

Photos by Don Yungling

2026 Shinnenkai New Year Celebration Recap

by Tom Ducharme and Juli Kodani

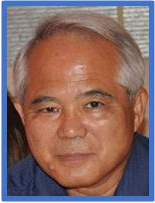
This year's NCOCK *Shinnenkai* New Year celebration was attended by nearly 400 people! The venue was set up in a timely and attractive manner by the Board, volunteers and vendors. By 12:00 pm, bentos were being handed out and MC **Megan Calhoun** started the afternoon with President **Tetsuo Ishisoko** giving a warm greeting, followed by the introduction of NCOCK officers, board members, and area representatives. There was a moment of silence for our members **Bob Debernardis**, **Sumiko Yonamine Lubbe**, and **Ross Rutherford** who recently passed away.

Certificates of Appreciation were handed out to **Megan Calhoun**, **Juli & Fred Kodani** and **Keiko Nakamura** for their years of tireless dedication on behalf of NCOCK. Acknowledgements also went to **Akane Matsuo & Keiko Nakamura** for the beautiful program design and guest singer **Masashi Ishihara's** banner. **Mako & Bob De Los Santos** (Tulare), **Anna Perez** (Fresno) and **Sueko & Mayumi Strohmaier** (Madera) were recognized for driving more than 200 miles to attend the *Shinnenkai*. This year we had 24 *Tushibi* members born in the Year of the Horse who received a small *eto* horse gift! That's 14 more than we had last year!

The recipient of the 2025 Okinawa Junior Study Program, **Makoto Kuniyoshi**, son of **Jeremy Kuniyoshi** and grandson of **Shingi Kuniyoshi** was also recognized. Since the last *Shinnenkai*, we had 17 new members in attendance: **Jessica Naomi Arellano**, **Jessica Dobry**, **Phanthipha Higa**, **Michiko Kealoha**, **Yoshiya Kinjo**, **Yuri Kojima**, **Jeremy Kuniyoshi**, **Taeko Marsaln**, **Cassie Miura**, **Jazmin Moyer**, **Junko Stickney**, **Caroline Weaver**, **Jaime Wilson**, **Lynn Witte**, **Edith Yamanoha**, **Kyo Yohena**, and **Yuko Yokota**.

Next came the introduction of VIP guests: **Takeshi Ishihara** (Deputy Consul General) and **Yusuke Teruya** (Consul) at the Consulate General of Japan in San Francisco; **Dr. Kaoru "Kay" Ueda**, **Dr. Cassie Kaneshiro Miura**, and **Dr. Michiko Miyashiro Kealoha**. Mr. Ishihara told a humorous story about his Okinawa dialect speaking grandmother and the 1975 World's Fair on Okinawa, then followed it with a *Kanpai* toast for the New Year of the Horse.

The entertainment began at 1:00 pm with *Tachiutushi* performed by the Okinawa *Eisa Shimadaiko*. Next was *Kagiyadefu*, Happy New Year Dance, performed by Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai Kinuko Mototake Ryubu Kenkyusho USA (hereafter *) with **Master Kinuko Mototake** and **Kyo Yohena**. They later paired in dances *Kui Nu Hana* and *Kanayo* (continued on pg.6)



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Hai-Sai, Gusu-yo, Chu-uganabira!

As we enter March, the winter chill is gradually easing and we can begin to feel the arrival of Spring. I hope this message finds all of our members well. Although somewhat late, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and extend my sincere wishes for your health and happiness throughout the year.

According to the traditional zodiac calendar, this is the Year of the Horse—a symbol of energy, momentum, and progress. In that spirit, we look forward to continuing our efforts to preserve and celebrate the rich culture and traditions of Okinawa while working together with our members to strengthen and grow our Kenjin-Kai.

Our New Year's Celebration this year was a tremendous success. More than 400 members, families, and friends attended, making it the largest gathering in the history of our organization. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all our members and especially to the many dedicated volunteers whose time and effort made this event possible.

