliver lunches to our guests that cannot attend the lunch in person. Our delivery program was instituted during the chaotic times of COVID. We wanted to continue to serve our

(continued on pg.6)



NVC & NVC FOUNDATION CALENDAR

**Last
Friday
of the month**

6:00pm – 6:30pm

***NVC Executive Council Meeting**

6:30pm – 7:00 pm

***NVC Foundation Board Meeting**

7:00pm – 8:00pm

***NVC & NVCF Combined Membership Meeting**

NOTE: NVC Memorial Hall is fully open, but for the safety of our volunteers and those who use the Hall, the NVC will continue to follow CDC, State, and County Covid protocols. For additional information, email: info@seattlencv.org

**HYBRID Meeting: The monthly meetings will be held on a Hybrid basis, meaning you can either attend In-Person at the NVC Memorial Hall OR attend Virtually through a Zoom Livestream online connection.*



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NVC Commander's Column

By Michael J. Yaguchi



My final column as Commander will be short. There are so many volunteers and patrons to thank: the newsletter editors, mailing crew, museum archivists, expense and correspondence managers, and those doing the daily chores to protect and maintain the building. Volunteers accomplish 95% of these jobs. Your time, energy, and passion for "Honoring and Carrying On the Legacy" is greatly appreciated and valued.

Thank you to all the members of the NVC Executive Council who served on one-year terms starting on March 20, 2021. The countless hours of conversing and debating helped inform all the decisions over the past three years. It has been an absolute pleasure and honor to serve in this role.

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NVC Foundation President's Column

By Shawn Brinsfield



Hello readers. As some of you know, although I am not going away, I am stepping down as President at the end of my one-year term. I have enjoyed keeping you in mind as I write these columns. It has been a rewarding experience. I thank you for your interest and participation in the NVC Foundation affairs.

A few months ago, I went on a Pilgrimage to Arizona to learn about the Poston Incarceration Camp which was in the hot Sonoran Desert. There, approximately 18,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned on the Colorado River Indian Tribe reservation (CRIT) during World War II – against the wishes of the Colorado River Indian Tribe leaders.

On the first morning of the pilgrimage, I and other participants



Colorado River Indian Tribe (CRIT) children dancing under partial solar eclipse.



Top: Fukuda dairy farm in Auburn.



Left: Remains of large building made of adobe brick.



Right: Original barrack with new outer structure protecting it from vandalism and weather.

got off the bus at a venue, and I noticed that everything seemed darker, and colors were more muted. Was it just me or what? I didn't realize that a partial solar eclipse was in progress and that it was setting the tone for a weekend of discovery.

Anyway, soon after debarking the bus, three Mohave girls dressed in their regalia spoke to us in what was a foreign language to me. But it hit me that here were a people who had already lived in this space for hundreds and hundreds of years. Generation after generation of families proudly passing on their hallowed customs and heart-felt ways of life. It all became real to me. I felt sad, and I felt grief for something of utmost importance lost. But I also felt grateful and respectful for these girls who continued to speak and uphold their history.

The girls then did a traditional dance with other children from the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT): the Mohave, Chemehuevi, Hopi. I was told that the children from the fourth CRIT tribe, Navajo, were not present since it is their custom to stay inside during an eclipse.

The rest of the Pilgrimage, with the collaboration of the CRIT Tribal Council, featured memories of Poston camp life, highlighting the significant links and relationships between the Japanese American incarcerated and members of the tribal community.

I met an elderly Hopi who remembers as a kid in the 1940's, moving with his family into one end of a Poston camp barrack while incarcerated Japanese and Japanese American families were living in the other end of the same camp barrack.

[Side Note: While talking to me, he casually mentioned that his sister sitting across the table

from us, had been in another living situation - as a little girl she had been put into a boarding school for Indian children.]

During the Pilgrimage, Marlene Shigekawa, Executive Director of the Poston Community Alliance, explained how the Colorado River Indian Tribes and Japanese American communities were working together to preserve the structures of the Poston incarceration camp on tribal land.

That trip to Arizona got me thinking about things closer to home. Cho Shimizu (*Cho's Story: From the Eyes of a Nisei Son, 2015*), is a regular visitor to the Nisei Luncheon. His own family had leased farmland from the Puyallup Tribe, and he grew up going to school with Puyallup as friends, sometimes "playing Cowboys & Indians with them". He remembers that "discrimination was never an issue as we kids were not into that as we all were 'foreigners'..."

(continued on pg.4)

NVC Foundation President's Column
(continued from pg.3)

Cho let me know that there were Nikkei who supported and some marched with tribal populations in securing fishing rights. And alternatively, some Puyallup tribal members had taken measures to help the Nikkei in holding onto their land.

