

Spring 2022 Japanese Hall Newsletter



This Issue:

Update: What Is Happening

Exhibits

Event: Girl's Day Festival

Outreach Updates

Vickie's Award

PROJECT: A Japanese Hall built in 1928 by members of the Japanese community and continued to function as a Japanese Hall until 2018 has been relocated to the Legacy of the Plains Museum (LPM) in Gering, NE. Here, the history of the Japanese and Japanese Americans from Nebraska and the High Plains will be preserved.

What is happening - We are not yet open, but we have been making progress:

Exhibits

The exhibit creation process has been more complicated and involved than was initially envisioned! The text must be written, revised, and discussed to ensure it is accurate and tells the stories we want to include. Differences in interpretations must be discussed including wording and audience perceptions. The first round of text review took almost three drafts to make it to the final design. The designer has adjusted his vision to fit what visual elements we want included and how to use these items to convey the stories and history.

The photos and artifacts play an important role in the work of the designer and his team in bringing together this vision. The exhibit company brings expertise to form the best experience for visitors. The exhibit committee of the Advisory Council has been working diligently with the exhibitors. Unfortunately, Root House Studio has been slowed by the pandemic and by supply chain issues which has caused significant delays. We will begin fabrication in May and **hope** to begin initial installation in May though the process will probably continue through the end of the year.

Outreach: Girl’s Day Festival



Hinamatsuri is an annual festival in Japan which takes place around March 3rd. It is also known as “Girl’s Day” or “Doll Festival”. The festival is held to pray for the healthy growth, prosperity and happiness of girls, especially young ones of the age of 10 or under. Our first Girls' Day Festival hosted at Legacy of the Plains Museum (“LPM”) on March 5th was a success for all in attendance. Participants had to brave the wind and snow, and spent the day enjoying activities, hearing presentations, and tasting food.

The LMP has many donated Japanese dolls, and this event gave us an opportunity to showcase all these beautiful dolls. The LPM’s Japanese doll collection has many doll types: a Hina Doll display which includes the emperor, empress and members of the court; a doll made of carved ivory; a variety of Kokeshi dolls with no arms or



legs; Hakata Urasaki dolls which are of older people and made of unglazed clay who depict daily life in Japan; Daruma dolls that are purchased with no eyes and the eyes are then filled in for good luck; baby dolls with faces made from crushed oyster shells, and many geisha, samurai, and other dolls.





The day began with a demonstration and lecture by Gayle Hashimoto Rojas, assisted by Cindy Yamamoto, on Origami. It was fun to watch people making various shapes, from cranes to simple cups. Gayle discussed the symbolism of the cranes and the background of the 1,000 cranes for healing.

Akemi Glass described Girl's Day celebrations in Japan, when special Hina dolls are brought out.

Traditional foods that might be eaten on that day include pink mochi; pink, green and white rice crackers; and sushi. She also shared information about a few Japanese children's games and dancing.

Charla Smith shared her experiences of living in Japan. Her husband, Jim, was in the Navy and they chose to live off base in the village of Miname-Kincade for two years. She enjoyed learning about her neighbors and the culture of Japan. In addition, she learned about Ikebana flower arranging and took lessons on making Geisha Dolls. Charla made 14 dolls which she donated to the museum. Each has a story. She shared her art with participants, answering many questions.

The final demonstration was Diane Mercer, assisted by her brother, Ron Sakurada, who had never made sushi before. He is now an expert! Demonstrations included three types of Sushi.

1. Spam Musubi (spam sushi) which originated in Hawaii during WWII (the military included Spam in soldier rations).
2. Inari, sushi rice stuffed in fried bean curd.
3. Maki sushi, rice and assorted vegetables rolled in seaweed, then sliced. The lucky participants sampled the sushi.



Children enjoyed playing games, listening to stories such as "Grandfather's Journey", coloring, and crafting. There were Japanese snacks and prizes for all.

Also joining the Festival were Joni Hotz and Michael Leach who sold pictures related to Japan and artwork with a Japanese flair.



Spam Sushi Platter



International Quilt Museum Aids Japanese Hall Project

On April 8, 2022, the International Quilt Museum used its' technology to help our exhibit contractor with the detail and high-resolution photos needed for one of our theater curtains. This will preserve the artifact through digital pictures for future generations and allow us to use this technology to create a smaller exhibit. This theater curtain was made for an event at Japanese Hall in 1929. According to the writing on the curtain, it is a gift to the Scottsbluff Theater Club, 4th year of the Showa emperor (Hirohito) by the Eagle Café, phone no. 181 and Broadway Café phone no. 912. We thank the International Quilt Museum for helping our Project preserve this history and for their ongoing and exceptional work in the preservation of the many precious and beautiful quilts in their collection. Their expertise and advise in the preservation of fabrics was greatly appreciated and worth traveling to Lincoln, Nebraska to see.



