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For many in attendance, it was a deeply moving and bittersweet experience. Others were simply in awe that the grand opening had arrived. The Heart Mountain Interpretive Learning Center was finally a reality. After many years of planning and fund raising, it is now open to visitors.

The very first visitors to walk through the doors of the Interpretive Learning Center included the former internees who journeyed back to Wyoming for the grand opening weekend. Some 500 former internees and their descendants attended the events, and a crowd of more than 1,500 people gathered for the opening day dedication ceremony on Saturday, August 20. The days that followed were nearly as busy with approximately 800 on August 21, and approximately 500 on August 22. All came to celebrate the grand opening of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Interpretive Learning Center, but each person had their own reason for being there. For many, the weekend felt like a class reunion or a family reunion.

The speaker line-up was inspiring, keeping to the theme for the weekend of “Lessons from the Past, Guidance for the Future.” During the pilgrimage dinner, keynote speaker Tom Brokaw retold the stories of the past and commended those attending by saying, “The strength of this country is drawn from the dignity and determination of our fellow citizens who have been wronged, many of them terribly, but have not given up on the American dream or the promise that their country will learn from its past mistakes.”

Heart Mountain boy scout troop 333, accompanied by troop 078, raised the flag to start the dedication ceremonies on Saturday, connecting the past to the future. Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation leaders welcomed attendees and thanked the many individuals who volunteered countless hours and resources to the effort. Former Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta and retired U.S. Senator Alan Simpson, who met as Boy Scouts when Mineta’s family was incarcerated at Heart Mountain, took the stage together and reflected on their experiences. Keynote speaker Senator Daniel Inouye talked about his own experiences during and after WWII, warning that to forget the past is to risk repeating it.

Senator Inouye, a Congressional Medal of Honor recipient who lost an arm fighting in Europe with the famous 442nd Regimental Combat Team, recalled being
shocked by racism he encountered after the war. He spoke of the strides made in subsequent decades, notably the 1988 Civil Liberties Act granting token reparations and issuing a formal apology to Americans of Japanese ancestry incarcerated during the war. But he cautioned that the lessons of this experience must be taught to future generations, and said the Interpretive Learning Center is an important achievement because it will tell that story for years to come.

After Sen. Inouye’s address, Rev. Alfred Tsuyuki performed a traditional Shinto purification ritual at the front entrance to bless the Interpretive Learning Center, followed by a ceremonial cutting of barbed wire to officially open the center. Visitors streamed through the center throughout the afternoon and attendees enjoyed outdoor entertainment including taiko drum ensemble performances directed by Rev. Shuichi Thomas Kurai.

The grand opening banquet that evening focused on “Guidance for the Future,” with a panel of thought leaders from across the country who commented on legal, legislative, psychological and philanthropic perspectives of the Japanese American experience and how it informs today’s civil rights discussions. The panel included Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Lance Ito, a respected advocate for civil rights and judicial reform, whose parents were incarcerated at Heart Mountain; Irene Hirano Inouye, president of the US-Japan Council; former transportation secretary Norman Mineta, who served in the cabinets of two U.S. presidents; and Dr. Melba Vasquez, President of the American Psychological Association.

More than 200 volunteers helped with the grand opening events. Volunteers came from around the country just to be part of the events and many worked alongside Heart Mountain staff from Friday morning into the evening on Sunday. They worked wherever they were needed—from the registration desk to parking to trash patrol to moving crew to hiking guides. Without the tireless efforts of our volunteers, the grand opening would not have been as successful and they are appreciated immensely. For many this was not a one time effort. Volunteers continue to donate their time at the ILC and behind the scenes in the archives, moving items from the archival warehouse, and performing general maintenance.