Thanks to the generous support and efforts of Ms. Toshi McRorie, we were honored to welcome Mr. Masashi Ishihara, a young *enka* singer from Okinawa. His performances—featuring duets with our members, Okinawan folk songs, and beloved Showa-era classics—brought great energy and excitement to the evening. We were also delighted to have three Ryukyuan dancers travel from Albuquerque, Las Vegas, and Los Angeles to support the event. The combination of Ryukyuan dance, traditional *sanshin* music, and Japanese popular songs made this year's celebration particularly memorable.

Looking ahead, we hope to make this a year in which we take concrete steps toward one of our most important goals: building a sustainable future for our Kenjin-Kai. Achieving this goal will require greater participation from *Nisei* and *Sansei* members, an increase in younger membership, and the development of individuals who will carry Okinawan culture forward to the next generation.

Okinawa Prefecture offers several excellent programs that support this mission. One example is the *Uchina Junior Study Program*, which allows junior high and high school students to learn about Okinawan history and culture while interacting with people in Okinawa. However, only about ten students from Okinawan communities around the world are selected each year. Another opportunity is the Okinawan Scholarship Program for Descendants (*Kenpi Ryugaku Program*), designed to cultivate future cultural leaders, but last year only seven students worldwide were selected.

While these programs provide valuable opportunities, relying solely on them may require many years to achieve our broader goals. It may be time for us, as a community, to begin considering initiatives of our own.

Fortunately, our Kenjin-Kai has been officially recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization. While developing new programs will require funding, this status provides an important foundation for pursuing new initiatives and expanding our activities. If you have ideas, expertise, or would like to support these efforts, we would greatly appreciate hearing from you. Please feel free to contact our executive board at info@ncokk.org.

The continued success of our Kenjin-Kai depends on the participation and support of our members. We warmly welcome anyone who is willing to share their time, talents, or experience to help strengthen our organization.

Our Kenjin-Kai will once again participate in the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival this April. On Saturday, April 18, our performing arts group will present a stage performance, and on Sunday, April 19, we will join the Grand Parade. We warmly invite our members to walk with us as we proudly represent the Okinawan community and celebrate the spirit and pride of *Uchinanchu*.

As we move into the new season, please take good care of yourselves. I look forward to seeing many of you at our upcoming events. "*Nuchi du Takara*"

ハイサイ、グスーヨー、チューウガナビラ!

早いもので三月を迎え、寒さも次第に和らぎ、春の訪れを感じる季節となりました。会員の皆様におかれましては、いかがお過ごしでしょうか。

遅ればせながら、新年おめでとうございます。本年も皆様のご健康とご多幸を心よりお祈り申し上げます。

今年の干支は午年でございます。午年は勢いと躍動の象徴とされ、新たな挑戦と発展が期待される年とも言われております。本年も沖縄の文化と伝統を大切に守りながら、会員の皆様とともに当県人会のさらなる発展に向けて歩みを進めてまいります。

さて、今年の新年会には四百名を超える皆様にご参加いただき、おかげさまで大変盛会のうちに開催することができました。これは当県人会の参加者数として過去最多でもあり、会員の皆様、そして献身的に支えてくださったボランティアの皆様にご心より深く感謝申し上げます。

また、トシ・McRorie様の多大なるご尽力とご支援により、沖縄出身の若手演歌歌手・石原まさし様をお招きすることができました。会員とのデュエット、沖縄民謡、懐かしい昭和の歌謡曲の数々により、会場は終始大きな盛り上がりを見せました。さらに、アルバカーキ、ラスベガス、ロサンゼルスより三名の琉球舞踊の先生方とダンサーの皆様も応援に駆けつけてくださり、琉球舞踊、唄・三線、歌謡曲が一体となった、例年とはまた趣の異なる記念すべき新年会となりました。

さて、午年にふさわしく、本年は当県人会の大きな目標である「持続可能な県人会の発展」に向け、具体的な計画を立て実行に移す年にしたいと考えております。そのためには、二世・三世の県人会の運営・活動への積極的な参加の促進、若い世代の会員の増加、そして沖縄文化を次世代へ継承していく人材の育成が不可欠であります。

沖縄県には、中学生・高校生を対象とした「*Uchina Junior Study Program*」があります。沖縄の歴史や文化を学び、現地の人々と交流することにより理解と関心を深めることができる大変意義深いプログラム (*continued on pg.5*)

