



Since 1929

# PACIFIC CITIZEN

The National Publication of the Japanese American Citizens League

#3034/ Vol. 140, No. 7 ISSN: 0030-8579

APRIL 15-MAY 5, 2005

## Building a Bridge Between Two Cultures

A New York couple uses their own experiences to create unity between the African and Asian American communities.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI  
Executive Editor

When Michael and Jenny King of New York first met 15 years ago in college the attraction was mutual, and soon they began dating. Marriage in Hawaii followed short-

Michael and Jenny, both 33, to form the partnership African and Asian American Unity and AAAUnity.com, a Web site that helps to bring together the African and Asian American communities.

"We created AAAUnity.com in the hopes to be a vehicle to allow other Africans and Asians in the U.S. and abroad to have a place they can call their own; an Afro-Asian community, a community of the future," said Michael. "We wanted to give our people a chance to experience the same joy Jen and I experience everyday since the first day we met."

Added Jenny, through AAAUnity.com "I am able to show other Asian and African people that are either interested or currently in relationships that it's not as uncommon as they may believe, and that I have the chance to offer these people positive images and stories of people just like them."

After much

discussion and many sleepless nights, the Kings launched African and Asian American Unity and AAAUnity.com in May of 2004. Since then about 1,700 people visit their site each month and the numbers continue to grow, all without the aid of advertising.

The site is a forum to discuss all types of issues affecting the African

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Michael and Jenny King of AAAUnity.  
Photo courtesy of Michael King

ly after.

To them it didn't matter that he was African American and she Chinese American. Although they have had to deal with the questioning stares, some pretty nasty, their love and the love of their families have helped strengthen their relationship.

And it is their mutual respect and love for each other that propelled

### P.C. FEATURE STORY

## The Silent APA Killer

Mental illness continues to be shrouded in secrecy and shame, but as suicide rates increase, so too does the silence.

By LYNDALIN  
Assistant Editor

The dark cloud of melancholy can be more than just a temporary nuisance. For some, sadness is like a blinding thunderstorm of hopelessness with no sign of relief in sight. Some seek treatment and swallow pills to make the pain go away, but many Asian Pacific Americans are still trapped in self-imposed silence.

But the statistics scream loudly: APA women 65 years and older have the highest overall suicide rate in the United States, said the Office of the Surgeon General in a report. According to the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA), APA women between the ages of 15-24 consistently account for the highest female suicide rate, and Pacific Islanders (like Native Hawaiian adolescents) have a high-

er risk of succumbing to psychological pains.

Depression, schizophrenia and posttraumatic stress disorder are some of the most commonly diagnosed psychological disorders among APAs, said mental health experts. But even with such startling numbers, studies have shown that APAs still underutilize mental health services more than any other community.

"The number of [APAs] who seek professional help is small," said Carol Lau, MFT. "Every family has some issues — marital problems, relationship issues — but many do choose to address the problem



amongst themselves within their own families."

In 1998, less than 17 percent of APAs who experienced mental health problems actually sought help. Since then, more and more community-based groups have been

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### IN MEMORIAM

## Fred Korematsu, Constitutional Law Legend, Passes at Age 86

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO—Fred Korematsu, who became a symbol of civil rights for challenging the World War II internment orders that sent 120,000 Japanese Americans to government camps, has died. He was 86.

Korematsu died March 30 of respiratory illness at his daughter's home in Larkspur, said his attorney Dale Minami.

After finally getting his conviction overturned



in the early 1980s for opposing internment orders during the war, Korematsu helped win a national apology and reparations for internment camp survivors and their families in 1988.

He was honored by President Bill Clinton in 1998 with the nation's

highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"In the long history of our country's constant search for justice, some names of ordinary citizens stand for millions of souls — Plessy, Brown, Parks," Clinton said at the time. "To that distinguished list today we add the name of Fred Korematsu."

"We are profoundly saddened by the passing of Fred Korematsu. He

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## Mystery Author Naomi Hirahara Looks to Her Community for Inspiration

By CAROLINE AOYAGI  
Executive Editor

When author Naomi Hirahara began her career as a mystery writer, several people gave her the same advice: write about white people because that's what sells.

Hirahara's currently working on her third installment in the acclaimed Mas Arai mystery series and has yet to take up the advice, preferring to write about the Japanese American community — a group rich with stories but whose voice is still largely unheard today.