The dinners, dedication, and hike set the stage for the future of the ILC. Since the opening, the visitation has consistently ranged from 80 to 100 people per day. Many groups, schools and organizations are beginning to schedule programs presented by the staff. The admission fee at the ILC for adults is $7 and $5 for students and seniors. Hours for the ILC will be evaluated based on visitation and staffing during the winter months. Please call the ILC at 307.754.8000 or check the website at www.HeartMountain.org to plan your visit.
Hearts as Big as the Mountain

BY KELLY JENSEN
The Nature Conservancy
Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve

The Nature Conservancy had the distinct pleasure on August 21, 2011, to open Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve to Japanese-American internees who lived at the Heart Mountain Relocation Center between 1942 and 1945.

The former internees and their families traveled to the Cody/Powell area to participate in the grand opening and dedication of the Interpretive Learning Center developed by the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

Although many had traveled back to the relocation camp site in past years, for others it was their first trip back, filled with mixed emotions. While some families said they had grown up hearing about the time in the camp, several said their parents or grandparents rarely spoke about being interned.

The event on August 21 was a pilgrimage of sorts to the top of Heart Mountain, a landmark that overlooked the camp, and served as a beacon for many who had lived inside the camp boundaries.

The group’s fearless leader was 82-year-old Bacon Sakatani, making his 8th trip to the top of Heart Mountain. Bacon is a small thin man with a loud commanding voice. When he directed the group to get ready for pictures, they did. When he told them to start hiking, they did. When he instructed all of us to “rest five minutes” we did. Bacon and his friend Keiichi were the first to arrive at Heart Mountain Ranch Preserve that morning, ready to hike. Bacon organized group photos at the ranch headquarters and again on top of the mountain. He stayed at the top to make sure photos were taken as each and every group reached the top. With each arrival he unrolled a commemorative banner he carried in his backpack for the photo being taken. When the last group had reached the top and began their descent, Bacon took a final look around the top of the mountain and started home.

On that day, nearly a dozen internees reached the top of Heart Mountain. They were joined by their children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends. Some took a moment to stand or sit alone at the top, while others rejoiced and shared their joy with everyone they saw. Most lingered, visiting with each other and taking in the view, while others fairly quickly turned around and began the difficult journey.
back down the mountain.

Janet Setsuda was interned at the camp when she was seven or eight. At the top she described how, as a little girl, she would sit inside the camp and look up at this majestic mountain. She would see it through the barbed wire fence and dream about some day sitting on top of the mountain and looking down on the camp.

Janet has hiked other mountains including Mt. Fuji but said this was the most important thing she had ever wanted to do. As she neared the top, the look of awe and joy on her face made it clear she had arrived where she needed to be. She was eager to visit with other internees on the summit as they sat for photographs or took in the view.

Janet’s family had arranged to have hiking sticks made that marked the occasion. They gave one to each person who had participated in the hike that day. Her grandchildren donated funds to purchase the sticks. They wanted this day to include a tangible symbol of the memories they would all carry.

Barbara “Bobbi” Konoo and her sister Marian Mimaki Murata will travel with me every time I hike Heart Mountain. Bobbi is 89 years old. Against her children’s wishes, she attempted the hike because her younger sister Marian, who is 87, very much wanted to be on top of Heart Mountain.

These two ladies, who are as small as hummingbirds, slowly made their way up the trail small step by small step. On their journey, they met gracious caring people who gave them strength to keep going. Bobbi, who led the two, is afraid of heights. Her guiding angel Ken Stockwell (a Cody man she had never met) walked backwards up the trail and told her to watch his feet and step where he stepped. He had already been to the top and was headed down but realized she could use some gentle guidance. With the help of Ken, Bobbi’s niece Jeanne (who was born in the relocation camp), and others who joined them, Bobbi reached the summit and looked down upon the camp’s location. As he helped her maneuver a rock outcropping, Ken said it was her heart, as big as the mountain, taking her to the top. Her trip back down the steep trail was slow, cautious and gentle. Her greatest concern was always that someone might be hurt while helping her down.

