

ROOTS & Branches

Every day heroes

By MAIJA YASUI

Pulling together in times of crisis are the life moments when we country folks most often shine. We know how to reach out to one another, provide emotional support, and share those actual products, food, shelter and clothing for the most vulnerable so we can all weather the storm. Whether a pandemic, hurricane, fire or economic collapse, our actions during these difficult times defines our very humanity. How do we treat one another? What are we willing to give up for the good of others? It is a question we are all too often faced with in recent times. One that we must answer in real time.

We look to heroes who have risen to those difficult occasions, our soldiers in time of war, our first responders, firemen, doctors and educators in times of disaster. I believe we can all be heroes in our day-to-day lives, in normal times, which lets us practice heroic actions comfortably, almost habitually, making it an automatic reaction when we are faced with a disaster, tragedy or catastrophic event.



Photo courtesy of Maija Yasui

DR. SATSUKI INA hanging origami cranes. Directions for folding the cranes can be found on page B5.

We were scheduling an event to honor one of our own local heroes on March 28, Oregon's Minoru Yasui Day. Min Yasui was born and raised in Hood River, graduated from Hood River High School and a few years later from University of Oregon law school. He began his law career at a Japanese Embassy in Chicago immediately before the United States was pulled into World War II with the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

At this very early moment in his life, he was prepared to sacrifice his freedom for the freedom of his Japanese American peers. He willingly sought to challenge the United States government over the illegal imprisonment of 125,000 Japanese living on the west coast. This was personal, as his father was illegally imprisoned as a traitor, and his siblings, friends and neighbors imprisoned for the color of their skin, for being of Japanese ancestry. He believed in the Constitution of the United States and the protections it provided to all, not just a few. Minoru dedicated his entire life, in times of war and times of peace, ensuring that people of all ages, faith, gender, ethnicity, race, socio-economic status, and ability were given their Constitutional protections.

Given the rapidly-changing health advisements, we are going to cancel Min Yasui Day events but hope that you will honor his heroism in a manner that protects the most vulnerable from the pandemic in which we are immersed. If we take our personal every-day health precautions of greeting one another with elbow or fist bumps or, better yet, keeping three feet between us, will help protect our elderly or health impaired friends and relatives by not exposing them to risk. Seek an alternative to face to face engagement, perhaps recording an event, taking pictures, but still allowing for interaction and participation for those in self-imposed isolation. Outdoor settings provide some protection from transmission of the COVID-19 virus as long as we practice those personal heroic deeds, secluding ourselves if we are not feeling well, covering any cough or sneeze, keeping from touching our face, especially eyes, nose and mouth, washing our hands repeatedly for at least 20 seconds, maintaining a three-foot space between one another whenever possible and disinfect surfaces repeatedly.

Perhaps one of our songwriting talents could scribe a catchy tune reminding us of these important health practices, hopefully not as dire as the childhood nursery rhyme we sang, "Ring Around the Rosey, pocketful of posey, ashes, ashes we all fall down." Whether true or false, the urban legend that this nursery rhyme was teaching about the symptoms of the plague, the way to ward off the disease (carrying posies) or the consequence of dying from the plague and being turned into ashes has been indelibly etched in our brains.

We will move forward with the installation of a QR Code embedded in the Minoru Yasui Legacy Stone that, when accessed with a cell phone bar code app will display the three-minute description of Minoru Yasui's life-long dedication in search of justice for all, by President Barack Obama. It is an inspirational speech by our president when awarding the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously to the Min Yasui family. Visitors to the small park located on the north library lawn above Fifth and Oak streets can scan the code with their cell phones and better understand the life work of Minoru Yasui at any time. I will add a photo of the stainless-steel code along with this column so everyone who downloads a free bar code app to their cell phone can access the video in the safety of their own home (see page B5).

We had also planned to highlight Hood River student activists work on social justice issues by placing a stone in the legacy garden engraved with the year, students name, and a word that represents the issue which they have been addressing. A \$250 award will also be given to this year's student activist on awards night and will be an annual reward to promote activism in the future. A list of those winners will be featured with photos in the next edition of the newspaper after announcements are made at Hood River Valley High School. The special engraved stones will be kept in the trophy case at Hood River Valley High School until after graduation and then permanently placed in the Min Yasui Legacy Garden.

