

# TOPAZ TIMES THE CITY

Volume One Number One

July 1994

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## THE LONG AWAITED TAPE "TOPAZ MEMORIES: A JOURNEY OF THE HEART" IS NOW AVAILABLE.

Joe Mori

Dave Tatsuno, who many of you know, has put together a video tape which covers a period of time from 1943 to 1945, the 50th year Topaz Reunion held on September 4-5-6 of 1992 and the Return to Topaz trek which was held on May 29-30 1993. I think it covers subject matters that the Reunion goers have been asking for. And it should be something that will be of interest to the Sansei, Yonsei, Goseis and generations yet to come. This video tape will be made available to all comers with this proviso: Support the Topaz Museum Board in its effort to raise funds so the Museum will become a reality. A minimum donation of \$100 is asked for one tape. The committee will gladly accept any amount but for the copy of the tape, it is at least \$100. There is much to be done and a large amount of money is required so we ask that the donors be as generous as possible. This is the only camp that I know of that is making an effort to establish some sort of a permanent structure, besides a memorial monument at the camp site, to mark what happened a half a century ago to a minority group. Every one of us who is interested in not having a similar occurrence ever to happen again to any group, especially minority groups, in these United States should give support to this effort so there will be a perpetual reminder of how one group can abridge the rights of another group under the guise of "what is best for the Country."

Donation can be sent to the Topaz Museum Board as indicated below. A form is attached to the lower part of this article which may be used to request a copy of the video tape for a \$100 donation. If you wish to make a donation only, the Board will be more than happy to accept any amount you can manage to send. The same form may be used but delete the part about the video tape. Actually, the amount enclosed will indicate whether a tape will be

provided or not. Please allow six to eight weeks for shipment of tape. Fill out the form below, detach, and send with a check to:  
TOPAZ MUSEUM PO BOX 550 DELTA, UT 84624

*I am making a donation for the funding of the TOPAZ MUSEUM which is to be established in the town of Delta, Utah. I understand that a donation of at least \$100 will procure a copy of Dave Tatsuno's video tape "TOPAZ MEMORIES--A JOURNEY OF THE HEART".*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

## MUSEUM PROGRESS REPORT Ted Nagata

Due to the National JACL Convention being hosted in Salt Lake City this summer, the Museum Board has found it difficult to meet as often as in the past. However, work is progressing. This newsletter is one example. It was good to have Chuck Kubokawa join us for our last meeting in February 1994. Construction bids have been received to have the museum barrack renovated to 1942 condition and moved to a permanent site on the grounds of the Great Basin Museum in Delta. Board member Charlotte Morrison says this will cost approximately \$15,000 including the building of foundations. Work is scheduled to start with a ground breaking on July 16, 1994. Some questions remain on vendor qualifications in historic preservation work. Jane is investigating the possibility of having an historic preservation supervisor check the work. Chuck Kubokawa's idea of having a "Hammer and nails" committee of internees to assist in the work would assure more authenticity and care in workmanship. It could be a lot of fun and fellowship, too. A booth at the JACL Convention has been secured (free of charge) for more Museum information and fundraising. The acclaimed art exhibit "The View from Within: JA Art from the Internment Camps" will also be on display. Additional fundraising mailings are planned: the first to local Salt Lake City JACL members and internees, later a corporate mailing (this might be our most productive effort). Our bank balance as of May 31, 1994 stands at \$31,840, total donations are in the neighborhood of \$44,000. Jane Beckwith, Ted Nagata and Tom Morita presented a proposal to the Utah Centennial Commission 45 days ago for Topaz Museum funding -- recently we were notified that our efforts were successful and the Museum is soon to receive an additional \$5,000.

*Who are these three young ladies? If you can identify ANY of the pictures in this issue, please write to us.*



## REUNION CRUISE . . .

### ANYBODY INTERESTED? Chuck Kubokawa

Many of you have stated interest in having a final reunion commemorating the 50 years after being emancipated out of the U.S. Concentration Camp. That would be sometime next year in 1995.