Our group took turns guiding her and learning to appreciate the value we each brought to the trip that day. When encouraged to rest during one stretch on the trail, Bobbi said she couldn’t stop at that place because there was barbed wire, and she didn’t want to rest where she could see it. Spoken so quietly, it reverberated like a thunderclap for those of us who heard it. When she walked into the parking area she was met with applause and cheering, bringing a smile to her beautiful face.

Marian Murata, Bobbi’s sister, made it nearly to the top but heartbreakingly had to turn back. She was so sorry her older sister made it and she didn’t. Marian experienced altitude sickness on the way up the mountain but was insistent she could get there. She was blessed to cross paths on the trail with Dr. Caety Schmidt (a local doctor hiking that day in case she was needed). Also with Marian’s group was William, an incredibly giving EMT from Bighorn Canyon NRA. Marian made it within a few hundred vertical feet of the top but reached a medical state where Caety insisted she return to the bottom. Transporting an 87-year-old lady physically unable to walk is tricky. She was placed on William’s back. He gently carried her all the way back down to the parking lot. And then, because he hadn’t reached the summit, he turned around and climbed the mountain. That evening, a chance meeting between William and Marian brought huge smiles and a big hug from a tiny lady for a kind young man.

The internees had an amazing day on Heart Mountain. We all did.
Message from the Chair: Shirley Ann Higuchi

It has been a summer to remember for the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) and its many friends and supporters. Our dream of opening the doors to a permanent museum at the site of the prison camp finally came true in August, with the grand opening of the HMWF Interpretive Learning Center (ILC). It was a time to solemnly honor the internees who endured such hardship at Heart Mountain and challenges throughout their lives, and it was a time to celebrate the Foundation’s accomplishment and years of hard work.

It is impossible to adequately recognize and show appreciation to everyone who contributed to the success of the grand opening weekend, but I must first and foremost thank the people who traveled to attend the events. The extraordinary turnout of former internees, family members and friends, along with remarkable support from local residents and the surrounding communities, resulted in a celebration that can only be characterized as an unqualified success. We also owe a debt of gratitude to everyone who volunteered time and assistance — from members of the HMWF Board, Advisory Council and committees to the army of local volunteers who assisted us in countless ways.

I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Park County, Wyoming, and the surrounding communities for embracing not only the Board and staff but the many visitors who descended upon Cody and Powell for the grand opening weekend. Special thanks go to Mayors Nancy Tia Brown and Scott Mangold for their support, and we are grateful to Mayor Mangold for contributing his voice talent as our program announcer for the events. The overwhelming sense of community that was shared with us was unlike anything I have personally experienced in Washington, DC, or anywhere else in the country.

Many people contributed to making the grand opening events memorable and enlightening. The pilgrimage dinner on Friday, designed as a tribute to Heart Mountain internees, was moderated by Board member Alan Kumamoto, HM Goodwill Ambassador Bacon Sakatani and former Heart Mountain internee Hal Keimi. The evening featured presentations from Judge Raymond Uno and former U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, and noted broadcast journalist Tom Brokaw was the special guest speaker for the evening. Everyone did an outstanding job and we are grateful for their efforts.

We also are grateful to everyone who participated in the dedication ceremony on Saturday morning, especially keynote speaker Senator Daniel Inouye, and Secretary Mineta and former Senator Alan Simpson who also spoke about their experiences and commented on the significance of the occasion. The common sentiment woven through the fiber of the grand opening was the shared vision and mission — to never forget the events that transpired at Heart Mountain during WWII, or allow such events to happen again.

Thanks also go to the people who participated in a panel discussion at the gala dinner on Saturday evening: U.S.-Japan Council President Irene Hirano Inouye, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Lance Ito, American Psychological Association President Dr. Melba Vasquez and Secretary Mineta. Panel members stressed the importance of carrying the messages of the Heart Mountain ILC into the future, and talked about ways to accomplish that goal.

