

VICTORIA NIKKEI CULTURAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – 5 February 2017
Location- Art Gallery of Greater Victoria – 1040 Moss Street, Victoria, BC

VNCS Annual General Meeting called to order by Tsugio Kurushima at 10:07am.

1. AGENDA – Tsugio Kurushima

◆ *MOTION: To approve Agenda*

Moved- Anne Lee Switzer; Seconded- Kana Mercer, all in favour → CARRIED

2. 31 JANUARY 2016 AGM MINUTES – Tsugio Kurushima

◆ *MOTION: To adopt the 31 January AGM Minutes as presented.*

Moved- Cristina Shore; Seconded- Barbara Wilson, all in favour → CARRIED

REPORTS:

3. 2016 PRESIDENT ANNUAL REPORT – Tsugio Kurushima

2016 has been another busy year for the VNCS. When Tsugio reviewed the year, he was surprised at just how busy the VNCS was. We had a variety of events for young and old and several events that involved community meals.

In addition we ran:

- Our first Japanese Conversational Language course instructed by Mieko Fedrau
- Published 6 Newsletter the last one by our new Editor-In-Chief, Yukari Peerless
- Introduced Japanese translation to our Newsletter
- Supported the translation of the Switzer's book, *Gateway to Promise*
- Made 3 submissions to the BC Heritage Japanese Canadian Historic Site project

The VNCS also received plenty of inquiries through our info@vncs.ca email seeking information or support. For example, we supplied several letters of support for NAJC grant applications. We have also become the go to organization for the general public seeking Japanese related information.

To address the growing number of cultural inquiries we have established a Cultural Outreach Committee whose job will be to assess each inquiry and determine if and how we can fulfill the request.

This year we provided a significant amount in grants - \$2,615.30.

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • Keiko Miyamoto Translation of Gateway to Promise | \$525.30 |
| • Switzer book grant | \$250.00 |
| • ICA Syrian Refugee grant | \$1,000.00 |
| • Natsuki Abe JCYLC grant | \$500.00 |
| • Mike Abe New Moon Over Tohoku Screening grant | \$350.00 |

The Japanese Cultural Fair was very successful again this year. The VNCS raised close to \$10,000, an all time high. This is the only fundraiser that the VNCS has so the financial viability of our Society is dependent on a successful Cultural Fair.

All the above demonstrates that the VNCS is a vibrant organization that is fulfilling a meaningful role not only for its members, but also to the general public.

To operate an organization as active as we are requires an effective Board of Directors, which we are thankful. Tsugio expressed his sincere thanks to the dedication and hard work of this year's Board.

◆ *MOTION: That the President Annual Report be accepted.*
Moved- Debbie Ibaraki; Seconded- Ken Watai, all in favour → CARRIED

4. 2016 FINANCIAL REPORT – Ken Watai

Please see Mr. Watai's Full Report for detailed numbers...

| <u>Revenue</u> | | <u>Expense</u> | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------|
| Membership | \$1005 | Administration Total | \$2191 |
| Donation | \$1252 | General Total | \$3225 |
| Mochi Tsuki Kai | \$588 | Events Total | \$15,803 |
| Advertisement | \$5 | | ----- |
| Ikebana Workshop | \$2013 | Total Expense | \$21,219 |
| Obon Donation | \$423 | | |
| Fall Fair | \$17,961 | | |
| Misc. | \$270 | | |
| | ----- | | |
| Total Revenue | \$23, 517 | | |

Net Income \$2298

| <u>Asset</u> | | <u>Equity</u> | |
|----------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
| Bank | \$33,235 | Members Equity | \$52,049 |
| Term Deposit | \$21,110 | Current Earnings | \$2297 |
| | ----- | | ----- |
| Total Current Assets | \$54,345 | Total Member Equity | \$54,346 |

Last year, the BC Government passed the new Society Act, effective 18 November 2016. We have to move our society into the new act and we have 2 years to do so. Ken has started the application process. We have to file both to federal and provincial. Once Ken is finished filing, he will start working on the new Society Act.

Question: What is the difference?
 Ken: Ten differences between old and new acts; Ken will add these updates to the website.

