

From the Director: Tom Ikeda

It's springtime in Seattle which means it's time for our Special April 1st Edition of the Densho eNews. Please have a laugh to brighten your day!

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In our continuing effort to reach new people, I am pleased to announce that our annual Sushi & Sake Festival will become Sushi, Sake & Weed! Not only will the new event attract a hipper Nisei audience, it will also connect to Japanese American history. For example, when it was time to come back home from Heart Mountain, George "Hash" Hashimoto wasn't sure what he and his family were going to do. As was the case with many Japanese American families, they had lost their farmland in escheat proceedings -- a process whereby the state repossessed the land under the tenets of the alien land law as part of the drive to discourage Nikkei from returning -- and had no idea how they were going to make a living. Like many others, they turned to domestic work and farm labor to make ends meet, eventually saving enough money to buy a small piece of property that would allow them to start over. But what could they grow on a small plot that would be lucrative enough to support the growing Hashimoto clan?

"It happened when my dad was interned at Ft. Sill," said Hash. A local Japanese Association president, Hash's father Tsutomu was among those Issei community leaders arrested immediately after the attack on Pearl Harbor and sent to a series of internment camps run by the army or Department of Justice. With little to do at Ft. Sill Internment Camp in Oklahoma, Tsutomu and other Issei men played go and shogi, made carvings out of wood, and brewed their own sake. And grew cannabis. "One of the old bachelors used to grow the stuff in California," said Hash, "and showed the others." Known for their lavish gardens, the men were able to hide the illegal plants amidst other flowering and ornamental plants in their gardens. They were even able to make a little money underground by selling the dried leaves and buds to neighbors.

Tsutomu passed on his skills in cultivating -- and camouflaging -- the plant to his family, and the Hashimotos starting growing small amounts on their little plot and soon found a booming market in the expanding postwar economy. "We grew other crops too," said Hash, "but cannabis really put the kids through college." They kept in touch with the families of the other men from Fort Sill and formed a joint distribution network. The "Hash" brand become well-known and highly respected and many Sansei family members went into the business.

With the recent legalization of marijuana in Washington and Colorado and widespread support of it elsewhere, families like the Hashimotos are beginning to tell their stories. (Of course since cultivation is still mostly illegal, the names in this story are all pseudonyms.)

This fall, if you attend the first annual Sushi, Sake & Weed, in addition to being able to sample some of the city's best sushi and sake, you will also be able to try "Hash" and other concoctions representing the best of Japanese American marijuana growers. We hope you can join us at our event, which promises to be



educational, uplifting, and good clean -- and legal -- fun!

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Densho News

Densho to Start Line of Nostalgic Fragrances

Have you ever wanted to liven up a party or family gathering while also getting the young people interested in Nikkei history and culture? If so, Densho's Nikkei Experience in a Can series might be just what you are looking for.

One spray of the Issei Home in a Can will instantly fill any room with the familiar and welcoming smell of a typical Japanese American home of the 1920s and 1930s: the refreshing pine scent of freshly prepared kadomatsu, the clinical scent of moxa, and the refreshing aroma of takuwan. Tanforan in a Can will first recreate the smell of horse stall accommodations in horse racing tracks turned "assembly centers" such as Santa Anita and Tanforan, while Manzanar in a Can will cover the room in dust in an uncanny recreation of a Manzanar (or Topaz, Heart Mountain, etc.) dust storm.

Among the many uses:

- for recreating the ambiance of the largely rural Japanese American home of the 1930s for an "Emperor's Birthday" theme party (especially if you live in some antiseptic smelling contemporary suburban tract home)
- as a "gag" retirement gift for your favorite Nisei
- to help set the scene for "teachers" of Japanese American history at all levels
- to increase the impact of anniversary party, special birthday or funereal slide shows/videos

Though limited to cans today, we look forward to the day when we will be able to transmit scents through our website, which will be used to "enhance" our visual life history collection.