2026 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

イベントカレンダー:

- April 18-19, 2026** 59th Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival, San Francisco Japantown
 北カリフォルニア桜まつり
 Stage Performance (4/18) TO BE ANNOUNCED
 Grand Parade (4/19), San Francisco, 1:00 pm from Civic Center Plaza
 グランドパレード (4/19) 午後1時開始
 (If you're interested in walking in the Grand Parade on Sunday, April 19, contact either Tetsuo Ishisoko 510-703-7926 or Fumiyo Tomita 510-426-2833)
- April 26, 2026** Cupertino Cherry Blossom Festival, 10:00am-5pm, Memorial Park
 クパチーノ桜祭り, 場所: メモリアルパーク, 時間: 10:00 am – 5:30 pm
 Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai USA, Kinuko Mototake Classical Okinawan Dance Academy & Eisa Shima-Daiko, Outdoor Amphitheater from 12:35 pm & Quinlan Center Stage (indoors) from 4:05 pm
- July 26, 2026** NCOKK Summer Family Potluck Picnic, Crown Memorial State Beach, Crolls Garden Picnic Area (between McKay Avenue and Eighth Street), Alameda, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm
- September 20, 2026** NCOKK Keiro-kai (Respect for the Aged Day), TO BE ANNOUNCED



Thank you Akane!

You could not have missed this banner if you attended our 2026 *Shinnenkai* New Year Celebration on Sunday, February 15! It was the innovative graphic artistry of **Akane Matsuo** who is also a member of the Okinawa *Eisa Taiko* group. She is credited with the imaginative artwork for our *Shinnenkai* and *Keirokai* programs in the last few years. You may recognize some of her creative images from these past program covers:



ACROSS BORDERS, OKINAWAN ROOTS SPEAK
海外ウチナンチュの祖先を探す旅



A Journey to Find the Roots of Overseas Uchinanchu

(English translation of Newsweek article from December 9, 2025)

From the Meiji Restoration to the early 1970s, the total number of emigrants who crossed the seas from the Japanese archipelago reached over 1.1 million. Okinawa, in particular, saw a vast number of people depart for Hawaii, North America, and South America. Now, several generations later, the descendants of these immigrants are seeking their roots, driven by the question: "Who am I?" In response to these voices, the Okinawa Prefectural Library established a research service called "Finding Okinawan Roots." This initiative, which helps overseas Okinawans (Uchinanchu) discover the travel records of their grandparents and great-grandparents, achieved a double win—the Grand Prix and the Audience Award—at the "Library of the Year 2024," held by the Intellectual Resource Initiative (IRI), an NPO that honors innovative library activities. The reason for the award was its grand vision: "The formation of a community that transcends borders and generations, starting from the search for immigrant roots." How conscious are we of the fact that Japan was once an "emigrant-sending country?"

The service was sparked in 2016 by a visit from a man in his 70s. A third-generation Okinawan-Hawaiian, he visited the library during a trip to Japan to see if there were any records of his grandparents. His only clues were the pronunciation of their names and their dates of birth. After hours of searching through massive passenger manifests, a staff member finally found a single line of record. Even so, he was reportedly moved to the point of tears. This encounter convinced the library of the dire need for people to "find their ancestors."

That same year, a research booth was set up at the "Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival"—an international exchange event held every five years in Okinawa—and it drew long queues. Aligning with the prefecture's philosophy of inheriting and expanding the "Uchina Network," the project was officially budgeted in 2019, and a dedicated research team was established. Today, the library receives hundreds of requests annually and even sets up pop-up booths at Okinawan festivals held in Hawaii and Brazil.

This activity is supported by cross-border partnerships. Okinawan associations worldwide take on the roles of local informants and coordinators. In August of this year, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with the Okinawa Genealogy Society of Hawaii to facilitate the sharing of immigrant-related materials and joint research.

Meanwhile, Makiko Kohatsu, who oversees immigrant-related projects at the library, expressed a sense of urgency regarding the collection of overseas materials. "Since most of the current generation no longer speaks Japanese, there is a risk that precious Japanese-language materials overseas could be thrown away. That would mean losing our connection to Okinawans living abroad.

