

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JAPANESE CANADIANS

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE – SEPTEMBER 2019



### COPANI XX



Photo: Courtesy COPANI XX Facebook Site

COPANI XX has now come and gone and we thank all of the members of the San Francisco organizing committee, headed by Roji Oyama, for putting together a truly memorable event. There was a total of 250 delegates in attendance, with representatives from Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Paraguay, Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Columbia, United States and Japan. Canada was well represented, with 40 attendees. We also thank all of the speakers and panelists for sharing their insights and promoting some thought-provoking discussions.

We encourage all those that attended to submit pictures and articles to our next newsletter!

### National Office

180 McPhillips Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3E 2J9  
(204) 943 2910

[www.najc.ca](http://www.najc.ca)

### Contact Us!

#### EXECUTIVE

Lorene Oikawa

[president@najc.ca](mailto:president@najc.ca)

Keiko Miki

[vp@najc.ca](mailto:vp@najc.ca)

Les Kojima

[treasurer@najc.ca](mailto:treasurer@najc.ca)

Eiko Eby

[secretary@najc.ca](mailto:secretary@najc.ca)

#### DIRECTORS

Kiyoshi Dembo,

[membership@najc.ca](mailto:membership@najc.ca)

Alex Miki

[youngleaders@najc.ca](mailto:youngleaders@najc.ca)

Susanne Tabata

[ace@najc.ca](mailto:ace@najc.ca)

Bryan Tomlinson,

[governance@najc.ca](mailto:governance@najc.ca)

David Mitsui

[pastpresident@najc.ca](mailto:pastpresident@najc.ca)

#### STAFF

Kevin Okabe

[ed@najc.ca](mailto:ed@najc.ca)

(403) 561 7572

Executive Director

Karina Uehara

[national@najc.ca](mailto:national@najc.ca)

(204) 943 2910

National Administrator

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### **BC Redress**

The hard-working BC Redress Steering Committee has completed the consultation process and they are now in the process of compiling the results. We thank all those that participated in the consultations.

#### ***BC Redress in the News***

Go to the links below to see some of the latest news on BC Redress that appeared in the media recently:

September 20, 2019 Globe and Mail Opinion Article by Jordan Stanger-Ross

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-japanese-canadians-deserve-justice-from-bc/>

### **Also in the News**

September 21, 2019 National Post Article by Tyler Dawson

<https://nationalpost.com/news/unearthed-japanese-camp-in-b-c-mountains-was-likely-an-escape-from-racism-until-internment-intervened>

September 6, 2019 News Article by Craig Takeuchi on George Takei and Tashme

<https://www.straight.com/news/1296631/activist-george-takei-visits-japanese-canadian-internment-site-while-fearing-trump>

March 15, 2019 Windsor Post News Article by Sharon Hill (Japanese Canadians in Essex County)

<https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/dark-history-of-japanese-canadian-detainees-brought-to-light>

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### NAJC President's Message



By Lorene Oikawa

September always holds strong memories for me including starting a new school year, meeting old and new friends, and new learning. This September we will be making more

memories when the NAJC executive, representatives of NAJC member organizations, and members of the Japanese Canadian community will be heading out to San Francisco for COPANI XX, the 20th Biennial Pan American Nikkei Convention. Some will be meeting up with old friends and for most of us, we will be meeting new friends, and discovering the links between those from North and South America with Japanese ancestry. We will be learning about our different cultures, and the work we are all doing, and discover areas for collaboration and support. We will have opportunities to attend sessions and hear from speakers on a range of topics. Since each participant will come back with a unique experience including different connections, learning, and resources, we hope to collect reports so all member organizations will benefit. I will share some impressions in next month's president's report and for those who use social media check out the Facebook posts (National Association of Japanese Canadians) and Twitter feed (@najc\_ca) September 20-22 when we will share some of the highlights and what we are experiencing at COPANI XX. If you are attending COPANI XX please make sure you register with us so that we know you are attending and how to contact you. When we

have more details about the convention agenda and find out about the availability of a venue, we are going to try to organize a gathering for the JC delegation in San Francisco.

