

Bainbridge Island WWII Nikkei Internment and Exclusion Memorial Committee

Bainbridge Island/North Kitsap Interfaith Council ❖ Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 18, 2007

EDITORS NOTE: Updated bus schedule information for ferry and park-and-ride location: Free bus service directly to the site will be provided by the Bainbridge Island School District, beginning at 10:25 a.m. with one bus from the Winslow ferry terminal for walk-on passengers arriving on the 9:35 a.m. sailing from Seattle to Bainbridge Island, and a second bus for park-and-ride lot passengers at the lower parking lot of St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, intersection of Wyatt Way NE and Sportsman Club Road, 1187 Wyatt Way NE. Both buses will leave the memorial after the ceremony at 12:45 am, transporting passengers to the ferry terminal, park-and-ride lot and the city hall reception. Parking is extremely limited at the ceremony site - Carpooling is strongly requested

Contact: Clarence Moriwaki (206) 855-9038, cell (206) 419-5905 clarence@bainbridge.net

65th Anniversary ceremony of first Japanese Americans sent to WWII camps and tour of Bainbridge Island Nikkei Memorial to be held on Friday, March 30th

The first 227 Japanese Americans to be forcibly removed from their homes and taken to WWII concentration camps left Bainbridge Island on March 30, 1942.

With only six days prior notice and allowed to only bring what they could carry or wear, they were gathered by armed U.S. Army soldiers and delivered in military trucks to the Eagledale ferry landing. There they boarded the ferry Kehloken and departed on a lonely journey with an unknown destination and fate.

These Bainbridge Island families were the first of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans – two-thirds of them United States citizens – to be exiled from the West Coast. While more than 114,000 were sent to concentration camps, others served in the U.S. military, some were unjustly imprisoned and some moved away, but all were forbidden to stay.

Their only crime was being Nikkei – persons of Japanese ancestry.

A special ceremony commemorating that tragic day in American history – and a public tour of the first phase of construction of the memorial – will be held on Friday, March 30, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. at the site of the former Eagledale ferry landing, located at the end of Taylor Avenue on the south shore of Eagle Harbor opposite the Winslow ferry terminal, Bainbridge Island.

Participants will include WWII era survivors of the Japanese American community, former Governors Gary Locke and Mike Lowry, community members and performances by the acclaimed Seattle Kokon Taiko drum group.

An open house and reception featuring an award-winning historical display of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community will be held at Bainbridge Island City Hall from 1 – 2:30 p.m. Refreshments will be provided.

On Feb. 6, 2007, the US House of Representatives unanimously passed (419-0) the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Monument Act of 2007 sponsored by Rep. Jay Inslee (D-Bainbridge Island). The bill would make the Bainbridge Island “Nidoto Nai Yoni – Let it not happen again” Memorial site a satellite unit of the Minidoka Internment National Monument and part of the National Parks Service. The measure awaits action by the US Senate and President Bush.

To date, the memorial project has raised more than \$2.4 million – \$1 million for land and \$1.4 million for development. A scale model of the entire \$5 million memorial will be on display at the event. The first phase of construction – containing new access roads, parking, boardwalks and a pavilion and entry/exit gates was completed this year. The second phase – a 272-foot long stone-and-wood story wall, one foot for each Nikkei who lived on Bainbridge Island at the outbreak of WWII – will begin construction this year. Future phases include a 5,000 sq. ft. interpretive center and a 150-foot long departure pier, one foot for each Nikkei who returned to Bainbridge Island after WWII.

Limited parking for media vehicles is available on a first asked, first reserved basis. Please contact Clarence Moriwaki at (206) 855-9038, cell (206) 419-5905 or clarence.moriwaki@mail.house.gov to reserve a spot.