To that end, we ask our Nisei community to share your personal histories and pass along the stories to your children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews. In order to continue the dialogue on this important topic, we need to engage the younger generations to keep your stories alive.

Memories of the Interpretive Learning Center grand opening are indelibly etched in the hearts and minds of all who attended during the historical weekend. Many have referred to the celebration using words like “transformational” and “inspiring.” While the opening of the ILC ends an arduous journey, the real work now begins. The work of building upon this legacy and bridging the generations is now upon us — and we want you with us, every step of the way. Your membership is crucial in the ongoing involvement of the next generation and will allow us to take this message forward.

In looking ahead, we want you to mark your calendars for the next celebration sponsored by the HMWF at the Interpretive Learning Center: August 10 – 12, 2012. At the Foundation’s next board meeting, we will focus on the topic of multigenerational outreach and recruitment, and ways to build our next major national event around long-term sustainability for the future. We’ll be looking at a broad spectrum of programming proposals and ideas. Your suggestions and feedback are welcome. We look forward to working with you in the coming year.
Myth #3 The government decided to remove people of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast because the military had reason to fear a Japanese invasion.
At the time in mid-February of 1942 when President Roosevelt signed the Executive Order authorizing the mass removal of Japanese Americans from the West Coast, the military consensus was that a Japanese invasion of the West Coast was all but impossible. The military was anticipating and preparing for spot raids and sea-based shellings, but understood that Japan lacked the capacity to stage and support a land-based invasion across the many thousands of nautical miles between Japan and the West Coast of the United States. Top Army and Navy officials testified to this effect before Congress on February 4, 1942. Thus, while there was great alarm among politicians and the general public about an imminent Japanese invasion of the West Coast, the actual military circumstances did not support it.

Eric L. Muller is distinguished professor and associate dean of faculty development at the University of North Carolina School of Law. He is the author of the books, “American Inquisition: The Hunt for Japanese American Disloyalty in World War II” and “Free to Die for Their Country: The Story of the Japanese American Draft Resisters.” He is a board member of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and recognized as a leading authority on the constitutional implications of WWII internment.

Do You Know? Questions From Our Archives
As we collect information and artifacts, several questions and objects leave us stumped. We would love your help solving some of the mysteries. If you can answer the following questions, please email Christy at flemingchristy@heartmountain.org

Question #1 Did the barracks have mailboxes? We would like to know if they did, where they were located, and what they looked like.

Question #2 This rock was found near the site of the high school face down in a pile of river rocks. Our guess is that it is some sort of survey marker, but we have no idea. Does anyone know what it is?
Detained behind barbed wire in the shadow of Wyoming’s Heart Mountain, internees—uprooted from their homes and their jobs on the West Coast—looked to arts and crafts, hobbies, school, sports, and other activities to occupy their time.

On September 16, staff from the Buffalo Bill Historical Center (BBHC) arrived at the ILC with an amazing display of art work produced in Heart Mountain. Inspired by the Smithsonian exhibit, *Art of Gaman*, BBHC staff approached HMWF to see if we were interested in working together to create an exhibit to display arts and crafts work produced during the confinement at Heart Mountain. Pieces, representative of the arts and crafts created by internees from scrap wood, shells, and other found or discarded materials at the camp, were carefully considered and an exhibit was created.

The majority of the 27 arts and crafts objects on display are items from the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation collections, with an additional piece from K.T. and Ted Roes. Artifacts on display include wood carvings, jewelry, needlework, oil paintings, and a doll. This small exhibit honors the artisans who created these incredible pieces. The skill and artistry involved in crafting these objects is outstanding, and the exhibit is certain to be informative and enlightening.

The exhibit *Beauty Behind Barbed Wire: Arts and Crafts from the Heart Mountain Internment Camp* was originally on display during the summer of 2011 at the BBHC. Through a partnership with the BBHC, the exhibit will be on display at the ILC through the winter months. Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Interpretive Learning Center is honored to work with the BBHC to bring the first of many special or traveling exhibits into the ILC Temporary Exhibit Space.