We need to deepen our ties with them and move forward with preserving these records."

Preserving these precious materials does more than just protect the fading history of immigration; it also provides a motivation for countries to engage with one another. In a multi-ethnic society, one's existence is not "taken for granted." A sense of gratitude—knowing that one stands upon the hardships and efforts of their ancestors—drives many to embark on a journey to find their roots.

The Okinawa Prefectural Library's roots research service has proven that a library can be more than just a local information center; it can serve as a hub that collaborates with diverse organizations to promote international mutual understanding. Serving as a guide for those searching for their family sagas is a practice that touches the very core of the SDGs: protecting human dignity and realizing a just and peaceful society.

NOTE: This article was provided by Yo Mizuno who will be attending our NCOKK Summer Family Potluck Picnic on Sunday, July 26 with his OPL (Okinawa Prefectural Library) team to speak to our members. He is the son of former member Takashi & Kitty Mizuno of Watsonville.



TIP OF THE HAT, TO OUR MANY VOLUNTEERS!

by Juli Kodani

We had another successful *Shinnenkai* on February 15 and so many volunteers to thank, beginning with our carpool volunteers: **Jack Journeyay, Kazuki Kinjo, Ben Kobashigawa, Steve Matsumoto, Charles Sakamoto** and **Tsuneko Silva** who picked up members needing a ride. Next, **Mieko Perry-Blang** and her team of **Yoko Balanon, Mina Curry, Tomoko Quichocho, Toshiko Rabine** and **Mina Tamashiro** kept the kitchen in tip-top shape and the refreshments coming. Our new Events & Volunteer Coordinator **Harumi Ducharme** (and husband **Tom**) oversaw the event like a pro. **Kazuki Kinjo & Harold Chaput** took charge of all the Silent Auction items; **Evelyn Frank, Alex Frank** and **VP Annette Adams** sorted and filled the 20 raffle goody bags; **Yasuko Heffner** passed out membership rosters & programs; **Alex Frank, Christine Yamashiro** and new member **Caroline Weaver** distributed bentos; **Donald Yungling** was our photographer; **Keiko Nakamura** and **Akane Matsuo** designed the beautiful program and Masashi Ishihara banner; **Megan Calhoun** MC'd the proceedings; **Tetsuo** and **Chris Ishisoko** manned the AV equipment; time management duty was ably handled by **Yoshiya Kinjo** and **Maika Gibo**; **Ben Kobashigawa** manned the book sales; **Joyce Tamanaha-Ho** and her family sold Uchinanchu Taikai T-shirts and fans; **Greg Kawabata** took care of the lighting/videotaping; **Fred & Juli Kodani, Kenny Higa** and **Joanne Takata** manned the reception area; **Chika Mori** and **Akiko Nagayama** took care of the Masashi VIP group. As always, the creative director of the entertainment program was **Master Kinuko Mototake**, ably assisted by **Fumiyo Tomita**. *Nifedebiru* to all にふえーでーびる!



A Message of Appreciation from Masashi Ishihara

At the recent New Year's celebration of the Northern California Okinawa Kenjin-Kai, we had the pleasure of welcoming singer **Masashi Ishihara** from Japan. His wonderful performance greatly enlivened the event. Through nostalgic Showa-era enka and songs that reflect the spirit of Okinawa, his warm and heartfelt voice created a moving moment that many of our members shared together. Mr. Ishihara's sincere and heartfelt singing will surely remain in the memories of many for a long time. After returning to Japan, he kindly sent us the following message, which we are pleased to share:

Thank you very much for allowing me to spend such a wonderful and moving time with the members of the Northern California Okinawa Kenjin-Kai. Even after returning to Japan, the memories of that stage and the warmth of the occasion remain with me.