Question: Will it change our constitution and bylaws?
 Ken: No

◆ *MOTION: To accept the Financial Report as presented*
Moved- Ken Watai; Seconded- Susan Kurushima, all in favour → CARRIED

5. 2016 NEWSLETTER REPORT- Yukari Peerless

Michael Abe prepared a message for the VNCS AGM relinquishing his duties as newsletter editor. He thanked everyone for the opportunity as well as the many contributors of articles and columns over the years. Mike asked for the continued support of Yukari and wishes her and the newsletter team continued success.

Currently the VNCS Newsletter is digitally distributed to 163 email addresses. The newsletter is issued on the third Thursday of every other month. After 15 years of dedicated service, Michael

Abe has stepped down as our editor-in-chief. Yukari stated that it was an honour for her to have taken over this position from him and she hopes she can fill his shoes.

Starting this year, VNCS has transitioned our newsletter distribution to Mailchimp. Mailchimp allows us to create the newsletter online and distribute it directly to each member's email inbox. This makes the editing of the newsletter easier; however, it also presents some challenges:

- An inability to correct errors and typos once the newsletter has been published.
- The newsletter is no longer being distributed in PDF format—a format that some of the users had preferred.

Despite having some drawbacks, Mailchimp is the go-to technology for this decade. The emails will be more easily read on more screen sizes, taking up less bandwidth to download, and requiring less storage space on your device. For these reasons, VNCS decided to switch to Mailchimp.

Other updates:

- Wakana Takai McLean has joined the newsletter team.
- VNCS has established a translation team. This includes Yukari, Mieko Fedrau, Kana Mercer, and Wakana Takai McLean. Yukari expressed her gratitude for the team for taking the time to volunteer and translate English articles into Japanese. Yukari announced that they are always looking for help. Please contact Yukari if anyone is interested in lending your expertise.
- The newsletter is currently being printed and mailed to 49 physical addresses, which includes individuals, organizations, and businesses. Printing, copying, and mailing of the newsletter over the course of time has become prohibitively costly. As a response to these increasing costs, effective immediately, we are phasing this service out. In the extreme case where the hard copy is necessary, members can pay \$25/year service charge to cover the cost. Payments for hardcopy newsletters can be made to VNCS.

Question: Initially the fee discussed was to be \$15. Why has it changed?

Tsugio responded that numbers were tossed around, but VNCS has decided on \$25.

Yukari: If you print a Mailchimp newsletter, it yields approximately 16 pages. Printing is quite labour intensive.

Craig: Asked the VNCS to reconsider the availability of the newsletter to non-members and creating a repository for the newsletters. Craig notes that there is a wider audience beyond members who would find the newsletters valuable pieces of history/memory. Craig asks the board to look into creating an online database for everyone. Tsugio agrees that it is a good idea and Anne Lee supports this initiative. If we can make it searchable, it would be even better. Craig believes that it wouldn't be too labour intensive, especially with the pdfs. Tsugio concluded that it will be discussed at the next board meeting.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the Newsletter Report as presented.*

Moved- Yukari; Seconded- Amy Kawano, all in favour → CARRIED

6. 2016 MEMBERSHIP REPORT – Prepared by Tony Ibaraki, presented by Tsugio Kurushima

Tony Ibaraki was unable to attend the 2017 AGM due to work commitments.

The 2016-year ended with a total of 93 paid memberships (76 membership renewals and 17 new members). Of these memberships, 36 made donations to the VNCS. Our membership was down 11 from last year; many did not renew last year due to forgetfulness.

Currently there are 46 paid memberships (35 renewals and 11 new) for 2017 prior to the VNCS AGM on February 5, 2017. Of these members, 20 have made a donation to VNCS.

Recommendation: In the first few newsletters put a visible reminder reminding members to renew their membership.

Debbie reminded everyone who signed up for a membership should keep their receipt.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the 2016 Membership report.*
*Moved- Tsugio Kurushima; Seconded- **Tamaki**, all in favour → CARRIED*

7. 2016 UMINARI TAIKO REPORT – Tsugio Kurushima

2016 was a very busy and successful year for Uminari Taiko.

Performances

We had 13 gigs this past year, two of which were pro bono. Three of our gigs were out of town – Nanaimo, Courtenay and Port Hardy.

The Port Hardy gig was most memorable. It was the first overnight trip to a place most of us had never visited before. Not only did we perform in their Filomi Festival but we also gave 2 workshops and participated in a parade.