**Jamie Schwartz and Sarah Walcott
International Quilt Museum arranging curtain**

Japanese Hall Featured on Pure Nebraska

Pure Nebraska, a Channel 10-11 daily program features unique places in Nebraska. On April 8, one of the spotlights included the Japanese Hall move from downtown Scottsbluff to Legacy of the Plains Museum in Gering. The program included an interview with Project Construction Manager, John Miyoshi, and can be viewed at: <https://www.1011now.com/sponsored/nebraska-community-foundation/small-building-shares-big-history-nebraskas-japanese-settlers/>

Outreach: Asian Community and Cultural Center Lincoln, NE:

On May 22, 2022, at the Lancaster Event Center-Lincoln Room, the Asian Community and Cultural Center will celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Center from 1:00 to 5:00 P.M. In conjunction with Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, Asian groups throughout the region will have displays and put on different cultural performances and storytelling. The Japanese Hall and History Project has been asked to participate and share the history of early Japanese Immigration. Over the past 30 years, the Asian Community & Cultural Center has served immigrants and refugees. It has made important contributions to promote cultural exchange and mutual respect among various ethnic communities. We look forward to participating in this event and sharing the history of Japanese Immigrants in Nebraska. For more information see their website.

[Asian Community and Cultural Center: Home \(lincolnasiancenter.org\)](http://lincolnasiancenter.org)

Champion of History Award:

The Champion of History Award was presented to Vickie Sakurada Shaepler. She was selected for her efforts to share the history of Japanese immigrants and their families in Nebraska and the High Plains. She has been a key individual behind preserving Japanese Hall in Scottsbluff, NE. After learning the building, built in 1928, was scheduled for demolition, she, and a group of people from across Nebraska raised funds to move the building to the Legacy of the Plains Museum campus in Gering. The building will be restored and serve as a museum featuring the Japanese and Japanese American communities.

The award was presented by Senator Jon Lowe of Vickie's home legislative district, also in attendance was Senator John Stinner who represents the Scottsbluff area and is a long-time supporter of the project.



Future Feature: Accessioning Committee

In a future edition, we will showcase the important work of our Accessioning Committee. Diane Mercer, Cindy Yamamoto, and Anita Marcus spearhead this important part of the LPM. Accessioning involves the collecting, storing, recording, preserving of items obtained by the Museum.

Newsletter Contact Information: JHALLNews@legacyoftheplains.org

Please send us Email Addresses or Name and USPS Address to add your family and friends to our Distribution List.

Or mail your requests to: Matt Sakurada, Communication Coordinator
62180 E 313 Rd.
Grove, OK 74344

Donations to preserve Japanese Hall or help with ongoing maintenance, may be made to: Oregon Trail Community Foundation: **OTCF-Japanese Hall**, P.O. Box 1344, 115 W. Railway Street, Scottsbluff, NE 69363-1344

Or to the Legacy of the Plains Museum, **LPM-Japanese Hall**, 2930 Old Oregon Trail, Gering, NE 69341.

The OTCF and LPM are 501 (C) (3) Organizations.

Checks should be written to: **OTCF-Japanese Hall** or **LPM-Japanese Hall** for us to receive credit.

You may also contribute directly to the fund at the Oregon Trail Community Website at:

[Oregon Trail Community Foundation : Japanese Hall : Japanese Hall \(otcf.org\)](http://otcf.org)

If you would like recognition or wish to donate in memory of or in honor of an individual, please contact: Japanesehall@legacyoftheplains.org for donation recognition information. Thank you for your interest in preserving this unique part of Nebraska history.

Advisory Council: LPM Japanese Hall & History Center OTCF/LPM-JH

George Behringer, Honorary Counsel, General of Japan, Emeritus, Omaha, NE	Brian Croft, Scottsbluff, NE
Katherine Endacott, Pleasant Dale, NE	Jane Fliesbach, Scottsbluff, NE
Dr. Heather Frye, Omaha, NE	Dr. Don Gentry, Gering, NE
Kim Hachiya, Lincoln, NE	Roger Hara, Tucson, AZ
Sharon Ishii-Jordan, Omaha, NE	Steve Kay, North Platte, NE
Cathy McDaniel, Ex. Administrator, OTCF, Scottsbluff, NE	Diane Sakurada Mercer, Torrington, WY
Kara Miyagishima, Denver, CO	John Miyoshi, Wahoo, NE
Rick Myers, Gering, NE	Larry Nagaki, Phoenix, AZ
Gayle Hashimoto Rojas, Scottsbluff, NE	Jodi Ruzicka, Scottsbluff, NE
Vickie Sakurada Schaepler, J Hall Coordinator, Kearney, NE	Matt Sakurada, Grove, OK
Paul Snyder, Scottsbluff, NE	Elizabeth Stobel, Scottsbluff, NE
Dr. Nathan Tye, Kearney, NE	Susan Ugai, Lincoln, NE
Julie Ushio, Honolulu, HI	David Wolf, Director of LOP, Gering, NE

Other Support

Anita Marcus, Lyman, NE	Kate Donnelly Dodd, Cary NC	Cindy Yamamoto, Scottsbluff, NE
-------------------------	-----------------------------	---------------------------------