An event was planned for Min Yasui Day at the Riverside Community Church to participate in a Tsuru for Solidarity "Fold In" with national activist and psychologist Dr. Satsuki Ina. That in-person event has been canceled but we encourage interested participants to watch a description of the Tsuru for Solidarity event at tsuruforsolidarity.org and hold their own "Fold In" in the safety of their homes.

Dr. Ina, who was born in the Tule Lake prison camp, was to speak about the parallels between the Japanese American incarceration during World War II and the detention of immigrant children on the U.S.-Mexico Border. Ina has used her incarceration experience to help thousands of individuals cope with the challenges of mental health trauma. She has published books, produced documentaries that speak to the unjust and forced imprisonment of 125,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

Dr. Ina is a leader of the group Tsuru for Solidarity, which cites the Japanese American incarceration as one of the main reasons to stop the current border detention policies, which have been shown to cause severe trauma for detained children. At a presentation of cranes at one of the border camps in 2019, Dr. Ina stated, "Americans turned their backs on us as we disappeared. Nobody marched

See ROOTS, page B5

YESTERYEARS

Wy'east gym comes down after snow damage in 1980

1910 – 110 YEARS AGO

Automobiles are making their appearance in town and on the country roads in numbers and the season promises to be a lively one in the use of scoot wagons. Four new cars have been sold recently by the Gilbert-Vaughan Implement Company, one each to J.H. Heilbronner, B.E. Duncan, Wilson Fike and Leslie Butler. The two former purchased Cadillac thirties, Mr. Fike a Chalmers-Detroit and Mr. Butler a new Cadillac thirty. Three of these have been delivered and the other is on the way here.

1920 – 100 YEARS AGO

In view of the growing strength of the local post of the American Legion, and with the object of doing something for the boys who went overseas from Hood River County, a committee of local ladies has been formed for the purpose of securing the nucleus for a fund for a Legion home in Hood River. Committee in charge of events are Mrs. L.N. Blowers, chairman; Mrs. Vonder Ahe, Mrs. A.C. Lofts, Mrs. A.S. Keir, Mrs. E.C. Sherrieb, Mrs. V.R. Abraham and Mrs. L.M. Bentley.

1930 – 90 YEARS AGO

Within the next few weeks, Hood River will have its own airplane, if the plans of the members of Hood River Aviation Club, organized a few days ago, are carried through. The group of local airmen, now numbering well on the way to a score of young men, expect to have a Waco plane of their own on the field by about the middle of next month and to take up a steady course in flying. One of the tasks to be undertaken by the club is to put the aviation field on the hill in first class shape and to maintain that condition.

1940 – 80 YEARS AGO

Under the auspices of Hood River Fruit Growers, a plan to pool Bartlett pears and cherries is being put through, with the object of enabling independent growers to place themselves in an advantageous position for bargaining with canners and others who will be in the market this coming season. The committee working out the plans include Ralph W. Perry, Joe D. Smullin, R.W. Skibbe, J.E. Hounsell Sr. and George Galloway.

1950 – 70 YEARS AGO

Coach Bill Abey's Hood River High boxing team swamped White Salmon's prep squad in a smoker at Legion Hall on Thursday. Hood River dropped only two out of nine matches.

Odell High Cougars observed their first baseball workout on Wednesday when around 18 showed up for practice. Odell will join four other clubs in the Cascade B prep league in a round robin baseball schedule this spring.



Hood River News archives

MARCH 15, 2000

Take Me Out to the Ballgame: Hood River Valley High School girls softball team opened the season with a four-team jamboree on Monday against Benson, Grant and St. Mary's. The Eagles won one, lost one and tied a game. Junior Calli Vannet, above, reaches for an errant throw at first base. The Eagles will be in action on Wednesday at Westview High School. Photo by Jim Semlor.

Other clubs are Parkdale, Corbett, Maupin and Dufur. Play commences around the first of April.

1960 – 60 YEARS AGO

Teacher contracts for 1960-61 were the top order of business for the county unity school board at their regular March meeting held last Wednesday. The board, without major discussion or question, approved, on blanket votes, the retention of all teachers in the district, except those asking to resign from their posts.

1970 – 50 YEARS AGO

A solid wall of opposition meant defeat Monday for a Chamber of Commerce-sponsored plan to develop an off-street parking lot in downtown Hood River.

