



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

LESSONS LEARNED

Our first issue of the NAJGA Journal, published in 2013, concentrated on "Connections," drawing on the theme of the inaugural NAJGA conference hosted by the Denver Botanic Garden in October of 2012.

During the intervening time, NAJGA has solidified its connections to academic and garden professional societies in Japan and the United Kingdom, made more connections through a series of regional workshops and events, and worked to connect its growing membership with resources and information conveyed through its newsletters, website, and social media.

In our second Journal, we focus on lessons learned, and open with a series of articles focusing on some North American Japanese gardens that have, or are planning to, celebrate a very significant milestone anniversary. Of the more than 250 public Japanese gardens across North America, barely two dozen are near 100 years of age. Centennial celebrations have been held from coast to coast in the continental United States and in western Canada. We asked gardens in Virginia, California, New York, and Hawai'i to tell us how they are celebrating this important occasion and how this anniversary might impact their relationship with their respective local communities. In fact, Dr. Jill Raggett's opening book review takes us even closer to one celebration in particular.

NAJGA held four regional conferences in 2013 featuring a variety of topics: stone setting and black pine pruning in Memphis, Tennessee; Japanese woodworking techniques and traditional hand tools in Oakland, California; designing and constructing water features and koi care in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and restoration of cultural assets as well as a new look at the impact of gardens on our lives in Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Each of those conferences provided educational opportunities to members and non-members alike.

One of those conferences sparked the articles in this year's Journal on pond construction, maintenance, and repair. Our authors have covered the waterfront with case studies from six gardens: large and small, in cold climates and hot, with problems ranging from major to massive, and with creative solutions to all.

Finally, in a nod to the human culture of Japanese gardens, this issue pays homage to American Nikkei pioneers in the landscape field. In the fall of 2013 I was walking in Washington D.C. on Louisiana Avenue from Union Station toward the Capitol. My husband met me at the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II – a triangular park with maple and cherry trees, a stone arrangement in a pond, a striking "Golden Cranes" sculpture by Nina Akamu, and many inscribed panels.

Dedicated in the fall of 2000, the memorial includes panels listing the names of ten U.S. internment camps and the number of persons incarcerated. Along one edge of the pond are inscribed words from President Ronald Reagan when he signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988: "Here we admit a wrong. Here we affirm our commitment as a nation to equal justice under the law."

Some of the lessons learned from the World War II experience of Japanese Americans, including landscapers, are covered in two articles on Manzanar, a WWII internment camp in California. Perhaps the larger lesson learned is best expressed by the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye of Hawai'i, whose words are carved into a panel facing the pond at the memorial, "The lesson learned must remain as a grave reminder of what we must not allow to happen again to any group."

As I complete my first year as Editor, I have a great deal of gratitude for the guidance and direction of the Journal's past editor and current NAJGA Board President, Dr. Kendall Brown, whose knowledge and dedication are inspiring. Our Executive Director, Diana Larowe, has a level of enthusiasm that is positively infectious, and that's a good thing. This issue could not have happened without the hard work of my fellow associates on the Journal editorial board. My thanks goes out to Benjamin Chu, Dr. Seiko Goto, Lon Saavedra, and Edzard Teubert for their support and hard work. And of course, a great big tip of the hat to all the authors and photographers who have contributed their talents in making this issue happen. Let us know what you think. Your letters are always welcome as we seek to learn from each other.

- K.T. Cannon-Eger - Editor