"We're kind of invisible as JAs ... we're not represented and it makes me sad," she said. "But to intentionally avoid JA characters because you're JA, you have to take a second look."

"We all have different stories to tell," added Hirahara. "Part of my intention is to introduce readers to JA characters. If people are interested, they will pick it up."

Hirahara's first mystery, "Summer of the Big Bachi," introduced her readers to the character of Mas Arai, a reluctant Kibei

See HIRAHARA/Page 12



### SPRING CAMPAIGN A Step Into the Age of Technology

By ALAYNE YONEMOTO  
PSWD P.C. Bd. Rep.

Other duties as assigned. This is a common phrase employers love to tag on at the end of any reasonable job description. At UCLA, this phrase has meant that I am involved in the maintenance of six Web sites.

Although the phrase continually

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## PACIFIC CITIZEN

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**PACIFIC CITIZEN** (ISSN: 0030-8579) is published semi-monthly except once in January and December by the Japanese American Citizens League, 7 Cupania Circle, Monterey Park, CA 91755. OFFICE HOURS — Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Pacific Time. ©2005.

**Annual subscription rates:** NON-MEMBERS: 1 year—\$35, payable in advance. Additional postage per year — Foreign periodical rate \$25; First Class for U.S., Canada, Mexico: \$30; Airmail to Japan/Europe: \$60. (Subject to change without notice.) Periodicals postage paid at Monterey Park, Calif., and at additional mailing offices.

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**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: Pacific Citizen, c/o JACL National Headquarters, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115. Ride along enclosed.

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## KOREMATSU

(Continued from page 1)

was an American hero," said JACL National President Ken Inouye. "As a community, we owe him a tremendous debt of gratitude for his courage and determination to right the wrongs committed against him and other Japanese Americans during World War II, and we are grateful."

Korematsu was born in Oakland, California on Jan. 30, 1919, the son of Japanese immigrants. He was a 23-year-old welder living in Oakland in 1942 when military officials ordered all JAs on the West Coast — including U.S. citizens like Korematsu — to report to remote internment camps.

Nearly all complied, including Korematsu's family and friends,

who urged him to go along. But he refused.

"All of them turned their backs on me at that time because they thought I was a troublemaker," he recalled.

"I thought what the military was doing was unconstitutional. I was really upset because I was branded as an enemy alien when I'm an American."

Korematsu defied the military orders, evaded authorities and was ultimately arrested and jailed in 1942. He appealed his case to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that it was

unconstitutional for the government to incarcerate Americans without charges, evidence or trial. He lost, the court calling the internment a "military necessity."

**'His fight for justice teaches us that our civil liberties are only as strong as those who have the courage to stand up and defend them. That is the powerful legacy of Fred Korematsu.'**

— John Tateishi  
JACL Executive Director

Korematsu was arrested, convicted of violating the order and sent to an internment camp in Utah. The Supreme Court upheld Korematsu's conviction in December 1944, agreeing with the government that it was justified by the need to combat sabotage and espionage.

Current legal scholars almost universally regard the ruling as one of the worst in the court's history. But it was not repudiated until the early 1980s, when Asian American lawyers and civil rights advocates unearthed new evidence that undermined the internment order. Korematsu's conviction was overturned in 1983.

For almost 40 years, Korematsu did not talk about his experiences and even his daughter had to learn about it in a college textbook. "He had a quiet courage," Minami said. "That's the best way to describe him. He did things because he thought they were right. He just thought this was wrong."

"The name 'Fred Korematsu' is synonymous to many as a lesson in democracy," said JACL Executive Director John Tateishi. "His fight for justice teaches us that our civil liberties are only as strong as those who have the courage to stand up and defend them. That is the powerful legacy of Fred Korematsu."

Korematsu remained active in civil rights issues in recent years, speaking out against parts of the Patriot Act that he felt violated the rights of Arab Americans.

"He felt like what was happening to Arab Americans was very similar to what happened to Japanese Americans," Minami said. "Part of his legacy is that he challenged the government in a time of war. ... He continued speaking out in support of civil rights and the Constitution for years and years."

Korematsu is survived by his wife, Katherine, his daughter, Karen, and son, Ken.

A memorial service will take place at First Presbyterian Church, 2619 Broadway in Oakland on April 16 at 1:30 p.m.

