3 Historically Significant Letters

Pacific Citizen has gained access to three letters which, without doubt, played an important role in President Reagan's decision to sign the Japanese American Redress bill, known as Public Law 100-333, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

The first letter, a campaign letter by JACL’s Legislative Education Committee, both houses of Congress approved the bill this past summer. Differences between the House and Senate versions were worked out in conference committee. The Senate approved the reconciled version unanimously by voice vote last July 27, followed by overwhelming approval in the House.

The letter from Nisei Vice President John H. Burke of New York City, who himself had served in the Civilian Conservation Corps, stated, “the House approval is the first step in implementing the redress law.”

In order to expedite the identification process, ORA has developed a biographical information form, which is completed and returned to the Justice Department in Washington D.C.

“The Justice Department stresses that the form is strictly voluntary,” ORA’s overriding concern is to handle this information with utmost confidentiality.

The Office of Redress Administration is now ready to operate in downtown San Francisco.

Challenger Is Elected

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission’s (EEOC) 7th annual report to the president and to the Congress on affirmative action for minorities and women found that “A. American workforce is underrepresented in Top Federal Jobs”.

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ACCC HONORS MatsuSUI — Rep. Robert Matsui (D-Calif.) receives a plaque from George Matsukoski (picture left) behalf of the Asian Community Center before an audience of 800 during the Sacramento Asian Community Nursing Home's annual fund-raiser at Conflctus Hall in Sacramento on Sept. 24. Matsui was presented with the support of the nursing facility in leadership of the PHR, 442, the Japanese-American elders bill.

Inouye, Matsunaga Announce Start of U.S.-Japan Exchange Program

WASHINGTON — Sens. Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga (both D-Hawaii) on Sept. 23 announced the start of the 1989 Japan-U.S. Senate Scholarship Program, an international exchange program which annually allows each U.S. senator to name an outstanding high school junior to spend the summer in Japan with a host family.

High school students are each invited to nominate one junior to be considered for the two scholarships awarded in the state. The postmark deadline for submission of applications is Oct. 28.

Under the program, which is funded by the Japanese government and administered by Youth for Understanding International Exchange, the students will have the opportunity to experience the culture of Japan by living with a Japanese host family under Youth for Understanding's summer exchange program.

Scholarship recipients also will receive a trip to Washington, D.C., to meet their senators and the Japanese ambassador prior to departure for Japan. Their pre-departure orientation includes an extensive three-day training in the Japanese language and culture.

Nominations to the program must have a minimum 3.2 grade average, exhibit leadership in school and community activities and have the ability to adapt to a new or unusual environment. Twelve semifinalists will be chosen in each state based on their written applications and then will be interviewed by state selection committees composed of representatives of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the National Council for the Social Studies, Youth for Understanding and members of the local community.

Interested high school juniors should contact their school guidance counselor or, for more information, contact Youth for Understanding International Exchange at 2031 Nebraska NW, Washington, D.C. 20016, or call toll free, (800) 424-309.

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Performance of 'Fantasticks' to Benefit Nakanishi Legal Case for Tenure

LOS ANGELES — A performance of the Fantasticks will be presented by the East West Players as a fund-raising event to support UCLA Professor Don Nakanishi on Nov. 11.

The fund-raiser is sponsored by the Japanese American Bar Association, the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association, the Southern California American Nikkei-JACL and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.

The event will be held to raise financial support for and to increase community awareness of Nakanishi's legal battle for tenure in the UCLA Graduate School of Education. Despite a finding by the school's Committee on Privilege and Tenure that Nakanishi's bid for tenure was marked by extreme bias and hostility by various UCLA officials, tenure continues to be withheld. As Nakanishi's attorney, Dale Minami, has observed, "the entire process is tainted." For reservations, contact Reid Honjiyo at (213) 826-2634, or mail a check payable to the Japanese American Bar Association to Honjiyo at 3250 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 1610, Los Angeles, CA 90010. Please include name, address and phone number with mail-in reservations. Reserved tickets will be available at the door.