Cho continued:

"Another thing was that the Puyallup provided fish for the farmers in return for veggies when the Japanese first returned to Fife and instituted a "Crop Time Policy" with the Japanese. They actually had a route where they would visit various farmers and provided fish. The meaning of crop time was that the farmers were given land and tools which would be paid back to the Indians when the crops were harvested so the farmers could get started in the farming of the land."

Eileen Lamphere, President of JACL Puyallup Valley Chapter, wrote to me, saying that she is not an academic historian but rather a community recorder. She wrote:

"The Muckleshoot Tribe and the Japanese and Japanese American farms and dairies supported each other. Before the war, several J/JA farms were built along the southern Green River on land either sold to them or leased from them. One family in particular was the John Hamakami family. The farm was bought from the Muckleshoot (at that time, the alien land laws did not apply to the Native Americans and Japanese Americans) It was a vegetable and berry farm and employed many Muckleshoot

youth during planting and harvesting times."

"During the war, the Muckleshoot made sure that the ... farms and others were taken care of and returned the lands after the war. The relationship remained close..."

Eileen also said a Muckleshoot named Gilbert King George "presented John Hamakami with a traditional button blanket, which is usually reserved for honored and cherished tribal elders."

I called Gilbert King George's son, Warren King George (Muckleshoot cultural resources oral historian) to ask about the traditional button blanket. A button blanket is given out of respect for someone who has contributed much to a community. The button blanket tells a story and exhibits sophisticated artistry.

Warren said that his father, the late Gilbert King George, had always respectfully looked up to John Hamakami for many years. It was John Hamakami who had instilled a work ethic in the young Gilbert King George. "Taught him how to shoot and hunt and work responsibly."

Gilbert King George felt so grateful that many years later he searched for John Hamakami, not knowing where he might find him. The search was successful, finding John Hamakami and his daughters at a White River Buddhist Temple. When John saw Gilbert, he exclaimed, "Oh, Hoagie!" There were no dry eyes.

Warren King George forwarded to me an email from Tallis, Gilbert King George's wife. It

carried these exact words of Gilbert King George:

"There are many special Japanese Americans I was fortunate to know over the years, all treated me as a son. Some were willing to claim me for life, to live on their farms. As a young logger, I would be out of work each winter, when snow drove us from the woods."

"With two wee children to feed, I could always rely on my Japanese friends for employment in those lean months. They gladly hired me back. I will be forever grateful for their kindness and friendship."

"We as Muckleshoot share a dark history with our Japanese American friends in the Green River Valley. Both had their land taken illegally, some of our people never recovered. Both of Our People had our land and possessions taken unlawfully without compensation."

"That was the cause of our first treaty war of 1855-56. Muckleshoot was not to receive ANY land under our two treaties. As a result of our efforts and those of our allied tribes, we secured a reservation where we live today. Later, much of our land was sold, often under legally questionable circumstances."

"Though nearly all Muckleshoot families come from warriors, we had many relatives who were interned in concentration camps at Fox Island and Bainbridge Island



Mohave children speaking in Mother tongue.



CRIT dancing.

during our first treaty war. I was witness to the incarceration of our Japanese friends, in our language *sva?va čəł*. (Our Friends/Relatives)"

"Our People share many cultural values. My wife and I attend Bon Odori each year. Some of my friends' ashes are now buried in the Auburn "Pioneer" cemetery and we lay flowers for them each year. They are:

- Katsuma Murakami, a good man -- he calculated my pay on an abacus, speaking his language as he did it;
- Natsuhara owned a store on West Main, my mom knew him and he treated our family well; and
- Koji Sagara, his son went to high school with my brother Henry, they were good friends."

(continued on pg.5)

NVC Foundation President's Column
(continued from pg.4)

[NOTE: For Eileen Lamphere, recording community history is part of her life's work. She has been zealously engaged in the creation of the Puyallup Assembly Center Remembrance Gallery – to be situated on the Puyallup Fairgrounds. The Remembrance Gallery, a special project of the Puyallup Valley Chapter of the JACL, will be using the latest techniques in immersive and interactive media design that will bring to life personal stories and in-depth content. Puyallup Valley JACL is accepting needed donations to get them (which means all of us) over the finish line. Please help!!! <https://www.puyallupvalleyjacl.org/>]

Attention!

Graduate and Law Students in Labor Studies

From Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA)

The Michael Weiner Scholarship for Labor Studies seeks to recognize and support the efforts of graduate and/or law school students dedicated to improving the lives of workers. The Players Trust awards \$50,000 annually to fund up to five scholarships at a minimum of \$10,000 each. To date, the Trust has proudly awarded \$440,000 in scholarships to 43 students.