Our paid gigs generated \$8,204 the largest amount of gig revenue ever. The out of town gigs was a major contributing factor.

- 7 Potato Society Japanese New Year Celebration (Nanaimo) (Jan 10)
- Victoria Mochitsuki Kai (New Year) Celebration (Jan 24) *Pro bono
- Campus View Elementary School International Pot Luck Supper (Apr 14) *Pro bono
- TC 10K (Apr 24)
- St. Aidan's United Church (Jun 12)
- Canada Day Celebration - Courtenay (Jul 1)
- Port Hardy Filomi Days (Jul 15-17)
- Victoria Dragon Boat Festival (Aug 12-14)
- India Mela (Fest) (Aug 13)
- Moon Festival Lantern Celebration (Sep 17)
- Furusato Dancers 10th Anniversary Concert (Sept 24)
- VNCS Japanese Cultural Fair (Oct 24)
- BC government Crown Corporation Staff Day Event (Nov 23)

Courses

This year UT held 3 Introductory Workshops and 3 6-Week Classes. Enrolment in these UT regular courses was down this year. (35) In addition to the two drum workshops UT held in Port Hardy, they also held two drum workshops for St. Michael's University School and again loaned our sewer pipe drums to Antidote to conduct their own workshop. (Antidote is a multiracial girls and women organization in Victoria, BC.)

Membership

In 2016 UT added two new apprentices to bring their headcount to nine – six full-time members and three apprentices. A new apprentice will begin in January 2017. The growth is a very encouraging sign and bodes well for their future.

Internal Education

UT did not have any internal workshops for their members this year. Five of their members attended the Regional Taiko Gathering held in Vancouver on August 19-21.

Other

We purchased two new sets of costumes this year.

Finances

We ended the year with an operating surplus of \$1,662 based on income of \$13,276 and expenses of \$11,614.

UT 2016 Financial Statement

| <u>Income</u> | | <u>Expenses</u> | |
|---------------|----------|-----------------|----------|
| Gigs | \$8,204 | Rent | \$6,600 |
| Courses | \$2,901 | Gig expenses | \$3,290 |
| Membership | \$1,711 | Equipment | \$1,133 |
| Others | \$460 | Web | \$366 |
| | ----- | Other | \$225 |
| Total Income | \$13,276 | | ----- |
| | | Total Expenses | \$11,614 |

Operating Balance +\$1,662

We have \$13,621 in our insurance fund and \$12,216 in our reserve-operating fund.

Question: Is UT looking for drums?

Tsugio: Yes and UT will be starting a project. Some need to be re-skinned and looked into cost, but it may be better to buy new.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the 2016 Uminari Taiko Report
Moved- Tsugio Kurushima; Seconded- Tomoko Okada, all in favour → CARRIED*

8. 2016 FURUSATO DANCERS REPORT – Tsugio Kurushima

The Furusato Dancers enjoyed another successful year of learning and promoting Japanese Bon Odori. FD had a very busy year with 13 performances and 1 dance workshop with their Sensei. Of the 13 gigs, three were pro bono and ten were paid gigs (Received an honorarium).

- January – Mochi Tsuki kai
- February – Esquimalt Gorge Park Celebration
- April – Ethnic Dance Festival, Highlights Concert & International Day of Dance Gathering
- May – Asian Heritage Month Concert
- June – Heritage Dance Fest
- July – Westshore Neighbourhood Nights
- August – Dragon Boat & Obon
- September – Moon Festival and Lantern Celebration & 10th Anniversary Concert
- October – VNCS Japanese Cultural Fair

At the Ethnic Dance Festival the Furusato Dancers won an award for Best Fusion Dance for our performance of Yume Bijin an odori done to a modern tune.

In June we had a Dance Workshop with our Sensei, Hirano Sensei. She taught FD Yagi Bush, an odori that uses a kasa (umbrella) as a prop.

This year FD introduced three new dances: Yosakoi Naruko Ondo, Yume Bijin and Yagi Bushi. FD also added two new members: first child member, Minori Kongieli, daughter of one of their long time members Hiroko Shiramoto and another male dancer, James Marc. FD now have a total of 15 dancers.

The highlight of the year was FD's 10th Anniversary Concert held at the Berwick Royal Oak theatre on September 24. The concert was very successful and came close to meeting our break-even target with a loss of \$107.65.