The family has asked that donations be made to: The Fred Korematsu Civil Rights Funds at the Asian Law Caucus, 939 Market St. #201, San Francisco, CA 94103; The Northern California Chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, 1663 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94103; and the Memorial Fund at The First Presbyterian Church, 2619 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94612. ■

## CAMPAIGN

(Continued from page 1)

looms, it has afforded me an opportunity to learn new technologies in a field I did not study in college.

My job has opened a small window to the world of the Internet. I have learned about relational databases, servers, and languages that were never offered as foreign languages at my high school. All this has introduced me to a new form of marketing. The Internet is a store that is always open and it is instant communication to every part of the world.

Now is the time for the Pacific Citizen to market itself on the Internet. The P.C. Web site will become a place to read stories, in our own voices, without censorship from any outsider. It will become a resource for current issues facing our community and we can enhance the profile of JACL to a new audience.

The Spring Campaign will help raise money for this new P.C. Web site.

The staff of the P.C. is technologically advanced. They are experts in journalism and know the newest tools of their trade. Caroline Aoyagi, Lynda Lin, Brian Tanaka, and Eva Lau-Ting have willingly learned new technologies to stay on top of their craft. But they must now continue their education to stay competitive in their industry. This is an opportunity and a hurdle they are ready to tackle.

I recently had a meeting with P.C. Editorial Board Chair Gil Asakawa, Caroline, Lynda, and JACL National Youth/Student Representative Todd Sato. We discussed the goals for the P.C.'s new web site. They need assistance to achieve their goals. The P.C. needs to raise enough money to support the operational costs of a Web site.

They need enough money to hire a qualified programmer to design a Web site that they will be able to support. And they also need money to take the necessary classes to learn to maintain the P.C. Web site once it has launched.

It is a large task, but one that the P.C. staff is approaching with optimism and enthusiasm.

JACL needs to have a greater presence in this new age. The Internet is a new medium for us to reach new corners and represent ourselves. The P.C. Web site would be a perfect complement to the JACL Web site that is currently being redesigned. Together, the sites would give us a place on the Internet to publicize our JACL programs.

The P.C. editorial board supports the staff's initiative to create a web site. There are no plans to end the paper publication of the P.C. Having a Web site would be an enhancement, a step into the age of technology.

Keeping with the JACL constitution, the entire printed publication will not appear online and will remain a membership benefit. The staff of the P.C. will be able to post selected articles on the Web site. Breaking news stories and comments on current issues could also appear as they occur without having to wait for the printed edition.

The Web site will also be able to provide information about advertisement rates and subscription rates 24/7. This would allow the staff to provide better customer service to our members and advertisers.

The staff of the P.C. is willing to take on this new task — other duties as assigned. They are ready to grow their knowledge base and take on new technology. Show the P.C. staff that we support the good work they do. Please support the Spring Campaign by sending in your contribution. ■

## Letters to the Editor

### Caucasian

This is a friendly critique of "For all of the Asian women married to Caucasian ...." The more recently published dictionaries define Caucasian as the people of Caucasus, its people or their culture (Webster's New World Dictionary).

The term Caucasian "is no longer in scientific use." (The American Heritage Dictionary, 4th Edition). On the origin of the word "Caucasian," see Stephen Gould, "The Measure of Man," 1981.

The term was created by J.F. Blumenbach, a German, to describe a hierarchy of the human race with the Caucasians at the top of the pyramid, in short, a racist conception.

Paul Takagi, PhD  
Professor Emeritus  
University of California

### Re: Rachel Factor

This letter is in response to an article about Rachel Factor. Her effort not to offend by using periods is as lame as Coach Parcell's explanation about his sneaky play — JACL cut him off at his knees. I see no difference in Ms. Factor's explanation.

In a fairly recent movie, "Coach Carter," the coach tells his team he doesn't want them using the 'N' word among themselves. He says when ignorant people hear them using that slur, they will say it must not be offensive if the players are using it and we all know the answer to that statement.

Yes, I'm offended by the name of her show. I also noticed she has no Hawaii show scheduled. Is she afraid she'll be run out of town on a rail?

Thomas A. Kuwahara  
Via e-mail

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\* "Voices" reflect the active, public discussion within JACL of a wide range of ideas and issues, though they may not reflect the viewpoint of the editorial board of the Pacific Citizen.

\* "Short expressions" on public issues, usually one or two paragraphs, should include signature, address and daytime phone number. Because of space limitations, letters are subject to abridgement. Although we are unable to print all the letters we receive, we appreciate the interest and views of those who take the time to send us their comments.