It was my first time traveling overseas, and having the opportunity to meet and connect with fellow Uchinanchu made this an especially meaningful and joyful experience for me. If I have the opportunity to visit again, I would very much look forward to spending more time speaking with all of you.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to President Ishisoko, Ms. McRorie, and everyone who welcomed me so warmly. Thank you very much. Masashi Ishihara

先日の北カリフォルニア沖縄県人会新年会では、日本からお迎えした歌手・石原まさしさんが素晴らしい歌声を披露され、会場を大いに盛り上げてくださいました。懐かしい昭和時代の演歌、そして沖縄の心を感じさせる温かい歌声に、会員の皆様も大きな感動を共有するひとときとなりました。石原さんの心のこもった歌声は、多くの皆様の記憶に長く残ることと思います。帰国後、石原さんより心温まるメッセージをいただきましたのでご紹介いたします:

この度は北カリフォルニア沖縄県人会の皆様と感動的な時間をともに過ごさせていただき、誠にありがとうございました。日本に帰国した今も、あのステージの余韻が心に残っております。

初めての海外で、同じウチナーンチュとして繋がる皆様と交流できたことは、私にとって大変貴重で幸せな経験となりました。またお邪魔する機会がございましたら、ぜひ皆様とゆっくりお話しできることを楽しみにしております。

石底会長、McRorie様をはじめ、温かく迎えてくださったすべての皆様に心より感謝申し上げます。誠にありがとうございました。

COMMENTS FROM OUR MEMBERS & COMMUNITY:

Thank you so much for the warm words of holiday greeting. *Okinawa Tomonokai of Ohio* appreciates your friendship and trust. We hope you all have wonderful holiday season and prosperity in new year to come. *Kazumi Makowski, President Okinawa Tomonokai of Ohio*

2026 Shinnenkai Comments:

I really enjoyed Shinnenkai. Thank you so much for putting together this amazing event. お疲れ様でした！ *New member, Eiko Toyooka*

The Shinnenkai was fantastic as usual & I'm so appreciative of the absolutely beautiful & exquisite Year of the Horse gift. *Lori Higa*

The Shinnenkai was a great success. Thank you very much for thinking of me and ordering party favors from me. *Jane (baker and candymaker) Yamashiro* NOTE: We hope that everyone enjoyed her *shikuwasa* gumdrop bags passed out at the *Shinnenkai!*

We hope our donations went well for the Silent Auction and I want to thank Yas Matayoshi for transporting the items (to the Shinnenkai). In addition, with the famous Okinawan singer (Masashi Ishihara) attending, I bet it was a SUPER event! *Jim & Hiroko Paramo*

Fred and I were honored to be presented with NCOKK Certificates of Appreciation at the 2026 *Shinnenkai*. It doesn't seem like 15 years has passed since we became involved with the kenjinkai. We will both continue to support NCOKK to strengthen and enrich our community by sharing the responsibility. Thank you! *Juli & Fred Kodani*

(continued from pg.2) ですが、世界各地の沖縄系の中高生の中から本年選ばれるのはわずか十名の予定です。また、沖縄文化継承者の育成を目的とした「県費留学制度（ウチナーンチュ子弟留学生制度）」もありますが、昨年は世界中から七名のみの選抜でございました。

これらの制度はいずれも大変素晴らしいものではありませんが、それだけに依存しては目標の達成までに長い年月を要することも考えられます。今こそ私たち自身が主体となり、独自の取り組みを検討すべき時期に来ているのではないかと感じております。

幸いにも、当県人会はIRSより501(c)(3)の慈善団体として正式に認可を受けております。独自のプログラムを実施するためには資金も必要となりますが、この基盤を活かし、新たな取り組みを進めていく好機であるとも言えるでしょう。本件につきまして、ご意見や専門的知識、ご支援をお寄せいただける方は、ぜひ執行部までEメール (info@ncokk.org) にてご連絡いただければ幸いに存じます。

また、県人会の運営には多くの人材のご協力が欠かせません。時間や才能を分かち合い、県人会のさらなる発展にご尽力いただける方々のご参加を心より歓迎いたします。ご関心のある方は、ぜひ執行部までご連絡ください。

毎年四月に開催される北カリフォルニア桜祭りにも、今年も当県人会は参加を予定しております。四月十八日（土）には芸能部によるステージ演舞、そして翌十九日（日）にはグランドパレードが行われます。パレードにおいて当県人会の列に加わり、ともに歩いてくださる会員の皆方を募集しております。多くの仲間とともに歩み、ウチナーンチュの誇りと絆を示そうではありませんか。