## SCHOOL CHUMS

Here's Topaz Jr. High, June 1943, loaned by Chuck Kubokawa, given to him by Harry Mizote, (Palo Alto, CA) the picture was taken by Bob Utsumi's father in camp. He was the official camp photographer. The picture depicts the home room class of Mr. Bob Cummings, I wonder where he lives now? Do you have any old photos we can use in the newsletter and/or museum?

There was an idea for a real get together where everyone including the planners of these reunions could actively take part to enjoy the reunion in total. To put it bluntly, a cruise where everything would be taken care of by the cruise people. It would leave time for the attendees to truly enjoy the entire gathering spending time together with people who we didn't have much time to spend with in the last reunion.

The ship will separate everyone from their local surrounds and those attending will not have to rush home or leave for business meetings etc. Everyone attending would have to sever their cord with their normal everyday life for the duration of the trip. In so doing the entertainment, and whatever personal activity regimen can be self administered on board ship, eg: aerobics, weight lifting, swimming, jogging, playing pool, cards, drinking, reading, dancing, seeing movies, spending time with the entire family on neutral ground, etc. at your own pace with all the facilities available on board ship. Everyone will be confined on board to give it a nostalgic flavor of being incarcerated, or taking a boat back to Japan ... (Just joking) and just think you won't have to drive home after partying. If you are interested in such a reunion please fill out the return response portion below. If there's enough positive response there would be a chance for maybe chartering the entire ship with a savings that could be extended to all our fares. The cruise would be open to anyone who wants to join the group.

The cruise can also have a forum like we had in the last reunion and we could also have educational, informational and exhibit items for viewing scheduled for the non activity hours to supplement on board activities. Whatever ... please let us know your feelings so that we can provide you with the results on the next newsletter. THANKS MUCH !

Please check the appropriate statements and provide additional data if you so desire. I am: ☐ not interested. ☐ do not know at this time but please keep me informed. ☐ interested in participating.

☐ I'm ready to go, sign me up for the trip. How many persons? \_\_\_\_

☐ single, would like to share a room. Number of days on cruise, 3, 4, ? \_\_\_\_ Destination: ☐ Hawaii, ☐ Caribbean, ☐ Alaska,

☐ Mexico, ☐ Canada, ☐ Mediterranean, ☐ Other, ☐ Round

trip, ☐ One Way, ☐ Part of a longer trip Please return this questionnaire and personal candid comments on a separate sheet to:  
C. Kubokawa, 3365 Stockton Place  
Palo Alto, CA 94303-4202

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## EDITORIAL Joe Mori, Editor

Welcome to the "New" Topaz Times. This may be a needed forum from which individuals may expound their ideas and thoughts pertaining to things connected to Topaz, the Topaz Museum, which is in its infancy, and other things which may be of interest to the rapidly dwindling numbers of us who were camp inmates, to our offsprings and friends. There is need to perpetuate the memories of what happened when a majority group rode rough-shod over a minority group, ignoring the rights which have been established as the law of the land by the adoption of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Any relaxing of vigilance to protect the rights of the peoples of this land could again bring about the deprivation of this fragile thing called freedom. This idea of incarcerating behind barbed wires and sentry towers, a group of people because of their racial background was raised as recently as during Desert Storm.

As the articles in this premier issue of New Topaz Times indicate, there is interest in another reunion to coincide with the departure from the womb of WRA, a call for help in carrying out the many chores which need to be done to make the Topaz Museum a reality, a report as to the financial status so far collected for the use on the Topaz Museum and other concerns.

In my role as editor, it is necessary to reserve my right to be selective in publication and at times refuse to publish articles which, in my judgement, do not belong in a newsletter such as this. I shall also edit articles as necessary and will do so such that the gist of what is being presented is not destroyed.