By IKE HATCHIMONJI

On a recent trip to Wyoming for the grand opening of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation’s Interpretive Learning Center, on two different occasions, I was approached by individuals, one a woman and one a man who, when learning that I was an internee at the Heart Mountain concentration camp, said, “I apologize” followed by a hand shake. On hearing these words, I was momentarily perplexed and taken aback by what these complete strangers said. Actually, I was overwhelmed with emotion and softly responded, “thank you.”

Why did these words have such a powerful impact? The words came as a shock after so many years. Later, as I recovered my senses, I began to wonder about the people who said “I’m sorry” and what those words meant and why they said them. Simple words, yet they meant a lot. Perhaps it was the sincere expression of regret spoken by people who, as Americans, wanted to say how sorry they were for what happened at Heart Mountain. They knew that their fellow Americans were victims of a grave injustice. Was it a matter of conscience and guilt? Should I have said, “Thank you…I deserve an apology because of what you did to me.” No, I don’t think most Japanese American internees would react that way. I’m sure that many former internees have received similar expressions of regret from their fellow Americans and are grateful for receiving them.

Why would these people want to apologize for something they had no responsibility for? And why after so many years would these words be expressed? Perhaps social psychologists know the answers as to why decent Americans feel compelled to apologize on a personal basis. On the other hand, we Nisei, as Americans, do we apologize? No, that wouldn’t make sense.

A Presidential apology followed the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 that granted redress for our World War II experiences. Although the words in the Presidential letter of apology were rather tepid in tone, it was not a sincere expression of regret that was called for; it was, nevertheless, a “letter of apology.” The personal apologies such as I received at Heart Mountain meant much more.

Many local residents, some of who lived in the area when the Heart Mountain camp was there, attended the opening of the Foundation’s Interpretive Learning Center. In the interaction they had with former internees, stories were exchanged along with smiles and handshakes. As the Interpretive Learning Center is meant to do, the process of understanding had begun. No doubt, the expressions of apology are a part of that learning. True to the words of the Foundation: Kokoro Kara, the apologies were “from the heart.”
Driving Highway 14 A between Powell and Cody, it is hard to miss that lone red chimney. It commands attention and has become a local landmark. This iconic structure draws many people from all walks of life to learn about what happened at Heart Mountain. Starting in the 1970s, local citizens involved in the preservation of the Heart Mountain site worked with the Shoshone-Heart Mountain Irrigation District to ensure its preservation. While the chimney escaped demolition, it remained in danger of succumbing to age and the elements. Since then, deterioration of the masonry and strong west winds have taken their toll and the chimney now leans more than 18 inches out of plumb and is in danger of toppling.

In order to determine the extent of the damage to the chimney and to create a preservation plan, state and federal agencies funded assessments in 2002, 2006, and 2010. In June of 2011, the National Park Service awarded a Preservation of Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant to the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office for stabilization and restoration of the chimney.

Under this grant, the Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, and Park County Historical Society have formed a working group to ensure the chimney will be restored for future generations. A generous donation from the Mary and Chester Blackburn, the NPS grant, and matching funds from each partner will be used to restore the chimney in two phases. The first phase is testing and analysis. A temporary safety fence had been placed around the chimney. Testing and analysis has begun and will continue through the spring of 2012. This phase will measure and assess the damage to the masonry, analyze mortar, test the moisture in the walls, test compression strength of the brick, determine the foundation depth and footing configuration, and complete testing of geological and soil conditions. Phase two is the stabilization and restoration of the chimney. Based on the findings in phase one the chimney will be strengthened, lined if needed and the masonry will be repaired and repointed. Phase two should be completed in the spring of 2013 and the fence removed.