Nearly 56 percent remonstrance was submitted from the assessment area, including Diamond Fruit Growers, Inc., several lodges and clubs involved, as well as private businesses. The plan called for purchase of a half-vacant lot between Fourth and Fifth street on Cascade, surfacing it, adding lighting, landscaping and markings, and providing parking for some 52 vehicles.

1980 – 40 YEARS AGO

Crumbled remains of the walls of the Wy'east Junior High School gymnasium were cleared by a large bulldozer as an early step toward replacing the structure.

Men on ladders were working to seal off the stage area that linked the gym with the school cafeteria. "Lots of rock, not much concrete or reinforcement," said one of the demo workers. The structure was built in the early 1950s and was doomed when about five feet of snow collapsed the roof. Precise plans for its replacement remain to be developed, but there is speculation that it will be something similar to the Hood River Junior High multipurpose room.

VERBATIM

Tent City Is Now Contemplated

Owning to the collapse of the negotiations for the construction of a tourist hotel for Hood River, a number of local businesses and hotel men met at the Commercial Club on Wednesday to consider ways and means of providing sleeping accommodations for the large number of tourists who will visit this section the coming summer (sic).

After considerable discussion, it was admitted that at present only two alternatives to a modern hotel are available, and they are only of a temporary nature. One is, that residents who are willing to accommodate visitors in their homes during tourist season list their available rooms with a committee to be appointed, and the other,

that a tent city be inaugurated.

It is ascertained that C.A. Bell of the Mt. Hood Hotel is willing to lease the 100 x 100 tract west of the hotel for a tent site and it was stated that his would accommodate 15 8x10 and 10 16x16 tents, which would provide sleeping quarters for about 70 persons per night.

The general sentiment was that these propositions are all that can be gotten into shape this season, and the following committee was appointed to investigate the questions of cost and financing of the project: Hugh G. Ball, E.E. Brett, R.E. Scott, J. Culbertson and L. Baldwin.
— Hood River News, March 19, 1920

1990 – 30 YEARS AGO

Hood River becomes a television filming location next week, but it is unlikely local residents will tune in on the story any time soon. That is because the production will be shown in Japan. A delegation of young people from Tsuruta, Japan, will arrive in Hood River on March 25 for a week-long visitation as part of a continuing springtime sister city tradition. This time, the group will be accompanied not only by several adults and Mayor Kenji Nakano, but also a film crew from NHK-TV, Japan's largest television network.

2000 – 20 YEARS AGO

What is the future of the Columbia Art Gallery? About 20 supporters of Hood River's nonprofit art gallery explored that question March 10 at the Hood River Chamber of Commerce conference rooms in an all-afternoon meeting called "Vision 2000-plus." The question about what the fu-

ture holds for CAG became more immediate when it was announced at the beginning of the meeting that Myrna Clements, who has been director and then management consultant for the gallery, will retire April 1.

2010 – 10 YEARS AGO

Women in Hood River County are being urged to clean out their closets and donate both formal and semi-formal clothing in all sizes for the second annual Dress 4 Less event in Hood River. Christine Keith and Jessie Page gained strong community support for the first effort in 2009 to help teens find the perfect prom attire without spending a fortune. "We are hoping to have more than 200 dresses for girls to choose from this year," said Keith.

Compiled by Trisha Walker and Emily Fitzgerald, News staff writers

Items needed for FISH garden

The FISH Food Bank Garden is in need of items to assist with growing of nutritious vegetables for FISH Food Bank clients this summer:

- Seventy-five to 100, 10-foot long, thumb sized bamboo stakes that will be used to identify what crops are planted and where.

- Twenty-five to 50 cedar shakes and shingles, 18- or 24-inches in length, will be used to protect young plants

from the relentless west wind that the garden receives.

- Bed sheets in any size. These will be cut up and woven between steel posts to create a wind barrier for the garden.

Located behind the Spirit of Grace Church and FISH Food Bank at 1130 Tucker Road, this garden is a combined project between the Oregon State University Extension Central Gorge Master Gardeners, Spirit of Grace Church and FISH.

For the past eight years, this garden has annually grown one ton of fresh vegetables for distribution to FISH clients. Through this effort, individuals and families who face food insecurity are receiving locally

grown produce in season.

Donations can be dropped off at the FISH Food Bank Garden Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., by April 1; contact Tessa at fishgardenvc@gmail.com for information.

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