Densho to Start "Concentration" Camp

Remember the kid's memory based card game "concentration"? To play, card pairs are placed face down on a table. Players take turns turning over the cards, then turning them back face down and attempting to remember the location of each card. The goal is to use your memory to uncover matching pairs of cards, with the winner uncovering the most matching pairs.

To encourage kids of all ages to learn more about the Japanese American wartime incarceration, Densho has created a series of "Concentration Camp Concentration" cards. Each card will include the name of a concentration camp -- or a key event, person, or other topic tied to the Japanese American camp experience. While playing the fun, memory based game, players will also become familiar with key topics of the incarceration saga. The 5,589 card set will provide hours (or perhaps days) of entertainment -- and education -- and will retail for \$442.00.

But beyond creating the "Concentration Camp Concentration" cards, Densho has decided to go one step further. With many parents searching for spring break programs that provide more than day care, Densho has created a week long camp that will feature learning built around the cards. The "Concentration Camp Concentration" Camp -- or just "Concentration Camp" for short -- will be a fun and educational experience for kids between the ages of 6 and 32. In addition to the standard "concentration" game, campers will learn many variations, including "sumo concentration" and "stockade concentration," Campers over the age of 21 can also take part in a drinking



based version of the game, featuring sake brewed from a recipe first developed at Tule Lake!

For this first year of the program, we are starting with a limited trial run serving kids in the Seattle area, to be held at the Densho headquarters. The Densho office -- which was formerly the site of a Japanese nursery school -- will once again echo with sounds of children's laughter. Densho staff will run the camp. Some will be dressed in period military police uniforms and sit in replica guard towers, others will dress like camp era school teachers, and one will blend in among the campers, asking invasive questions for an anthropological "study" of the program.

Space is limited so sign up by April 30 for the first Densho Concentration Camp. Tuition for the week will be \$120,000.

New Seattle Restaurant Inspires "Camp Foodies"

With a James Beard "Best Young Chef" nomination and stints at The Spotted Pig, Chez Panisse and Le Bernadin, rising star Mill Donyer is creating buzz around his new Japanese American incarceration-themed venture in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood, Bloc 87A.

The space itself is a multi-million-dollar renovation by the celebrated Finnish designer Tod Withjen located in a storefront along the trendy 12th Avenue entertainment corridor. The custom tables and benches are constructed of reclaimed Italian wooden palettes. Artisan-crafted bare electric bulbs and handmade tar paper help to complete the unique atmosphere. "I was lucky to have had the resources to truly realize my vision, though we did have to make a few compromises. The health department would not let me use real horse manure on the floors," says Withjen.

The menu is composed of "camp classics, reimagined for the 21st century palate." Diners can begin their evening with a small-batch cocktail made in Bloc 87A's own micro-distillery, located in the utility closet in the back of the restaurant, along with an organic free-range Spam and chipped-grass-fed-beef charcuterie plate.

Entrees include Donyer's, "Mutton Stew," featuring lamb sourced locally from Diden Ranch, known for heirloom Katahdin sheep, along with beet and parsnip gnocchi in a chanterelle-dashi broth.

A trio of confit smoked duck roulade sits atop a bed of fava beans to make "Vienna sausages and beans." Donyer remarks, "our first iteration of the dish used cannellini beans; but I thought the green better evoked the tinge of the original."

Bloc 87A's signature dessert is a fennel-infused risotto, studded with candied, preserved huckleberries that Donyer forages himself in the Cascade foothills just outside Seattle. "It's an homage to everyone's camp favorite: rice pudding with raisins," he explains.

Some may wonder about the connection between camp and cutting-edge cuisine. "If you think about it, being forced to grow some of your own food and sneaking out at night to fish in the irrigation ditch are exactly the kinds of practices that underpin the sustainable, locavore movement," says Donyer, adding, "though 'Slow Food' generally doesn't mean having to stand in line for three hours."

Bloc 87A is open daily for a single dinner service and takes no reservations; however, in an innovative partnership, the local FBI office randomly selects 120 lucky patrons each morning who are provided with free transportation to the restaurant.



Happy April 1st!

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