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is hoping to continue the restoration process into the future with the help of the working group, grants and donors. Preserving these structures helps to preserve the history of this place. We appreciate all of our partners who work with us to ensure the story is preserved and couldn’t do it without them.

from our Visitors

It’s great to have a place to bring my kids and share this experience with. As a 4th generation (Nisei) to have visited with my family and my kids was special to me.

What an amazing place this is. Congratulations to everyone. This story is so important. I am glad that it has been told here in Cody.

Thank you to the internees who came back. You are great Americans.
The opening of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Learning Center was a stunning achievement. The efforts of all the people and organizations involved to make the ILC a reality is a testament to the importance of remembering the Heart Mountain story and how generosity and dedication can make all the difference.

In his keynote address at the grand opening, Senator Daniel K. Inouye spoke about patriotism and courage and the importance of remembering the lessons of our past. “Few nations are strong enough to admit when they are wrong and we did so. But it could happen again and it’s important to keep going so it won’t happen again,” Inouye said. He told the crowd “you have to help keep this [center] going.”

Norman Mineta, former internee at Heart Mountain who became a congressman and U.S. Secretary of Transportation, told the gathering at the opening ceremony: “There is no question this has been a labor of love for all the hundreds involved. It’s not about the past; it’s about the future because history always has the ability to repeat itself. What we’re doing here is drawing a line in the sand to say, ‘Never Again.’”

We have indeed drawn a line in the sand here at the ILC and with your help and commitment the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation will memorialize the past while moving forward with programs and research that will help us remain vigilant in the defense of our constitutional rights. But, we need your help.

We set a goal of $100,000 for the 2011 Membership Campaign and are already at nearly 73% of that goal. With your help we can reach our goal and “keep this center going.” We invite you to join our membership this year at the highest level you can afford. Your donation is tax-deductible and we offer various benefit levels to meet your budget. You can join on line at www.HeartMountain.org or just fill out the membership form and mail it back to the HMWF at 1539 Road 19, Powell, WY 82435.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS
HMWF would like to thank the following volunteers for their time and support during the preparation for the grand opening, the grand opening events, and into the future.

From The Executive Director: Stevan Leger

We have made every effort to list all names correctly. However, if your listing is in error or missing, please accept our apologies.
**BUY-A-BRICK:** Put your name in history for only $250 per brick. Commemorative bricks are inscribed and placed permanently at the entrance to the ILC. Each brick is 4” x 8” and will be permanently etched. Maximum of 3 lines per brick, 17 characters (alphabet, number, and symbols such as &, -) per line. All letters will be capitalized. Each line will be centered unless otherwise specified.

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**DONATIONS:** Yes, I want to do my part to help sustain the Interpretive Learning Center at Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Thanks to our generous donors, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation officially opened our Interpretive Learning Center August 20, 2011. We need your help to continue our journey toward assuring a world-class Interpretive Learning Center. We invite you to join our membership at the most generous level with which you feel comfortable.

**General Membership Benefits**
- Free Admission to the ILC
- Subscription to the newsletter
- Free admission for receptions and previews
- 10% discount on ILC store purchases
- Senior/Student ($30)
  General Membership benefits for one
- Individual ($35)
  General Membership benefits for one
- Family/Dual Membership ($60)
  General Membership benefits for two adults at the same address and children or grandchildren under the age of 18

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*(Valid for one year and renewable annually)*

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<td>• 20 one-time use guest passes</td>
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Mr. Mrs. Ms.
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Mr. Mrs. Ms.
Address: __________________________________________________________________________________________________
City: _____________________ State: ___________ Zip: ___________
Phone: __________________________
H W C Email: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

Membership contribution: $ ___________  
# of bricks _________ x $250 : $ ___________  
Additional tax deductible gift of: $ ___________  
Total contribution: $ ___________

Method of Payment: □ Cash □ Check □ Credit Card  
Name: __________________________________________________________________________________________________
(exactly as it appears on your credit card)  
CC#: ______________________________ Exp Date: _________
Signature: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

This gift is in □ memory □ honor of: ______________________________

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