季節の変わり目でもございますので、どうぞご自愛のうえお過ごしください。「ヌチドゥ宝」



A West Coast Artist's Uchinanchu Roots by Kyo Yohena

I was born in Ginowan, Okinawa and joined the rest of my family in Norwalk, California at 3-months old. It wasn't until I was 11 years old That I became active in the Okinawan

Association of America (OAA in SoCal) through Sensei Keiko Yonamine's *Kansenkai Ryubu Dojo* in Orange County. Under the guidance of Sensei Joseph Nishijo Jones and Akiko Yamauchi Sensei, I trained in Okinawan dance under Midori Nakamine Sensei and received the *Shinjin* (Newcomer Award) in 2011 and *Yuushuu* (Excellence Award) Certification of Classical Art Exam in Okinawan Dance in 2014. I also received my Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, with a minor in Theatre and Performance Studies at UC Berkeley in 2016. Upon graduating, I stayed in the Bay Area freelancing in costumes for theater, dance, musicians and film. I worked with Magic Theater, ODC Dance Company, Opera Parallel, Theatreworks, Opera San Jose and California Shakespeare Theater. I am also the current tour manager of American singer-songwriter legend Daryl Hall. It wasn't until I was deep into my costume career did I realize that I was following the footsteps of my paternal grandmother, Sadako Yohena, who was a seamstress in Naha, sewing kimonos for Okinawan *buyo* (dance).

Through Joseph Nishijo Jones Sensei, I Was introduced to Master Kinuko Mototake in 2017 which opened the door to the Northern California Okinawan Kenjin-Kai. Our "dynamic duo" has performed at various NCOKK events and cherry blossom festivals throughout the year. We have even ventured to New Mexico to perform at the Albuquerque *Akimatsuri* Fall Festival with plans to extend beyond Northern California. I currently live in Oakland with my partner, Edward.



(continued from pg. 1)

Amakaa. Shishimai, Japanese Lion Dance by * **Mai Miyagi, Suzuka Suarez, and Asuka Hirata** where one dancer begins and soon after two more join and move to the sound of flutes and drums, inviting good luck. Up next was *Chijuyaa*, also known as *Hamachidori*, which depicts aquatic birds in a dance expressing an exiled man's intense longing for home by guest Miyagi Ryu dancers **Masako Frost Sensei** (Las Vegas), **Sanae Wright Sensei** (Albuquerque, New Mexico) and **Mayumi Galles** (Los Angeles). They later danced *Sesokojima E Mensohree* celebrating the Sesoko Bridge. Next came, *Udui Ashibinaa*, which was a crowd favorite joyfully danced by the youngest performers **Lizbeth Suarez, Emiko Weber, Keiko Weber** and **Ayumi Clark**.

The eagerly anticipated special guest from Japan, **Masashi Ishihara**, was next to take the stage. While only 21 years old, he spoke briefly about his life, his journey to fame and that he was happy to be able to join us and help celebrate the new year. Masashi Ishihara then regaled us with his powerful and dynamic voice. His stage presence was like a seasoned professional as he embraced us with his music.

After finishing his set, Masashi left the stage to great applause, cheering and calls for an encore which he graciously performed.

After so much excitement, we calmed down with round one of our fund-raising raffles. The holders of winning raffle tickets enthusiastically selected a bag of goodies to take home. During the raffle drawing, volunteers handed out samples of **Jane Yamashiro's** homemade candies for everyone to enjoy.

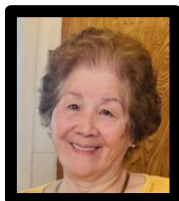
Entertainment restarted with the classical court dance *Yotsutake* by Miyagi Otori Kinsen Kai Arakaki Noriyoshi Ryubu Dojo with **Yori** and **Courtney Nakaishi** and Dushigwa Group's **Erika & Rachel Jacobsen** and **Jessica Dobry**. They were followed by 15 drummers from the Okinawa *Eisa Shimadaiko* performing *Ashibinaa* and *Shichigwachi Eisa Machikanti*. As her first stage performance, 3-year-old **Sylvia Dobry** serenaded us surrounded by the Profumo and Jacobson family!

