

## President's Report

My President's message last January started off by saying that 2023 was a very busy year. It turns out that 2024 was an even busier year than. In addition to our regular VNCS programming, we had all the Japanese Canadian Legacies funded projects and special events.

The Japanese Canadian Legacies grants allow us

- to put on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon,
- to fund Uminari Taiko to reskin four 19 year old drums,
- to fund the Furusato Dancers to acquire a new music system and new obis,
- to fund the Ikebana group to put on a public ikebana show,
- to support the formation of a JC young leaders' group,
- to purchase 70 custom happi coats,
- to purchase several new food making appliances to use at our fundraising events,
- to run the Karen Kobayashi Senior Active Care program which included 5 Japanese cooking classes and 3 Japanese cultural workshops and
- to run a weekend Non-Violent Communication Workshop.

We are grateful to the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society for their generous funding.

Our partnership with the University of Victoria PWFC project also achieved some significant milestones.

- In April we unveiled two new interpretive plaques at the Gorge Park Japanese Garden and a new Japanese Canadian historical display in the Pavilion itself.
- We were also successful in raising funds for a Public Art Project. This art project will be a collaboration between an indigenous artist and a Japanese Canadian artist. The resulting art piece will be located in the Gorge Park. Grants were received from the Esquimalt Art Reserve Fund, the CRD Equity Grants, BC Arts Council and most recently from the Japanese Canadian Legacies Fund. The Public Art Project will be carried out in 2025-2026.

Our summer was very busy with our two fund raising events, Japan Fest in July and the Japanese Cultural Fair in August, Obon graving cleaning work party, hosting the Vancouver Island Obon tour group and supporting the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Day event.

Usually, our programming ends with the Japanese Cultural Fair in August. This year we had events running right to the beginning of December.

- On November 3<sup>rd</sup> was our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Luncheon.

- On November 27<sup>th</sup> we hosted a Japanese Canadian Monument Park consultation session that was attended by over 120 people from Victoria, Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland.
- There were cooking classes and Japanese craft workshops held in late November and early December.

So we went from the Mochitsuki Shinnen Kai on January 14<sup>th</sup> to December 7<sup>th</sup> when the last of the Karen Kobayashi Senior Active Care program was held. What a long year it has been!

As you can imagine with all of this activity, the VNCS Board has been kept busy. We never took our usual summer break and we had some extra long Board meetings to address all of our Society's business. I would like to thank my Board for their hard work and dedication to the success of the VNCS. **Thank you so much - Amy Kawano, Dave Lawson, Djuna Nagasaki, Karen Geiger, Debbie Ibaraki, Reyna Goshinmon, Craig Mercer, Yumiko Mizuno, Joyce Tobo, Kimiko West and Lily Yee!**

Early indications are that 2025 will be just as busy as 2024. Just as the snake sheds its skin, may 2025 continue to bring the VNCS renewal and transformation.