Financially the Furusato Dancers had a break-even year. Our operating profit was +\$103.64 based on revenue of \$2,130.62 and expenses of \$2,026.98.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the Furusato Dancers Annual Report*
*Moved- Tsugio Kurushima; Seconded- **Tamaki**, all in favour → CARRIED*

9. 2016 JAPANESE CULTURAL FAIR REPORT – Tsugio Kurushima

General Overview/Thoughts

The 2016 Cultural Fair was again very successful. Many people have commented that this year's Fair was the best ever. It certainly was the best ever from a revenue perspective as we achieved a all-time high in net proceeds, close to \$10,000. Attendance also appeared to be higher, although there is no way of knowing for sure. As has been the practice in the past few years, we introduced new things to improve the experience for our Fair attendees. This year the major new initiative was the introduction of two new food items – yakisoba dogs and the YYJ (Yum Yum Japanese) dogs. These two food items along with a larger supply of onigiri and a second order of sushi helped us to feed the masses in the afternoon. The lack of food in the afternoon has been a problem for many years and this year we finally solved it. In the Silent Auction area we tried out an online auction site, GoBid, where we put several item up for auction. GoBid was very successful, so we will use it more next year. In the cultural demonstration area we brought in three new acts: a shakuhachi performance, a minyo band performance, and a presentation on Japanese Gardens. All three drew large audiences. Overall, not only did the VNCS reach new highs, in both attendance and revenue, but also Tsugio believes that we improved the Fair experience.

Volunteers

It takes a large number of volunteers to run this Fair. We had approximately 100 volunteers on Fair Day and close to that many at the work parties before the Fair (2 food preparation work parties and 2 pricing and sorting works parties by the Fujinkai). This year we received tremendous help from the UVic English Language Centre, who provided over 40 volunteer students as well as three supervisors. Most of our non-student volunteers were VNCS members., but there are also a number of volunteers who are not members, but come out to help because they think it is a great event. A prime example of the community support we get is the two individuals who stepped up to do the sound systems. When I found out a couple of weeks before the Fair that my son would not be available to do the sound system setups, I was able to recruit a young man and his father whose only connection with us was that they had been to the Fair before. Thank you to all the volunteers without whom we could not run this event. Thank you to Maureen Bird the Volunteer Coordinator.

Planning Committee

There is a core group of people who deserve recognition for the effort they put forth to organize and run the Cultural Fair. They not only have an area of responsibility, but they also are a sounding board to help solve general problems. Planning for the Cultural Fair starts in May and the Planning Committee meets throughout the summer. These individuals are critical to the success of the Fair. Planning Committee Members are:

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Amy Kawano, Debbie Ibaraki & Kana Mercer | Japanese Food |
| Craig Mercer | Facilities & Operations |
| Lisa Nakamura | Bake Sale |
| Val Watanabe | Children's area |
| Yukari Peerless | Promotions |
| James Harada-Down & Amanda Gaunt | Decorations |
| Rose Oishi, Joyce Pearlstone & Susan Kurushima | Fujinkai & Things Japanese |
| James Harada-Downs | Signage, Poster & Program |
| Maureen Bird | Volunteer Coordinator |
| Cristina Shore & Patti Kagawa | Silent Auction |
| Ken Watai | Finances & Cash |
| Patti Kagawa, Lily Yee, Rieko Gurney | Donation solicitation |

Cultural Demonstrations

A major goal of the Fair is to share Japanese culture. This year we had 23 different individuals or groups who presented 26 cultural performances and/or demonstrations, including three new acts: shakuhachi, minyo band, and a Japanese Garden presentation. All the performances were well attended and several had overflow audiences. A big thank you to all of these performers and demonstrators for helping us share, promote, and educate not only the greater community, but also our members of Japanese and Japanese-Canadian culture.

| | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Satomi Edwards | Koto |
| Uminari Taiko | Taiko |
| Furusatio Dancers | Bon Odori |
| Hitomi Harama | Kimono Presentation |
| Urasenke Tankokai Victoria Association | Tea ceremony |
| Michiko Seguev & her students | Ikebana |
| Vancouver Island Bonsai Club | Bonsai |
| Mike Abe & Natsuki Abe | Rakugo (Japanese Story Telling) |
| Mike Abe | Sumie |
| Keiko Alkire | Shodo |
| SanShukan Aikikai | Aikido |
| Kenzen Karate Sports Club | Karate |
| Victoria Japanese Heritage Language School | Youth Choir & Soran Bushi |
| Harumi Ota | Pottery |
| Brian Angene | Kyudo (Japanese Archery) |
| Paul Allison | Japanese Garden Presentation |
| Hugh Barclay | Shakuhachi |
| Rina El-Nahas & Family | Minyo Band |
| Shoshinkai Victoria Iaido | Iaido (The Way of the Sword) |