## Filipino WWII Veterans Racing Against Time for Full U.S. Benefits

By NICOLE ZIEGLER DIZON  
Associated Press Writer

CHICAGO—World War II memories spill from the dog-eared binder Jose V. Juachon carries with him everywhere.

The 86-year-old veteran knows that the military cap he wears adorned with medals will invite questions, and the binder contains his answers. One page holds a list of medals he was awarded by the U.S. and Philippine governments, another a map showing his escape route from Japanese soldiers during the Bataan Death March.

Like other members of Philippine Commonwealth Army, Juachon was inducted into the U.S. Armed Forces in 1941, when his country was under American control. The United States promised Filipino fighters the same benefits as American soldiers in return for their service, then rescinded that promise five years later.

Bills now in Congress would reverse the nearly 60-year-old slight by giving Filipino veterans full U.S. benefits. Similar legislation has failed in the past, but the cause has taken on new urgency as aging veterans like Juachon race against time for recognition.

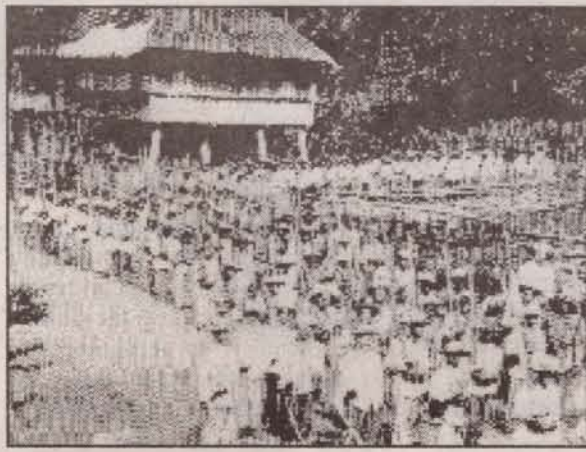
"Every time, I always cry," Juachon says, his eyes filling with tears as he talks about the \$50 a month he receives from the government for a war injury, all he can expect under current law.

"For all these years, I have served the U.S. government," he says. "We are trying to get the U.S.

government to recognize us. When most of this was happening, our senators and congressmen were not even born yet. They don't know."

Filipino interest groups estimate that about 58,000 Filipino World War II veterans are still alive, 12,000 of them in the United States. Like Juachon, most are in their 70s and 80s.

Some benefits originally promised to Filipino soldiers have been restored piecemeal over the years.



In 1990, Congress passed a bill that allowed thousands of veterans in the Philippines to immigrate and become U.S. citizens. Burial rights in national cemeteries came a decade later.

In 2003, President Bush signed a bill that made Filipino American veterans in the United States eligible for the same Veterans Affairs health care other American veterans receive. In the past, those veterans could receive treatment only if they had service-related disabilities.

Even so, veterans like Juachon

who served in the Commonwealth Army received only 50 cents on the dollar in disability benefits until recently, and they don't get death pensions or payments for disabilities unrelated to their service.

That is something the National Network for Veterans Equity is working to change.

"It's not, for us, just a matter of the survivor benefits or educational benefits or the pensions. It's a matter of justice and dignity and respect and honor," said Christopher Punongbayan, a member of the network, which hopes to get Filipino veterans bills passed in the first six months of this year.

U.S. Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, a California Republican, is the lead sponsor of the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2005. His bill would give full U.S. benefits to Filipino veterans in the United States and the Philippines at an expected cost of \$100 million to \$150 million a year over 10 years.

"These things were promised to them, and our government then basically came back and said, 'Not so fast,'" Cunningham said. "A promise made should be a promise kept." ■

## Analysis Shows Lower Standard of Living for NYC's Vietnamese Americans Compared to Other Asians

Vietnamese Americans in New York City not only had a lower standard of living than city residents as a whole but also lagged behind the city's overall Asian American population in 2000, according to a census-based profile released recently by the Asian American Federation of New York, a nonprofit leadership organization.

The population portrait details how higher poverty rates, particularly for children, as well as lower incomes, education levels and English skills, set Vietnamese New Yorkers apart from New York City's general population and from AAs city-wide, who are worse off than the overall city population in many

and overcome such barriers as low educational attainment and limited English skills."