Masashi Ishihara returned to perform a romantic duet with **Akiko Nagayama** and a *sanshin* duet with **Asuka Hirota**, demonstrating his *sanshin* skills to a very appreciative audience. Twelve performers from Azama Honryu Seifu Ichisenkai and Miyagi Ryu combined to the choreographed Kuroshima Island of Yaeyama folk song *Kurushima Kuduchi*. The next dance, *Minatokuri Bushi*, featured Miyagi Otori Kinsen Kai's **Ritsuko Spaulding, Yori Nakanishi** and **Courtney Nakanishi Reyes** dressed as young men. The song is about the sun shining after a summer rain. The *sanshin* performance of the new **Tiida Kankara Sanshin** group emotionally expressed the spirit, resourcefulness and resilience of the Okinawa people through music. The final solo performance was by **Master Kinuko Mototake** performing *Bu Nu Mai* with great power and skill. The afternoon climaxed with everyone joyfully participating in *Eisa & Kachaashii* with the Okinawa *Eisa Shimadaiko* to close the 2026 Shinnenkai and gathering for the traditional group photo. It was a wonderful day of lasting memories! Thanks to all the performers for putting on a wonderfully entertaining afternoon, bringing us comfort and happiness by just being together with family and friends, sharing in beautiful dance, drumming, and the sounds of Okinawa!



A special shout-out goes to an ardent fan and supporter of singer Masashi Ishihara, member **Toshi McRorie!** She was instrumental in funding his presence at this year's *Shinnenkai*. It was her dream for several years to invite Masashi to our *Shinnenkai* and to introduce this Okinawa-born and bred rising star to our membership. It was his first time traveling outside of Japan!

	<p>107 Caledonia Sausalito, CA 94965</p>
<p>S U S H I R A N</p>	<p>415.332.3620 sushiran.com</p>



IN MEMORIAM: by James Lubbe
Sumiko Yonamine Lubbe 1933 — 2026

Sumiko Yonamine Lubbe passed away peacefully on February 1, 2026, at the age of 92. She was the cherished wife of the late William Lubbe and mother of Caroline (Jeffrey Hill) and James (Neda Chlala). She is also survived by six grandchildren: Tobin, Saskia, Devin, Steven, Nadia, and Moon, and two great-grandchildren. She leaves many nieces and nephews as well as a surviving brother in Okinawa.

Born in 1933, she was one of 8 children. As a child, she lived through WWII on Okinawa, and later worked for the US military where she met her future husband, Bill. She returned with him to the United States and remained devoted to him until his death. She spent many rewarding hours with her family, joyfully tending to her garden, and socializing with her many friends. The memorial service was held on February 13 at the Duggan's Serra Mortuary, followed by the burial service at Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma. Her family has requested that memorial donations be sent in her name to the Northern California Okinawa Kenjin-Kai (www.ncokk.org) where she was a member for many years.

ADDITIONAL SHINNEKAI PHOTOS:



REVISED TAYUI DISCLAIMER (2022)

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR TAYUI NEWSLETTER:

You are invited to submit requests for any community announcements or other events that you feel are important to promote for our NCOCK members in the quarterly *Tayui* Newsletter. This includes Okinawan dance performances, concerts, Japanese festivals, local fundraisers, school events, etc.

Please consider if what you want to promote will benefit the NCOCK member community. The Tayui Editing Team reserves the right to make editorial and formatting changes to your story if space is limited.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. It must be in **English** and **Japanese (if available)**
2. It must be emailed to the Editing Team at sfokkjuli@yahoo.com, at least **two (2) weeks** PRIOR to printing.