Wynter Caron (Tsukino-con)
Uni Nami Farms (Heather)
Jaga Silk

Cosplay
Growing Japanese Vegetables
Maccha Tea Tasting

Donations

The financial success of the Fair is dependent on the donations we receive from businesses and individuals. This year the support was higher than in previous years. We received donations from 56 businesses and 50 individuals. These donations are used in our General Raffle, Silent Suction, Things Japanese Table, Baking Table, Craft Table, Volunteer Raffle, and Door Prize. Please see the Donation Banner for a complete list of all donors.

Not only did our overall donor base increase this year, so did the number of Platinum Level sponsors (donation value of \$1,000 or more). The 2016 Platinum Level Sponsors were:

- Bell Media (CTV Vancouver Island, CFX 1070, 107.3 KOOL FM)
- Bento Sushi
- Black Press (Monday Magazine, Victoria News)
- Campus Auto Group (Honda, Acura, Nissan, Infiniti)
- Fujiya Japanese Foods

Thank you to all of our donors both big and small. Please make an effort to support ALL the businesses that supported us.

As the convener of our Cultural Fair, Tsugio expressed his heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all volunteers, performers, and donors who contributed their time, talents, and generous gifts to make the Japanese Cultural Fair a success.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the Cultural Fair Report as presented.*

Moved- Tsugio Kurushima; Seconded- Craig Mercer, All in favour → CARRIED

10. 2016 SAKURA FUJINKAI REPORT- Susan Kurushima

The current mailing list is about 20, but a core group of 10-12 ladies have been meeting for dinner and social time on the last Tuesday of each month. They have two new members: Atsuko and Morag as well as some visitors who have occasionally come along with members. Sakura Fujinkai patronize restaurants that contribute to their fund-raising at the time of the annual Cultural Fair. In 2016 they were: Koto, Shizen, Shiki, Chikara, Yoshi, Bon Sushi, J & J Wonton Noodle House, Golden City Restaurant, and Azuma Japanese Restaurant.

Cultural Fair

Debbie and Amy coordinated the food preparation; Lisa and Rieko ran the baking table; a team of Rose, Grace and Joyce coordinated the pricing and sales at the Things Japanese and Fujinkai crafts tables. Debbie, Sue, Mieko, Rhonda and Susan participated in the Cultural Fair this year. Michiko Seguev, our sensei, did two half hour demonstrations and gave a door prize at each one.

Ikebana

Sakura Fujinkai had eight ongoing students in the Ikebana group on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month at St. Aidan's United Church. From May to July they, once again, made arrangements for the Art Gallery. They purchased items from Zen Florist when they closed down and can offer these things for sale to members at cost.

Debbie, Sue, Mieko, Rhonda and Susan participated in the Cultural Fair this year. Michiko Seguev, our sensei, did two half hour demonstrations and gave a door prize at each one.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the Japanese Cultural Fair Report as presented.*
Moved- Susan Kurushima; Seconded- Gordon Switzer, all in favour → CARRIED

11. 2016 WEB PRESENCE REPORT- Craig Mercer

*Please see Mr. Mercer's graph for full details and images

Craig notes that the Newsletter and Website should be combined into "VNCS Communications" Highlights

- Steady increase year over year on key metrics including Facebook likes (38% increase over 2015)
- Looking to launch online payment system for membership renewals (headed up by Nathan Wilson)
- Many visits from Russia in 2016, which may indicate automated programs (spam bots) roaming the site and skewing the data somewhat.

Unique Visitors by Year

- 2016: 7911 unique persons
- This is a high number and could be attributed to spam bots; ~1500 Russian skewed data, so numbers increased by ~1000-1200

Sessions by Year (Duration of the Session)

- Increasing in time; part of this because of new data on the site.