The Players Trust also provides support, resources, and networking opportunities to alumni of the scholarship program as they continue to move forward

in their educational and vocational journeys.

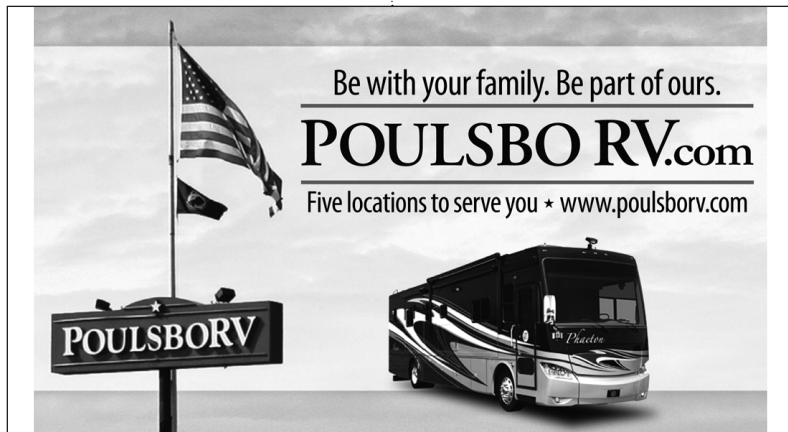
Michael Weiner spent 25 years, nearly his entire professional career, with the Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) working in support of Players – past, present, and future. Despite being diagnosed with cancer in August of 2012, Michael continued working on behalf of the players until passing in November 2013, at the age of 51.

By nearly every conceivable measure, baseball players are better off today than they were

when Michael first walked into the MLBPA offices in 1988. Michael fundamentally believed that workers – in all facets – deserved a voice on the job. Michael was widely respected for his love for family, his infectious personality, and his brilliance. The MLBPA and the players want him to be remembered as a champion for all workers seeking an opportunity to better their lives.

Deadline to apply is March 1, 2024. Link for application:

<https://mailchi.mp/ab23deb2182b/mlbpa-player-bulletin-13968212?e=53cf3dbf48>



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February Nisei Lunch Report
(continued from pg.1)

Nisei members, however with social distancing mandates in place, we had to think of a different way to continue the lunch program. The idea of food delivery was that option, and it is still an integral part of our program today.

Our gratitude and thanks go out to Carolyn Takei, Steve Suzaka, and Jim Yoshida. This trio delivers lunches to our guests that are located at Lakeshore Senior Living facility and Merrill Gardens Senior Living facility, as well as various private residences in our local community.



In closing, I would like to mention that we celebrated birthdays for the following folks, Shiz Kaku, George Kiuchi, and Fusako Akimoto. This is a new “wrinkle” that we intend to make a part of our monthly lunch.

Thanks for your time and stay safe. Perhaps we will see you at a future lunch. For more information, please feel free to contact me at: kyamavet@gmail.com or by phone: 206 390-1253 mobile.



NVC-NVC Foundation Volunteer Appreciation Brunch

By Keith Yamaguchi



Sunday, February 11, 2024, marked the 4th annual Volunteer Appreciation Brunch hosted by the Seattle NVC and NVC Foundation. Even though this year's event was held on Super Bowl Sunday, we still had a nice group in attendance, and everyone seemed to have a great time visiting with one another and enjoying the food provided by Terry Takeuchi, owner and operator of Terry's Kitchen in Bellevue.

As a community non-profit organization, the Seattle NVC and NVC Foundation relies on its volunteers to help to provide the “manpower” needed to implement the events and programs throughout the year. Programs such as the Chow Mein Dinner, Bake Sale, Nisei Lunch, Talk Story, Memorial Day Ceremony at Lakeview Cemetery, placement of U.S. Flags marking the Gravesites at Evergreen-Washelli Cemetery on Memorial Day, and the monthly NVC newsletter produced by the hardworking staff are examples of the good work done by our volunteers. None of these programs would be possible without their hard work and dedication.

We thank those of you that attended this year's brunch and look forward to next year's event. For those who could not attend this year, we hope to see you at next year's Volunteer Appreciation Brunch. Until then, take care and have a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!

