

Couple shares prisoner story

BY LARRY O'CONNOR
STAFF WRITER

A Lanigan fifth-grader pointed to the date at the bottom of a magazine article and with disbelief handed it to a girl next to him.

"Hey they apologized in 1988," said Kevin Barbieri, "and the war was 40 years before."

"That's stupid," said Kourtney Spaulding.

For many years, others have grasped for an apt description of what led the United States government to arrest and place Japanese-Americans in relocation camps during World War II.

Yet two children needed few words to sum up their feelings after a presentation by a Japanese-American couple whose families were interred at the onset of the war. The U.S. government formally apologized 40 years later.

They listened intently with other fifth graders to Nobu and Anna Shimokochi's story, which mirrors the disbelief, horror and hardship felt by 110,000 to 120,000 Japanese people interred from 1942-46; two-thirds of them were U.S. citizens.

SAGE volunteer Robert Eastman invited the Royal Oak couple to speak to the fifth graders as part of the program that brings older adults into Farmington classrooms.

"I was your age, 9 or 12, at the time myself," said Nobu Shimokochi, a retired engineer whose son works for Nissan in Farmington Hills and whose other son works for Bosch, also in Farmington Hills. "It didn't affect me as much because I didn't know as much at that age."

"Our parents were all devastated and suffered mental anguish. They were all law-abiding citizens. They were all overwhelmed at being uprooted."

Nobu recalled how he and his family were removed from their homes and taken to a horse race track in California. Families slept on straw in horse stalls

"which really stunk," Nobu said. Shake downs for weapons were common at first. Mothers started a riot after soldiers confiscated hot plates that were being used

to warm milk for infants. Guards promptly squelched the uprising.

Nobu's family was transferred to Heart Mountain, Wyo. His wife's family was interred in Tuley Lake, Calif.

A student asked Nobu what happened when a Japanese family didn't want to move. "A soldier with a bayonet came and made you move," he said.

Families received 23 cents a day for food. Otherwise, they lived on potatoes and carrots they grew themselves, Anna said.

Medical care was inadequate and her brother died while interred.

Yet, when asked to fill out questionnaires in the camps, many Japanese answered they were still loyal to the U.S., said Nobu whose father became a citizen in 1952.

After the war, though, they returned and found signs that said "No Japs." And there were acts of violence, Nobu said.

A formal apology — which in some cases included reparations — helped heal emotional wounds.

"It made us feel a certain amount of shame by being incarcerated," Nobu said. "In all these years, our loyalty was questioned. It made us feel better that the government apologized."

Fifth graders in the Lanigan cafeteria looked over photos and fingered pieces of barbed wire taken from the camps. Some tried to imagine the harsh living conditions, while others wondered how something like mass internment, based on fear and suspicion could happen in this country.

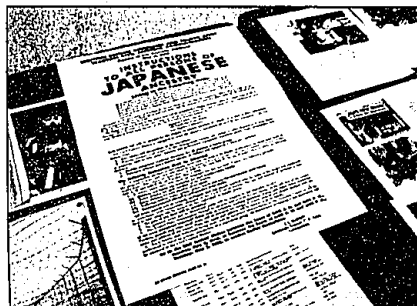
"I can't imagine anything like that happening now," said Kevin Ventura, fifth grader. "I think it was senseless to put the Japanese in prison. They didn't even have trials."



Unforgettable time: Nobu Shimokochi tells Lanigan Elementary fifth-graders about being interred in a Japanese-American relocation camp during World War II. Nobu's family was taken to Heart Mountain, Wyo. His wife, Anna, was interred at a camp in Tuley Lake, Calif.

Vignettes on view: Alvin Konja, left, Ben Bersche and Mustaf Sulejman look over clippings and other information about Japanese who were interred.

STAFF PHOTOS BY TOM HOFFMANN



Remnants of incarceration: The notice summoning people of Japanese ancestry to report to camps is one of many artifacts the Shimokochis shared with students.

Former football coach tackles VFW's top firefighter honor

BY WILLIAM COUTANT
STAFF WRITER

Dave Moriarty tried fire fighting because he was looking for something interesting to do in his spare time.

Ten years later, he still loves his job as a paid-on-call firefighter out of Station 1 at Drake and Nine Mile.

"There is something different every day," he said. "You are always dealing with the unknown."

The Farmington resident and 20-year engineer said he used to coach high school football, but his full-time job made that impossible.

"I still had some spare time," he said. "This has just worked out."

It has worked out so well that Moriarty is the 1996 VFW Firefighter of the Year.

"Dave is a quiet guy who just goes about his business," said fire Chief Rich Marinucci. "He's the kind of guy who hustles and responds to a lot of calls."

Paid-on-call firefighters are required to respond to 37 percent of their station's calls. Moriarty has consistently been at a much higher percentage.

Moriarty has used his experience to teach others on the job, while giving time on several projects for the department. Moriarty has been an active member of the department since 1987 and has received training that has led to certifications by



Dave Moriarty of the Michigan Fire Fighters Training Council as a Fire Fighter II, Fire Officer I and II, and Fire training Instructor.

He also is certified as a CPR instructor and has obtained state licensure as a basic emergency medical technician.

Moriarty has been an active participant in many fire department activities, volunteering during recruit schools, Firefighter III, the emergency medical technician course, and various public fire safety education programs.

He has found time to volunteer on the truck committee, banquet committee, awards committee, and the committee that determines what medical equipment the department should have.

Moriarty has been able to

transfer this background into a practical application on the scenes of emergencies.

Since 1993, he has received 4 unit citations and 4 life saving awards.

In a department that asks volunteers to put forth a lot of effort while maintaining a full-time job, firefighters like Moriarty are rare, Marinucci said.

"It's getting rarer," said the chief. "He enjoys both jobs. And that is a benefit to us."

In 1996, Moriarty received 2 unit citations for his contribution during a rollover accident on Jan. 26, and a vehicle accident with a natural gas leak on July 28.

He also received a life saving award for his work to help a woman with problems breathing on Jan. 27. In that case, he responded with crew members and found the 27-year-old woman in respiratory arrest.

Moriarty and his partners initiated basic life support providing artificial respiration using the bag valve mask and oxygen therapy.

The woman was taken to Botsford General Hospital where she was treated and released.

"Yes, there is a lot of satisfaction when you've helped someone," Moriarty said. "Unfortunately, a lot of times you get there and there is not much you can do. You have to look forward to the next time."

Trial date set in Hills murder case

Two Detroit men charged with killing a Farmington Hills man on March 22, 1996 are scheduled to go on trial Aug. 18.

Robert Waucoush, 24, and Dominic Garcia, 20, were charged in the shooting death of Luvic "Lou" Lucal while Lucal and three friends were in a Geo Tracker in the Mexican Village area of Detroit.

The four had stopped to finish

drinking beer before going over the Ambassador Bridge to Canada.

A witness for the prosecution and a member along with the accused of the gang Cash Flow Posse, had testified last year that the shooting was a case of mistaken identity.

The three gang members thought Lucal and his friends were from a rival Detroit gang.

Wayne County Assistant Prosecutor Bob Donaldson said a motion to suppress statements by Garcia to police was denied on Feb. 21.

"There will likely be a motion to try them separately," Donaldson said.

The trial is scheduled for Aug. 18. Waucoush and Garcia are in the Wayne County Jail without bond.

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