Top Countries by Year

- Top countries by year: 75% is Canada, then US, then Japan; fairly steady growth
- The pink section (see graph) is the spike in Russian data
- If we add the newsletters on the website (archive), there will be significant growth on the website

New Vs. Returning by Year

- New 81.5%; Returning 18.5%
- Big spike in 2016; the data is being skewed by Russian data

Facebook Likes by Year

- Patti Ayukawa looks after the VNCS Facebook account
- 427 Likes in 2016
- 38% increase over 2015
- FB started in 2012 and we are seeing steady growth. The more likes, the more reach
- Yukari has also set up a Twitter

◆ *MOTION: To accept the Web Presence Report as presented.*
Moved- Craig Mercer; Seconded- Tomoko Okada, all in favour → CARRIED

12. 2016 NAJC REPORT – Tsugio Kurushima

The National Association of Japanese Canadians is a non-profit incorporated community organization that represents the Japanese Canadian community. Its mission is to promote and develop a strong Japanese Canadian identity and thereby to strengthen local communities and the national organization; and to strive for equal rights and liberties for all persons, in particular, the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.

The VNCS is a member organization of the NAJC. One of the reasons the VNCS is a member organization is to have the NAJC act as a voice that can speak on our behalf of human rights, racial discrimination and other social and political issues. Our charitable status limits the extent to which we speak out on these issues. Given the current socio-political climate this is even more important. The other major benefit the NAJC provides is funding which is described below.

The NAJC does its work through a variety of Committees. The four key Committees are as follows:

1. Endowment Committee

Determines the recipients for the two endowment funds – Sports, Education and Arts Development (SEAD) and Cultural Development (CD). These two endowment funds were set up from the original \$12 million that was part of the Redress Settlement for educational, social and cultural activities, and programs to contribute to the well being of the JC community. \$250K went to SEAD and \$350K went to CD. Victoria based recipients are: Keiko Sauders Translation Project in 2016, Kyudo in 2014, and Uminari Taiko in 2004. The VNCS could take more advantage of these funds.

2. Human Rights Committee – Chaired by Lorene Oikawa

One of the objectives of the NAJC is to actively work independently and with others toward the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination and related intolerances and to strive for equal rights and liberties for all persons in Canada, irrespective of and not limited to, race, colour, creed, national origin or sex and to combat discriminatory practices directed against disadvantaged groups. This committee is very active particular given the current social climate locally and worldwide.

3. Japanese Canadian Young Leaders Committee

The Young Leaders Committee is responsible for:

- Acting as the national voice of young people in JC communities
- Engaging and connecting young people in JC communities across Canada
- Proposing recommendations to the National Executive Board on programming, events, and annual budget.

They have held several conferences on their own.

4. Community Renewal Fund Committee

This is a new fund that was set up at the 2015 NAJC AGM.

The NAJC will provide a one-time grant of 1. \$24,000 maximum for NAJC Full Member organizations; 2. \$4000 maximum for NAJC Supporting Member organizations.

This grant: For the fiscal year 2016 through to 2019, to cover the cost of capital projects, renovations, facility improvements, new or continuing programs, initiatives, events, and/or any related projects.

The funds for the Community Renewal Fund come from the Endowment Fund and no portion of the funds are taken from the annual interest generated by the Sustaining Fund, which is required for the operational cost of the NAJC. VNCS will be making an application to this fund this year.

NAJC Conference

In 2015 Victoria hosted the NAJC AGM and National Conference. Spearheaded by Past President Michael Abe, many in this room were involved. In 2016 The NAJC AGM and National Conference was held in Calgary. Concurrent with the National Conference was a JCYLC Conference. Tsugio attended the NAJC AGM for 2016. Jeff Tanaka and Natsuki Abe attended the JCYLC Conference. The Calgary Japanese Canadian Association and the CJCA Seniors Foundation hosted the gathering. They did an excellent job.

Tsugio's Highlights for the AGM

- Financially the NAJC is in a strong position due primarily to astute investments by the past Treasurer, Kevin Okabe.
- So far only three centres have submitted a grant application to the Community Renewal Fund: Vernon, Kamloops and Winnipeg. These centres all have a Cultural Centre building.
- There were elections for the VP position and for Board Directors. This is a very positive sign that there is interest in the membership to sit on the National Executive Board.
- The new president of the NAJC is David Mitsui from Edmonton.