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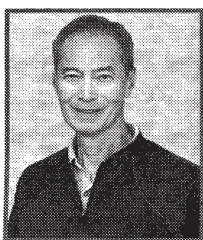
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Scouts Host Seattle Betsuin Service at NVC Memorial Hall By Dale Kaku



During the evening of Dec. 31, 2023, an arsonist broke into the Seattle Buddhist Church and set a fire in the temple's basement. The fire caused

extensive damage to the basement area and considerable smoke and soot damage to the remaining Temple building. The fire destroyed valuable written historical records and artifacts, that will not be able to be replaced. Fortunately, no people were injured, but the extensive fire, water and smoke damage throughout the building has closed the Seattle Betsuin Temple for an undisclosed period of time.

When informed that the fire left the Betsuin Boy Scouts Troop 252 without a meeting venue, the NVC offered to host the Scouts at the NVC Hall for their weekly meetings. Since the first week in January, the Scouts have been holding their weekly meets in "Lefty's" room.

A long relationship between the Seattle Buddhist Church and the Nisei Veterans began during the founding of the NVC. The current

NVC Hall was completed as a Japanese martial arts hall in 1937. During the removal of Japanese Americans in 1942, the building was vacated, and little used for the duration of WW II. When the Japanese Americans returned to Seattle following the war, the building was in disrepair. With the task of maintaining the Kendo Hall, a lack of interest in Japanese martial arts, and in gratitude to the returning Nisei Veterans, the Kendo Kai sold the property to the NVC for \$1,000. Prior to the purchase of the current NVC building in 1949, the Nisei Veterans Committee, founded in 1946, initially met at the Buddhist Church until they obtained their current location in 1949. During the NVC Hall renovation in 2007, the NVC again held their monthly meeting at the Seattle Betsuin Buddhist Temple.

Each February, the Boy Scouts conduct a Scout Sunday for the members of the Buddhist Church. This year, the Scouts held their Boy Scout Sunday in our gym. The Scouts set up the gym for members of the Temple and conducted the service with Rinban Kusunoki. Because incense is burned during the Buddhist service, the fire alarm company was notified of a possible false fire alarm in the gym.

The Scout's service was greatly appreciated by the Temple members, and it was nice to see all the energetic Scouts helping with the set up and clean up for the event.

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Letters: Vincent Okamoto Should Get the Medal of Honor

By Rodney Inefuku, Vietnam Vet

I wondered why Vincent Okamoto didn't get the Medal of Honor for his heroic action during the Vietnam War... as he sure as hell deserves it. What Okamoto did was nothing less than what Audie Murphy did during WW2.

Vincent Okamoto should have gotten his soon after his heroic action in Vietnam. He did get the Distinguished Service Cross... but he also deserves the MOH. If he was from Hawaii, he would have gotten it... the Hawaii congressional reps would have made sure of that.

What about California congressional reps? I think California should make every effort to see that Californian Vincent Okamoto gets awarded the MOH. Never too late.

Aloha!

Rodney Inefuku, Vietnam vet,
rodney.inefuku@gmail.com

Please watch the following Vincent Okamoto videos.

**American Valor: Judge Vincent Okamoto
American Veterans Center, 2016, 5:22 minutes**

<https://youtu.be/xzlhsXaBa80?feature=shared>

The story of Judge Vincent Okamoto, a man born in a Japanese American internment camp who would go on to become the most high-decorated Japanese American to survive the war in Vietnam. Introduction by Pat Sajak, and narration by Julianne Moore.

**Judge Vincent Okamoto, Vietnam Veteran (Full Interview)
American Veterans Center, 2017, 35:30 minutes**

https://youtu.be/k7_KdHkOEjk?feature=shared

Vincent Okamoto was born in a Japanese American internment camp during the Second World War. He would go on to become the most highly decorated Japanese American to survive the Vietnam War. Listen to his story here.



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We have made space for 9 more Veteran Bricks. No further space will be available after these 20 JA veteran bricks are filled. Orders will be taken on a first come, first served basis. Also, we have 284 Internee Bricks remaining. The price per brick is \$260.



If you are interested in purchasing a brick, please go to the www.nvcfoundation.org website and click the link under Japanese American Memorial Wall at the bottom of the page. Please print and return a copy of the donation form to: NVC Foundation, Japanese American Memorial Wall, 1212 S. King Street, Seattle WA 98144.

Questions? Contact Bev Kashino at bkashino@msn.com or 206-488-6678.

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Homes and Land Neighborhood Specialist

The One to Know

John L. Scott
REAL ESTATE

Community NEWS

Seattle First Hill Lions Club Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, February 25, 2024, from 8am – 1pm
Kawabe Memorial House, 221 18th Ave S, Seattle

What's better than a Sunday brunch that benefits the community? Be a part of this popular Seattle tradition and join us for all-you-can-eat pancakes, eggs, rice, and sausage, any time between 8 AM and 1 PM on Sunday, February 25 at Kawabe Memorial House! Bring your family, friends, and appetite to this popular fundraiser.