NAJC will share our work on BC Redress with COPANI participants. Thanks to the hard work of the BC Redress Committee and the organizational skills of our Executive Director, on August 31st, we completed 19 community consultation sessions and received input from the Japanese Canadian community at in-person meetings, virtual sessions, and through online submissions. A very special thank you to the NAJC member organizations and volunteers for your support and to all of you who contributed your ideas and comments. We stressed from the beginning that it was important to hear from as many voices from the JC community as possible. Through September, the BC Redress Committee is reviewing all the submissions and developing recommendations. The NAJC National Executive Board will be reviewing the report and discussing the recommendations with the membership at a zoom meeting on September 28. An email with the meeting details will be sent out to members. The plan is for the report and recommendations to be presented to the BC government and JC community by October 16, 2019 to be in time for consideration for the next year's provincial BC budget.

Last month, we held our first virtual AGM. I am pleased to say that the technology worked and supported this online meeting so we were able to conduct our AGM business smoothly and it was cost effective.

We started off the meeting by acknowledging Indigenous territory. The Japanese Canadian community started with long-time settlers like my family who came to Canada in the 1800s

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and 1906, and we want to recognize First Peoples and the traditional Indigenous territories when we meet.

Part of the business is announcements and we reminded members that we have openings on the Endowment Fund Committee, Human Rights Committee, Audit Committee, and Nominations Committee. For more information please contact [national@najc.ca](mailto:national@najc.ca)

We also shared some important recognition at this meeting.

NAJC past president David Mitsui was recognized for his hard work and dedication. He has continued to provide guidance and support for a year after he completed his term as president last year. The 2019 AGM is his last meeting as past president. I have appreciated his support when I was his vice president and started the process for BC Redress. We will miss him, but I know he will not be far and look forward to seeing him at the next Remembrance Day ceremonies in Vancouver. He has shared his memory as a 5 year old boy visiting his grandfather, Sgt Masumi Mitsui, and admiring his grandfather's WWI medals and then the profound impact on his life when he received the medals after his grandfather's death. His grandfather's story is a reminder of the heroic efforts of the Japanese Canadian Issei volunteers in the First World War – their bravery and the 54 who lost their lives and their fight off the battlefield to attain the right to vote which they finally received in 1931.

Another former NAJC president, Terumi Kuwada, will receive well-deserved recognition at the Islamic Social Services Association Canada's 20th Anniversary Gala Dinner in Winnipeg on September 19, 2019. Terumi's efforts to support a just and peaceful society

through her work for the Japanese Canadian community and her cross-cultural work with the Muslim community is inspiring. We join in the accolades and thank Terumi for all she has done and continues to do.

We paid tribute to Gordon Kadota, a former NAJC president, who passed away on July 31, 2019. Gordon Kadota will be remembered for his important work on behalf of the Japanese Canadian community and his many accomplishments. Please see the article in this edition of e-news.

Also in August, I was honoured to attend the premiere performance of Linda Ohama's new play *From the Inland Sea* which took place at the former Murakami Boatworks in Steveston BC. It's a deeply moving story about her grandfather Otokichi Murakami's dream to be a boatbuilder and his journey from the Seto Naikai Sea (Inland Sea of Japan) to Steveston and to a 1948 hearing before the Bird Commission. Her powerful play connects us with family, their perseverance, and their dreams.

Lots of memories past and present.

Take the time in September to make more wonderful memories with your loved ones.

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### JAPANESE CANADIANS RESPOND TO MAXIME BERNIER – by Alex Miki September 25, 2019

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) is deeply disturbed by the recent video posted by the People's Party of Canada Facebook page on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019.

<https://www.facebook.com/hon.maximebernier/videos/vb.10419173702/784288095354979/?type=2&theater>

In this post, Maxime Bernier expresses his proposal to end official Multiculturalism in Canada. He states that “in the past, immigrants who came to Canada readily integrated into our society”, while showing an image of Japanese Canadians boarding trains from Slocan BC, to be exiled to Japan under the Repatriation Bill in 1946:



(“Repatriation” to Japan, Slocan, 1946. NNM 1996.178.1.33).