Profile facts include the following (referring to 2000 census data and New York City residents if not specified):

- Four out of 10 Vietnamese children in the city lived in poverty — exceeding 30 percent of all city children and 24 percent of all the city's Asian children.
- Vietnamese per capita income was \$16,590 — compared with \$22,402 citywide and \$18,416 for Asians.
- About 42 percent of New York City's Vietnamese adults had not graduated from high school — sur-

**'Our profile sheds important light on New York City's Vietnamese American population — a community with special needs requiring further attention.'**

Cao K. O., Asian American Federation

respects. In addition, the profile charts larger household size and rapid recent growth for the city's Vietnamese population.

Based on 2000 and 1990 census results, including recently released data, the demographic portrait is one of a series of population profiles prepared by the Federation's federally designated Census Information Center (CIC).

"Our profile sheds important light on New York City's Vietnamese American population — a community with special needs requiring further attention," said Cao K. O., executive director of the Asian American Federation. "Service providers, policy-makers and funders need to find effective ways to help this growing immigrant community reduce severe child poverty

passing 28 percent of all adults and 31 percent of Asian adults in the city.

• More than 6 in 10 Vietnamese residents (61 percent) spoke limited English — compared with 24 percent of all residents and 49 percent of Asians throughout the city. Among senior citizens, 89 percent of Vietnamese had limited English ability — exceeding 27 percent of all elderly New Yorkers and 73 percent for Asian city residents.

The Vietnamese profile is available at [www.aafny.org](http://www.aafny.org).

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works to advance the civic voice and quality of life of AAs in the New York metropolitan area. ■

## COMMENTARY

### Should the P.C. Not Use the Word?

By GIL ASAKAWA  
P.C. Board Chair

An article in a recent issue of the *Pacific Citizen* has sparked a very important discussion about words and their meaning.

The discussion began innocently enough, with a feature article not unlike most feature articles you might find in the *P.C.* or in any other publication.

It was about a Japanese American playwright, Rachel Factor, who has converted to Orthodox Judaism, and now identifies herself as Jewish. She's now touring and performing a piece she wrote, which she cheekily called "J.A.P." — in which "J.A.P." stands for Jewish American Princess.

There's a separate discussion worth having about whether "Jewish American Princess" or, as it's quite commonly spoken and written, "J.A.P.," is a derogatory term for young Jewish women. But a lot of Jews that I know use the term.

Let's assume in this case that "J.A.P." is generally acceptable to Jewish women. Factor isn't dumb — she understands that the same three letters used as a word, not an acronym, is a still-common word, "Jap," that's been hurled for 150 years at people of Japanese descent.

In the *P.C.* article, she points out the title of her performance is tongue-in-cheek and not meant to offend Japanese Americans.

This article has resulted in some JACL members expressing concern that the *P.C.* uses the term "Jap" too freely, not just about Rachel Factor's play, but in recent coverage of various "Jap" road, lane and rock controversies, and in condemning football coach Bill Parcells and comedian Al Franken for using the word.

I appreciate all your comments, and of course agree with you that "Jap" has no place in any dialogue, much less one in the *P.C.* — unless it's the discussion of a news item about a "Jap Road" somewhere, or eBay's insensitivity.

However, I want to reiterate that the acronym J.A.P. (and I note the *P.C.* was careful to use the periods, which many people don't) in the article about Rachel Factor is NOT a racist label about JAs.

As for the *P.C.*'s news coverage, I believe that journalists reporting about an issue should not shirk away from using a word, if the word is what the story is about.

I wouldn't want the *P.C.*'s staff to censor the word, or to use an euphemism, if the story is about "Jap Road." By putting quotation marks, for one thing, the *P.C.* is already separating the word from its own vocabulary. I wouldn't want to see it written as "The J-word Road," or even "J\*\* Road."

I'm not dismissing any JACLer who feels uncomfortable about the use of the word "Jap" — we should feel uncomfortable, and that's why the JACL fights it everywhere it's used in its negative, hateful historical meaning.

What's great about the title

Rachel Factor chose for her play is that it's given voice to strong emotions that too often are hidden away under the blanket of *gaman* and *shikata ga nai*. Just having the discussion frees us of some of our oppression.

I encourage others to express their feelings, and to air their opinion. The discussion itself helps us heal.

The word "Jap" is just the scab covering the sore, and the word continues to have a lot of control over us. There's something underneath it. Not using it anymore would be to put a Band-Aid over a very bad wound, and it would always fester.

These letters to the editor and e-mail discussions I've had with *P.C.* editorial board members about the word have reminded me how deeply the word affects our community. Let's continue to air out the sore, and talk about the wound. Everyone's perspective is important, and discussion about the issue is vital.