Sponsored by the Seattle First Hill Lions Club. The Pancake Breakfast benefits Kin On, Legacy House, Kawabe House, and Nikkei Manor. Tickets: \$15.00 per person.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/329264546764387/?ref=newsfeed>

CAPAA's Golden Celebration

March 23, 2024, 4:30pm – 7:00pm
Highline Community College, Mt. Townsend Room,
2400 S 240th St, Des Moines

Join us for a colorful evening at CAPAA's Golden Celebration! Get ready for a night filled with live entertainment, music, awards, and delicious food. Community members, organizations, and elected officials are all welcome and will be in attendance. This Golden Celebration is more than just a milestone; it's a testament to the dedication, resilience, and accomplishments of the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities in Washington. The event promises an evening filled with nostalgia, camaraderie, and a look back at the transformative initiatives that have shaped the landscape for Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the state. Information and Tickets: <https://capaa.wa.gov/golden-celebration/>

Wing Luke Museum Dinner & Auction

Saturday, March 23, 2024, 5pm – 9pm
Sheraton Grand Seattle, 1400 6th Ave, Seattle

Chinatown-International District is home to many who find community, comfort, and security. Join us in celebrating the resiliency that binds us together. Support the museum while reconnecting with long-time community members, learning about exciting new developments on the horizon, and reigniting your passion for arts and culture at our annual dinner & auction. All event proceeds benefit the programs and facilities of the Wing Luke Museum. Information and Tickets: <https://www.wingluke.org/eventscalendar/2024auction>

Commemoration of the 82nd Anniversary of the Exclusion

Saturday, March 30, 11am – 12 pm
Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Boardwalk
4192 NE Eagle Harbor Dr, Bainbridge Island

You are invited to join in commemorating the 82nd anniversary of the forced removal of Japanese Americans from Bainbridge Island. This year's theme is "Teach the Children."

<https://bijaema.org/event/commemoration-of-the-82nd-anniversary-of-the-exclusion/>

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Community NEWS
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Omoiyari – A Songfilm by Kishi Bashi

Bainbridge Island Museum of Art
Saturday, March 30, 3pm-5pm

BIJAEMA welcomes you to the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art for a screening of *Omoiyari*. In *Omoiyari: a Songfilm by Kishi Bashi*, internationally acclaimed composer and songwriter Kaoru Ishibashi (professionally known as “Kishi Bashi”) embarks on a personal quest by creating his music in locations relevant to the Japanese American Incarceration during WWII. It is on this journey in which Kishi Bashi comes to terms with his own identity and uncovers a myriad of social issues that have gripping modern relevance. *Omoiyari* is a genre breaking, artistic exploration that fuses history, music, and the complexities of the human condition. Ticketing details to follow: <https://bijaema.org/event/omoiyari-a-song-film-by-kishi-bashi/>

Seattle Cherry Blossom & Japanese Cultural Festival

Friday-Sunday, April 12-14, 2024
Seattle Center

Over the years, the award-winning non-profit Festival remains a free, life-enriching experience. It is dedicated to increasing the understanding and friendship between the people of Japan and the Pacific Northwest. As a public service, the Festival presents culturally educational programs, arts, technologies, and the rich heritage of Japan. Join us in celebrating the beautiful sakura, cherry trees, and the cultural and educational blossoms it inspires each year. Information: <https://cherryblossomfest.org/>

Kodomo no Hi

Sunday, May 5, 11am – 5pm
JCCCW, 1414 South Weller St, Seattle

Kodomo no Hi, or “Children’s Day,” is a fun and exciting opportunity to explore children’s culture in Japan. Hosted by the JCCCW, this free-to-attend annual festival connects children and families in the community, in a shared multicultural experience. Japanese and Japanese American culture, art, history, music, and more are waiting for you at this community celebration for children’s health and wellness! More details soon: <https://www.jcccw.org/kodomo-no-hi>

Japan Fair 2024

Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue
June 29 and 30, 2024

Japan Fair is a free, two-day festival in Bellevue, WA across the lake from Seattle, that celebrates Japanese art and culture. Formerly known as “Aki Matsuri”, Japan Fair is a communal endeavor of musicians, artisans, community organizations, and businesses from both Japan and the U.S. who come together to share their products, talents, and knowledge of Japan. Through live performances onstage, hands-on exhibits, cultural workshops, and vendor booths, the public is immersed in the music, dance, artisanry, and philosophy of Japan. Stay tuned for more information! <https://www.japanfairus.org/>



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Leslie Inaba at info@nvcfoundation.org or leave a message at NVC Hall: (206) 322-1122



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