During World War II, more than 21,000 Canadians of Japanese descent were forcibly uprooted, dispossessed and incarcerated. After the war, Japanese Canadians were not allowed to return to the west coast and were required to move to Eastern Canada or go to Japan under the Repatriation Bill, a country many had never known. This photo depicted in Mr. Bernier’s

video is not a moment of welcoming new Canadians. It is a moment depicting Japanese Canadians being derided and subjected to sweeping, merciless political violence. We remain puzzled if Mr. Bernier endorses such actions or if this was an error as a result of ignorance to past injustices by the Canadian Government.

As this year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japanese Canadians being granted the right to vote in BC, we are reminded of those whose civil rights and liberties were denied and we hope that as this federal election approaches, Canadians join the continued fight for a just society committed to equal human rights for all and the elimination of racism and discrimination.

### NAJC STATEMENT: OFFENSIVE PHOTOS OF PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU

September 19, 2019

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) has become aware of offensive media that have recently surfaced of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. While these images are disturbing and concerning to the NAJC, there are much broader issues regarding racism and discrimination in Canada that deserve close attention, scrutiny and examination by Canadian society. Even today, people are still feeling the ongoing impacts of racism and discrimination, and combating this is the real challenge that we all face. We stand in solidarity with other Canadians that have felt the pain of racism, and call for its end in all forms.



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### **In Other News:**

We have been asked to forward this information to our membership, for your information:

#### **NHK World Video: Hope in the Dark**

NHK World recently made their video called Hope in the Dark available on their website.

During World War II, more than 20,000 people of Japanese ancestry were forcibly relocated in Canada. Many of them were interned in camps set up in a frozen wilderness. Camp life was going to deprive the teenagers of a proper education, but female missionaries stepped in to lend a helping hand. They set up high schools and provided the students with moral support and inspiration. This is the little-known story of the search for hope in the dark days of wartime Canada.

<https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/ondemand/video/3016050/>

#### **Canadian Race Relations Foundation**

The 2019 Annual Report for the Canadian Race Relations Foundation has now been released. A copy can be downloaded from their website at this link:

[https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/images/2019AR/2018-2019\\_CRRF\\_Annual\\_Report-final\\_003.pdf](https://www.crrf-fcrr.ca/images/2019AR/2018-2019_CRRF_Annual_Report-final_003.pdf)

#### **Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022**

The Canadian Government has released their anti-racism strategy for 2019-2022. That can be found here:

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/pch/documents/campaigns/anti-racism-engagement/ARS-Report-EN-2019-2022.pdf>

#### **Princess Dolls Book**

<http://tradewindbooks.com/books/the-princess-dolls/>

Vancouver, 1942. When best friends Esther and Michiko spot the beautiful Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret dolls—in vogue at the time—in the local toy store window, they long to get the dolls for their shared birthday. But when Esther receives the doll and Michiko doesn't, their friendship starts to unravel.

The story is set against the backdrop of an atmosphere of increasing hostility and racist attacks upon the Japanese community—culminating in the Internment.

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### Upcoming Dates and Meeting Notifications:

September 28, 2019

NAJC General Membership Meeting

BC Redress Consultations

Via Zoom Internet Conferencing

5:30 PM PST

6:30 PM MST

7:30 PM CST

8:30 PM EST

March 18, 2020

NAJC Special General Meeting

Bylaw and Constitutional Changes

Via Zoom Internet Conferencing

5:30 PM PST

6:30 PM MST

7:30 PM CST

8:30 PM EST

December 18, 2019

NAJC General Membership Meeting

Via Zoom Internet Conferencing

5:30 PM PST

6:30 PM MST

7:30 PM CST

8:30 PM EST

September 2020

NAJC Annual General Meeting and National Conference

Edmonton, Alberta

### Enews versus Membership Newsletter

This newsletter is being created to inform the official NAJC Membership about NAJC news, notifications and activities. This is different than distributions that are occurring via enews, which may include individuals and organizations that are not members of the NAJC.

If you are not on the NAJC Enews distribution, please feel free to add yourself by going to [www.najc.ca](http://www.najc.ca) and filling out your details in the section on the bottom of the page “Subscribe to our mailing list”