Gotando's Acclaimed Play

By Jane B. Kalbath

CHICAGO — History is being made here in the Windy City. For the first time a well-known Chicago mainstage, the Wisdom Bridge Theatre, is presenting acclaimed playwright Philip Kan Gotando's Yankee Dawg You Die. Reprising his role as Vincent Chang is Sab Shimono, who also appears in Gotando's new film The Wash. The role of Bradley Yamashita is played by Marc Hayashi, who appeared in Wayne Wang's Chang Is Missing.

The performance of A Flower Drum Song at the long-ago demolished Mill Run Playhouse in Niles (where the Sears Automotive Center now sits) has Chicago seen top Asian American talent in a live performance. The play shows how in the past 20 years Asians have gone from being in an exotic love story to dealing emotionally with entertainment industry racism.

This provocatively-titled play is about two Hollywood film actors, one Nisei and one Sasebo, confronting each other's conscience and style as they both struggle to work successfully in the mainstream. Although the play contains some very heavy issues like racism and generational understanding, it is tightly packed in an upbeat, comedic form. In this way Yankee Dawg You Die is a milestone in Asian American theatre. The play is effective with its range from gentle humor to the wacky Godzilla-stomping scene, all while maintaining an important message.

As the years, the older Vincent, is suave, seasoned and debonair. Vincent is buffeted by the younger Bradley's changes in style but carries enough confidence to step back and listen to the young man's views.

If only for Goldilla's sake, Yankee Dawg You Die is showing at the Wisdom Bridge Theatre, 1559 W. Howard St., through Oct. 30. Group sales available. For more information, call (312) 743-6000.

National Business & Professional Directory


All-Camp Topaz Reunion — The first all-camp Topaz, Utah War Relocation Authority reunion was hosted by organizers, who note 1,100 registrants attended the Sept. 16-18 gathering at the Burlingame Hyatt Regency in San Francisco. Reunion activities, which ranged from an opening night mixer to a banquet, photographic exhibit and branch, were videotaped by George Nomura. Nomura is offering the videotape for $25, which includes postage and handling. Orders can be sent to him at: 880 Bates Ave., EI Cerrito, CA 94530; or contact him at (415) 525-7217. Pictured at the reunion (from l to r) are Mike and Nami Suzuki of Maryland and JU Miyachi-Kittano of Los Angeles.

MILD SEVEN
An Encounter with Tenderness.

MILD SEVEN Lights
The effect of Japa’s slip-ups toward Blacks in both word and deed are still being felt. To recapitulate, last summer a Japanese department store used Black mannequins with grossly distended physical features frozen in dance poses. Americans were also shocked to learn that some Japanese companies sold toys festooned with caricatures of Blacks. Equally troubling was when Japanese politician Michio Watanabe advised that the color of old people’s hair be changed when they die. These incidents in Japan are often laughed at in Japan. But it is also the unspoken for of Japanese Americans to point out when Americans go too far or too far in their reactions. It makes us wonder why we, as a nation, can’t engage in Japan-bashing, some of it futile, misguided and premature, some of it with racist undertones. This includes angry phone calls to the JACL, destruction of Japanese products in front of the Japanese Embassy and calls for boycotts of things Japanese (and Japanese American). This despite apologies from the Japanese parties involved, the prompt removal of the offending products and steps to create a better understanding of America’s mindset.

That’s not to say that all is well but, clouded are issues like where did the Japanese get the misinformation for their disasters? It is somehow possible to say, “What goes around comes around.”

If the class will come to attention, I will ask today’s question: How many of you have been so familiar with the fish that you have never seen it? A school of fish was raised in the United States in an environment like a river. They were raised for two years. The outcome was clear. The fish in the river grew much faster than those of the same species in the United States. It is known as the effect of river fish—fish that grow faster in a river.

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If you are an older Nisei, you probably know that katsuobushi is the base of the fish soup, dried until it is the color of old mahogany and as hard as polished hardwood. Katsuobushi is not used in Japanese cuisine to make soup stock, but the shavings can be sprinkled over the kind of dish that I call a “sashimi” or the “Temari” that I have heard people call “the Japanese country rice.”

When Nisei were little, they may have been one or their chums to help my mother make katsuobushi. Children of katsuobushi were made in a column of clay but it is now used in the United States. The black art is now a piece of paper but it still has a piece of paper.