## HAMMER, NAILS AND YOUR TIME C. Kubokawa

The Topaz Museum Project, is in dire need of dollar donations to carry the project through to its completion, a statement of fact! In





order to further support the project in any way we can, an idea of maybe actively taking part on the project was brought up. The participation would be somewhat like project "HABITAT", that even our past President Carter, takes part. All it takes is a hammer and your volunteer time to pound some nails. Its like raising a barn, only it will be to finish off the Topaz Museum, once the foundation is in. A working group could drive or meet in Delta, and stay for a week to take part, and at nights have fellowship and fun talking about old times or do anything you want like meeting townspeople, or socializing with them to express our thoughts and gratitude . . . Jane Beckwith is doing a tremendous job in Delta, but she really needs help any way she can get it.

If you have time and want to volunteer for the building project please feel free to respond, or give the editor your comments and thoughts so we can share your ideas with the rest of the readers. A good idea is worth nothing until one shares the thoughts with others who may be able to help implement that idea. You can provide all of us with thoughts we may have missed or didn't even think about. Any takers ?

## INTERESTING ARTIFACT DONATIONS CONTINUE TO ARRIVE

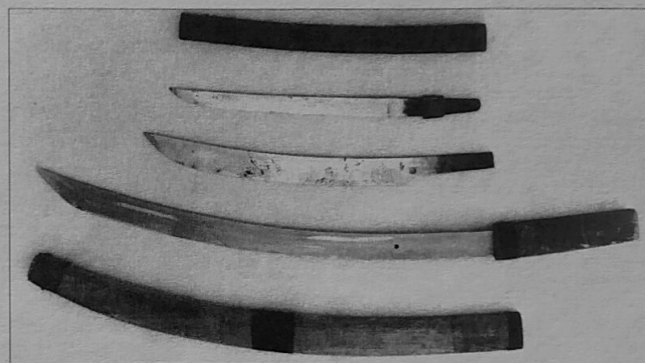
*Jane Beckwith*

Finally, it seems that every day we are moving toward our goal of a wonderful Topaz Museum. We have enough money to begin restoration; we are printing a newsletter to keep people informed; and we are steadily collecting artifacts to furnish the Museum. In the past month we have received two very interesting gifts: a set of four chairs from Frank Kami of Berkeley and four swords from Mrs. Edith Ikemoto, now living in Salinas.

The chairs were made from wooden boxes used to ship personal belongings from Tanforan to Topaz. Each chair is sturdy with an apron around the seat braced from beneath. The simple design is very pleasant. Underneath one chair it reads: Mess-12 Group-B 9-22-42 (The date the family left Tanforan.) James J. (Kami) 13696. The swords were made in camp from a leaf spring of a car. Mrs. Ikemoto sent a brief note, but the Museum volunteers are full of questions that may never be answered. The largest sword, almost three feet has a scabbard and hilt made of wood. Two of the three other blades are unfinished, one has a lacquer sheath.

Others who have donated items include the entire collection of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Sekerak, shell brooches and carved birds from Leighton and Helen Dingley, a fine suzuri carved from slate from Antelope Springs and fitted with a wooden case from Roy Shimada. Many items from Delta residents are also making

their way to the Museum. The Topaz Museum Board has been promised large items, a piano and other furniture. We will make arrangements to pick up donations from the Bay Area and transport things back to Delta by a rental truck. If you have items you would like to donate, write or call Jane Beckwith, Box 272, Delta, Utah 84624 (801) 864-2098 so we can schedule the pickup trip. Thank you so much for all your help.



## CAMPSITE RESOLUTION *Chuck Kubokawa*

At the August 1994 National JACL Convention, in Salt Lake City, there will be a resolution brought before the attending national delegates to vote on relative to all the ten past WRA Campsites. This resolution authored by Chuck Kubokawa, and introduced by the Sequoia JACL Chapter, will be to charge JACL, as a project, to get the U.S. Government to make all the former campsites into a "National Historic Site". By taking such action, and if the U.S., does it, the upkeep, erection of a standardized monument, etc. will be handled by the Government, no longer resting upon the shoulders of the survivors. There will also be another plus in that once erected, if anyone defaces the monument it will be a Federal offense