But remember, journalists can't shy away from using the word in the act of reporting on its awfulness. To cave in to its hateful meaning would be to grant victory over our identity to those who oppose us, who still want us to "go back where you came from."

Our real victory will come when no one uses the word at all, and we never have to cringe or feel uncomfortable about it. ■

Gil Asakawa is the chair of the Pacific Citizen's editorial board and executive producer for *DenverPost.com*.

## Legislation to Preserve 'Confinement Sites' Introduced

Bipartisan legislation to preserve historic "confinement sites" used to detain Japanese Americans during World War II was introduced April 6.

The bill, HR 1492, replaces HR 360 and substantively continues the same program with some changes. Also, HR 1492 uses the term "confinement sites" to make sites in addition to the ten internment sites eligible for funding.

"The internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans in 1942 as a result of wartime hysteria remains a powerful lesson today for the protection of basic rights and freedoms. This bill will work in partnership with local communities to preserve these sites and ensure that their lesson does not fade from our nation's memory," said U.S. Rep. Doris Matsui, D-Calif., a cosponsor of the bill. "Several of these sites are in dire need of protection from the effects of time — protection this bill will provide — and I urge my colleagues to adopt it as quickly as possible."

HR 1492 authorizes \$38 million in grants for preservation projects at historic "confinement" sites across

the country, with a 25 percent non-federal match required to distribute funds. HR 1492 calls for the grant program to be administered by the National Parks Service in consultation with the Japanese American National Heritage Coalition, that includes the JACL, Go For Broke Educational Foundation, Go For Broke National Veterans Association, and the Japanese American National Museum. The program would sunset two years after all of the authorized appropriations are awarded.

In addition to Matsui, cosponsors of the bill include Congressman Bill Thomas, R-Calif., an early supporter of HR 360, and Congressman Mike Honda, D-Calif.

"I am excited to be working with my distinguished colleagues Congressman Thomas and Congresswoman Matsui on this important project, which promises to carry on the important lessons of the internment period," said Honda.

The House Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Works also announced that it would hold a hearing on HR 1492 on April 14. ■



# National Newsbytes

By P.C. Staff and  
Associated Press

## Japanese Sub Will Stay In Its Ocean Bottom Home

HONOLULU—A Japanese submarine discovered last month by an undersea research team on the sea floor off Pearl Harbor will remain at rest with thousands of other submerged vessels and debris in Hawaii's waters.

The I-401 submarine, one of a pair captured a week after Japan surrendered in 1945, is from the Imperial Japanese Navy's I-400 Sensuikan Toku class of submarines. They were the largest built before the nuclear ballistic missile submarines of the 1960s.

Researchers with the undersea team, which happened upon the I-401 during test dives, said raising the sub from almost 2,700 feet below the sea surface and towing it ashore would likely cost tens of millions of dollars.

The Japanese submarine is just one of thousands of sunken ocean, air and land craft, most from the past two centuries, in the waters around the Hawaiian islands.

## Two Arizona Women Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

PHOENIX—Two Arizona women, Sara O'Meara and Yvonne Feddersen, have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for championing the needs of abused and neglected children. The pair founded Childhelp USA, which helps 400,000 abused and neglected children annually.

In 1959, the women personally rescued 11 Asian American children left to die on the streets of Tokyo. They went on to build orphanages there and later coordinated the effort to airlift thousands of orphaned children from Vietnam to the United States, eventually creating Childhelp USA.



## Organizer of Grand Valley State GOP 'Affirmative Action' Bake Sale Steps Down

ALLENDALE, Mich.—An organizer of a College Republicans' affirmative action bake sale at Grand Valley State University that drew complaints from stu-

dents has stepped down from his post as president of the club.

Kyle Rausch, 19, said his club wanted to challenge affirmative action policies that give preference to women and minorities. Two other members involved in planning the event also resigned.

At the bake sale, the same cupcake that a white male could buy for \$2 was available for 75 cents to a white female or a black person, 50 cents to an Asian or a Hispanic, and a nickel to an American Indian.

## Smithsonian to Mark 100 Years of Filipino Migration to U.S.

WASHINGTON—Filipino immigration to the United States will mark its 100th anniversary next year at the Smithsonian Institution with the theme "A Century of Challenge and Change: The Filipino-American Story"

The exhibit will provide a historical overview of the struggles and achievements of Filipino Americans. Based on the U.S. Census of 2000, there are 2.36 million Filipino Americans and Filipinos in the United States with most living in California, Hawaii, New York and New Jersey.