Thank you to our generous members:

Donations to NCOCK:

Steve & Patty Arakaki
 Mieko Blang, in memory of William Blang
 Yoshiko King
 Hiroko & Jim Paramo -for NCOCK Scholarship Fund (2nd year in a row)
 Matsue & Wayland Woo

Monetary and In-kind Donations from 2026 Shinnenkai:

Tiana Andretti, Mieko Blang, Yoshiko & Tom Canevari, Kyoko Clemons, Minami & Isa Cohen, Fujiko Dandoy, Chloe Erickson, Evelyn Frank, Maria Frye, Michiko Fujii, Michio Goto, Dennis & Julia Haley, Timothy & Lisa Haley, Yasuko Heffner, Yoshiko King, Akiko Kohler, Shingi Kuniyoshi, Kazuko Lerseth, Toshi McRorie, Mieko Merrill, Jane Miyashiro, Yukiko Otake, Hiroko & Jim Paramo, Yoneko & Thomas Rieker, Anna Schweitzer, Ritsuko Senaha, Yukiko Smith, Hatsuko & Gregory Spivey, Emily Strisar (Simmons), Joyce Tamanaha-Ho, Fumiyo & Tsutomu Tomita, Uehara Travel (Tamiko Uehara), Seiji Uezu, Kiyoko Winter, Christine Yamashiro, Jane Yamashiro, Ritsuko & Calvin Yip, Stephanie Yue, Toyoko & Donald Yungling

(If you made a donation in money or in-kind and we did not recognize you by name, please know that it was not intentional. We appreciate all the support we receive and will make every effort to acknowledge you in the future. Thank you for your understanding.)



VENMO & PAYPAL ONLINE PAYMENT NOTICE

We accept online payments via **Venmo** and **PayPal**. Please make sure that you check **for friends and family and NOT for goods and services**. Please also email a screenshot of your online payment receipt to ishisoko@gmail.com

We hope that this will make it easier for everyone to pay their Membership Dues, Bentos, Silent Auction purchases, etc. For those who prefer to pay online:

Venmo: [@NCOCK](https://www.venmo.com/@NCOCK)

PayPal: ncokk2020@gmail.com

However, if you prefer the old-fashioned way, checks are still acceptable!

NCOCK Personal Contact Information Policy (as of July 2021)

Due to privacy concerns, the NCOCK Board approved **NOT** to include personal data information (i.e. new member's address and member's change of address) in the *Tayui* newsletter going forward. Any personal contact information in the NCOCK Membership Roster can also be withdrawn. Please email treasurer@ncokk.org if you **DO NOT** want to be listed beginning with the 2022 Membership Roster.

個人情報の記載: ニュースレターやメンバー登録名簿等に記載を希望しない方は treasurer@ncokk.org にお知らせください。

めんそーれー

26 New Members / Address Changes as of 3/31/2026:

新会員加入 2026年3月31日付

Nobuko & Marty Alumbaugh	Pamela-Misako & Chai Milin
Jessica Arellano	Cassie Miura
Jessica Dobry	Junko Stickney
Stephanie Kinjo Flanagan	Eiko Toyooka
Masae Heintz	Terence Tumbale
Mindy Hori	Kira Van Eeghen
Akiyo Kawabata	Caroline Weaver
Michiko Miyashiro Kealoha	Jaime Wilson
Yuri Kojima	Lynne Witte
Jeremy Kuniyoshi	Edith Yamanoha
Taeko Marsaln	Kyo Yohena
Jhene Matsuda	Yuko Yokota
Jamielle McDonald	Paul & Miyuki Yoshimoto



UYEHARA TRAVEL TOUR HIGHLIGHTS IN 2026

- **July 27 – August 7th: Brazil/Argentina Tour, \$3,500.00 plus air fare**
- **2027 Uchinanchu Festival – Exact dates TBA (late October to early November 2027)**
Mark your calendars!

Note our NEW address:

Uyehara Travel
 335 E. 2nd Street #217
 Los Angeles, CA 90012
 Phone: 213-680-2499
 Email: tamiko.uyehara102239@gmail.com
 C.S.T. #2062682-40



TAYUI ADVERTISING RATES (for 4 issues):	
Business Card	\$100
¼ Page	\$200
½ Page	\$300
Full Page	\$500



Content Editor – Juli Kodani

Graphics Editor – Megan Calhoun

Artwork: <http://illust.okinawa>

549 Las Colindas Road
 San Rafael, Ca 94903