## WE WOULD LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU *Chuck Kubokawa*

As you may know by now Mr. Joe Mori, has graciously accepted the editorship of this new "Topaz Times," to keep everyone informed as to the goings on of our camp people. It is an unique quest and hopefully all of you receiving this newsletter will enjoy the thoughts of all the contributors and ideas that have been in your mind for all these years with no place to go. Well now you will have an outlet because the Topaz Museum board is hoping to publish this newsletter twice a year letting you know how the museum project is

coming along, and providing you a way for keeping everyone in touch. Please write, or call with your input, photographs, and other ideas to: Joe Mori. at 18973 Sara Park Circle. Saratoga, CA 95070 (408) 973-1185. Will you please let us know whether you think this newsletter is interesting and worth while enough to keep it going? We would sincerely enjoy any response if anyone is out there reading our newsletter. Hello, Hello!, Hello, is anyone out there?

## MAILING LIST

Our mailing addresses are based upon the original "1992 Reunion" Mailing List, and is not complete, therefore, if you know of anyone excluded from the original list not receiving this newsletter please let us know so that we can establish a complete list. After the last reunion the past committe was told that many people never received notices or knew about the reunion, therefore, this is an attempt to close the break in the loop so everyone will know what is going on. It may be that in some cases the mail didn't go through and may be in some warehouse in Chicago (just joking ).

TOPAZ TIMES Summer 1994, Premier issue

Joe Mori, editor; Ted Nagata, design & layout

Contributors: Chuck Kubokawa, Jane Beckwith, Ted Nagata

Photo credits: School -Mr. Utsumi, artifacts -Jane Beckwith  
all others: Tokuye Sato Printed in Delta, Utah

**Help us reach our goal -  
Additional funding is needed to  
keep the Topaz Museum project alive.**

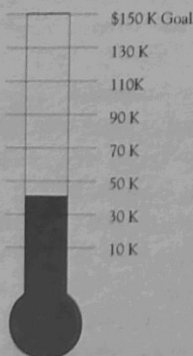
## TOPAZ MUSEUM



GREAT BASIN MUSEUM

TOPAZ TIMES  
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Topaz Museum Board  
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Charlotte Morrison, Delta  
Dave Tatsuno, San Jose  
Ted Nagata, Salt Lake City  
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Chuck Kubokawa, Palo Alto



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July 18, 1994

Topaz Museum holds official ground breaking ceremony

In a ground breaking ceremony last Saturday, the Great Basin Museum officially kicked off the restoration project of the Topaz recreation hall which will be the central artifact of the Topaz Museum. Construction on the project is scheduled to begin immediately. A small crowd of Delta citizens gathered to hear the history of the project as well as discuss future developments.

Originally, the committee planned on refurbishing the recreation hall to house the Museum and its memorabilia. Upon further consideration, that seemed to distort the historic nature of the building, since it was badly made when it was used at the camp.

In a bold step, the committee decided to enlarge the scope of the project by constructing a new building to house the Museum and then restore the barrack as an artifact. We like having the climate play a role in the experience people will have when they enter the hall, as there will be no central heating only coal burning stoves.

In his welcome address, Mayor Don Dafoe related a story about the hat he was wearing for the occasion. He received it as a gift from Chuck Kubokawa at the Topaz Pilgrimage last year. He said his grandson asked him why he hadn't given back the hat since it said, "Return to Topaz May 30, 1994."

He concluded by saying how much he supported the Topaz Museum. Other speakers voiced the same sentiment.

On a more distressing note

At the same meeting I learned the unhappy news that the Topaz site is being irreparably damaged by development. It's hard to believe that someone would choose to live at the site, and it is equally hard for me to believe that someone would be so willing to destroy such an important historic landmark.

Those of you who attended the Return to Topaz pilgrimage last year may remember that a house had been moved to block 28. Now, telephone service has been extended to the site for three homes, possibly more, thus destroying in a couple of months what the desert protected for fifty years.

I have been talking with a few agencies trying to obtain some protection for the area, but haven't made much progress. The article in the newsletter about gaining National Historic Site status takes an approach which would certainly be timely. If you would like to volunteer help, please write or call.

  
Jane Beckwith