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Dear Governor Keen:

On behalf of the Japanese American community, I want to thank you for bringing up redress legislation in your conversation with President Reagan. When you told me that the president understood and sympathized personally with our cause, it was one of the most deeply affecting moments of my life. As an Asian American citizen, I have worked hard for Japanese American redress because I believe that our effort is part of what our country has always stood for and that it will always stand for. So it is that our country is finally a great affair of the heart.

From June Mansa Goto, I have enclosed a letter, a photograph, and some material about a California episode in which Ronald Reagan showed his rectitude and truly disassociated himself from his community. This was in 1965 in Santa Ana, as he may recall. I have also included some photographs of my ancestors and a copy of a letter that James and Josephine Goto wrote to him that same year. I am sure that Japanese American WWII were not benefactors of “protective custody.” We did not voluntarily leave our homes, our neighborhood, and our work, but at the San Francisco Examiner it was to be “saved” from our rights and our property. The guns were pointed toward us, and not toward any group that may have wanted to hurt us.

The truth is that the “protective custody” argument was developed by some government officials and journalists as an after the fact rationalization. Many of these people were ashamed of what they advocated and did; some were not. In any case, Japanese American were seen as convenient and used to go to the camps or whether they moved on their own will. From Grant’s letters and the accompanying pictures, I think you will agree that the Japanese Americans were conceived and treated in the same fashion that the Chinese Americans were conceived and treated in the same fashion.

I also enclose a letter and photo from June Mansa Goto, son of the original Goto family in California. I am sure that you will want to include the photo of General “Vigare Joe” Siswell awarding a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross to Mrs. Goto’s brother. I understand you went to the event that day and you gave a moving speech which was filled with emotion

THOMAS H. KEAN
Governor of New Jersey

Dear Governor Keen:

The last time you were in New Jersey, we talked about Japanese American redress legislation. In the absence of any news, I thought we would both do the same. What you both said to me then has become friendly through

Kean followed up the meeting by hand-delivering these letters to the president. One was a letter from Ujifusa to Governor Keen. The second was a letter from June Mansa Goto to the president, which had been prepared with the assistance of Ujifusa and Rudy Tokiwa, a disabled veteran of the 442nd and leader in Nisei veterans affairs.

The third was Keen’s covering letter to President Reagan.

“Governor Keen,” says Ujifusa, “was the only person outside the White House to have actually seen the president about the redress issue, and the three letters are probably the only ones about redress he read personally.”

What happened thereafter is not clear. Not only did Keen receive the bill last Aug. 10, but he hastened its passage through New Jersey, where he was support to the House. Below, the texts of the three historically significant letters turned trade public for the first time.

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Friday, October 21, 1988 / PACIFIC CITIZEN — 7
JACL-LEC Fund-raising Drive Underway

The JACL-LEC fund-raising campaign has so far received positive results, reports JACL-LEC Fund-raising Chair Mae Takahashi. Takahashi states that the mail solicitation campaign has generated contributions from at least 12 percent of the 25,000 letters sent out to solicit financial support. Approximately 2,922 contributors, as of Oct. 11, have sent in $104,744. JACL-LEC plans to lobby for contributions from at least 25 percent of those solicited.

The JACL-LEC made its decision to launch its fund-raising drive at a May

For the Record

A statement in the article entitled “National Director Search to Begin Soon,” which appeared in the Sept. 23, 1988 Pacific Citizen was in error. The article stated that “The American Jewish Committee is showing interest in meeting with members of the JACL...” The organization referred to in the American Jewish Committee, a different organization. P.C. regrets any confusion this may have caused.

San Diego

A committee of 250 people will build a new five-story, 206-bedroom hotel on the intersection of 18th Street and Pacific Highway. The hotel will be situated near the San Diego Convention Center and the International Airport.

San Francisco

A new hotel, the Hyatt, is under construction at the site of the former Hotel Nikkei. The new hotel will have 278 rooms and a conference center with 10,000 square feet of meeting space.

San Jose

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SCAN

Benefit performance of East West Flows production of The Fantasticks, a fundraiser for UCLA Professor Don Nakashima's tenure battle. Nov. 11 - Dec. 31. The event will feature a silent auction, dinner, and entertainment.

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