On Saturday the conference was held at the Sheraton Suites Hotel in downtown Calgary. The conference opened with a plenary session. One of the speakers was Mike Abe who gave an update on the Landscape of Injustice Project. Following the plenary session, delegates got to attend different seminars. Tsugio attended the Heritage Stream about researching your genealogy from a Japanese Canadian perspective; the Human Rights Stream, an update about the human rights activity of the NAJC; and a Young Leaders Stream, which was a panel discussion on racism from a young person's perspective. The breakout sessions were not as meaty or informative as Tsugio would have liked.

A banquet to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Japanese Canadian volunteers in First World War was held on Saturday evening. Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Her Honourable Lois Mitchell and Consul-General of Japan, Consul General Tanabe attended the banquet. Four descendants of First World War Volunteers: David Matsui (Edmonton), Laura Sugimoto (Calgary), Kaye Kishibe (Toronto) and Tim Tamashiro (Calgary) gave presentations. The stories were very moving.

On Sunday morning the AGM delegates participated in a planning/brainstorming session about the future of the NAJC. The three highest priorities that came out of that session were:

- Education: Push the Japanese Canadian dispossession and Redress story into the school curriculum so that this part of Canadian history is not forgotten.
- Immigration: Develop strategies and programs to get new Japanese immigrants involved in the Nikkei community.
- Continue to help local Nikkei community organizations to grow and develop.

Overall, Tsugio says that it was a good conference.

Next conference will be held in Ottawa to celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Confederation and the 75th Anniversary of the Uprooting and Internment.

Question: How far do you push the political in the organization?

Tsugio: It is difficult to assess where to draw the line. We have to keep supporting those who speak on our behalf. However, we must be careful, but we can rely on the NAJC to put out press releases and support their efforts. We have to be careful to not be seen as a lobby group.

**NAJC is not a charity

Question: For the Community Renewal Grant Application, what will the VNCS use the money for?

Tsugio: To support cultural programs, more funding for translations, language program, Ikebana group. We have also discussed with Ken Noma about storage. The VNCS is open to suggestions. Possibly build a float for the parade (Maybe).

Question: It will be the 140th anniversary of Manzo Nagano, are we going to celebrate?

Tsugio: No, but we're open to it. The board has yet to decide what events will be held this year.

◆ *MOTION: To accept the 2016 NAJC Report as presented.*

Moved- Tsugio Kurushima; Seconded- Craig Mercer, all in favour → CARRIED

GENERAL INFORMATION + MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS:

13. EVENTS INFORMATION – Tsugio Kurushima

- Nori Tori next Sunday, February 12. Bradley will send package information and Sus Tabata will provide his cottage for a potluck dinner afterwards.
 - 50 more booklets have been printed: \$10 non members, \$6 members

14. KEIKO TRANSLATION PROJECT -

- Gathered 16 translators. This can pose some different interpretations; however Keiko has a friend who will help edit, since they both have a similar sense of writing style.
 - Sections 1 and 3 are underway. Aim to finish by June/July 2017
 - Keiko went to Japan to promote the book at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo and the Migration Museum in Yokohama
 - Received various sources of funding. Keiko is grateful, but the book will require more funding.
-

Kyla Fitzgerald had to leave due to an engagement and stop minute taking; Susan Kurushima will take over election minutes after historical presentation at 12:00pm.

AGM reconvened at 12:45 pm.

15. ELECTION OF OFFICERS – Vice President Debbie Ibaraki

Debbie called for nominations from the floor for the office of President. None were heard. Tsugio Kurushima was elected by acclamation.

No nominations were made from the floor for the office of Vice President and Debbie Ibaraki was elected by acclamation.

No nominations were made from the floor for the office of Treasurer and Ken Watai was elected by acclamation.

No nominations were made from the floor for the office of Secretary. Since no nominations had been made previously this position will remain vacant. The board can fill this position at a later date from the directors then in office.

There are nine Director positions. Jeff Tanaka has resigned and all other Directors are willing to be nominated for a new term. There were no nominations from the floor. Therefore Yukari Peerless, Kyla Fitzgerald, Karen Kobayashi, Mieko Fedrau, Tomoko Okada, Hitomi Harama, Cristina Shore and Amy Kawano were elected by acclamation. There is one seat vacant.

Amy Kawano moved that the meeting be adjourned at 12:55 pm.