## Suit Claims *Billboard's* Bias was Off the Charts

NEW YORK—Two *Billboard* magazine employees are charging the magazine of racially profiling its employees. Evidence in just-filed court papers from fired editors Keith Girard and Samantha Chang's \$29 million lawsuit against the magazine allege that upper management perpetuated an atmosphere of sexual and racial intimidation.

In one instance, according to the filing in New York State Supreme Court, a *Billboard* official prepared a chart titled "Editorial Staff Demographics" and listed each employee by name, title and race — "Caucasian," "African American" or "Asian or Pacific Islander." The chart was accompanied by an e-mail raising concerns about the friendship between Chang and *Billboard* senior writer Carla Hay, an African American, and whether it could lead to a lawsuit against the company. ■

## Coalition Expresses Concerns on Patriot Act

More than 40 civil rights, human rights, immigrant rights and civil liberties groups sent a letter April 5 to Members of the Senate and House Judiciary Committees calling on Congress to address fully the range of human rights, civil rights and civil liberties concerns many Americans have about the government's post-9/11 policies.

The letter follows an announcement from House Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., R-Wis., and Ranking Member John Conyers, Jr., D-Mich., that the Committee will conduct hearings in preparation for possible reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act, parts of which expire at the end of 2005 without congressional action.

While applauding the Judiciary Committee's plan to hold oversight hearings, the organizations are urging Members to recognize that widespread public opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act reflects a more general discomfort over the government's actions.

More than 360 communities and four states have passed "anti-Patriot Act" resolutions that deal with a wide array of issues outside the scope of the USA Patriot Act.

The letter calls upon the Committees to examine concerns such as:

- Mass secret arrests of Arabs and Muslims followed by detention for extended periods without charges,

denials of access to counsel, secret hearings and, in some cases, abuse by prison guards;

- Abuse of the material witness authority to detain citizens and others without charges;

- Discriminatory enforcement of the immigration laws, leading to arbitrary detentions and deportations;

- Detentions of Americans incomunicado as "enemy combatants" without access to lawyers or the courts;

**More than 360  
communities and  
four states have  
passed 'anti-  
Patriot Act'  
resolutions**

- Expanded use of secret wiretaps and secret searches of Americans' homes and offices;

- Massive growth in surveillance technologies

and authority (including the authority under the USA Patriot Act to seize library and medical records and all commercial databases) with inadequate legal protections against abuse;

- Spying on lawful political and religious activity; and

- Eavesdropping on attorney-client communications without judicial approval or oversight.

The letter was coordinated by the Rights Working Group, a coalition of civil rights, civil liberties, immigrant rights and human rights organizations who seek to develop a coordinated response to policies and attitudes leading to the deterioration of civil and human rights in the aftermath of 9/11. ■

## APAs in the News

By Pacific Citizen Staff

## Indian American Wins Illinois Township Race

Moin Moon Khan, an Indian American, recently won the race for trustee of York Township in Illinois.

He was the first non-Caucasian to be nominated by the Republican Party in DuPage County and the first Indian American to win on that party's ticket in the county.

DuPage is a predominantly Republican county and historically the four trustees have been Republicans.

## Calif. JA Student Receives Archdiocesan Christian Service Award

The Department of Catholic School presented Louisville High School senior Hilary Hisako Porter the Los Angeles Archdiocesan Christian Service Award April 12 at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

## Downtown L.A. JACL to Honor Four JA Women of the Year

The Downtown Los Angeles JACL and the Japanese Women's Society of Southern California have selected four prominent JA community leaders as the 2005 Women of the Year.

Manzanar Committee Chairperson Sue Kunitomi, Families with Children from China Chairperson Jeri Okamoto-Floyd, kimono kitsuke, sashiko and cooking teacher Yoko Tamae and Japanese language professor Yoshiko Yamaguchi will be honored at a May 1 luncheon at the New Otani Hotel and Garden in



Floyd



Embrey

Little Tokyo.

## Miyagishima Receives Flame of Hope Award

Las Cruces, New Mexico resident Mike Kazuji Miyagishima was recognized as this year's recipient of

the Larry Willard Flame of Hope Award for his contributions to the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for the Special Olympics, New Mexico. The award is given annually to a law enforcement officer who continuously demonstrates a significant

contribution to LETR. Miyagishima consistently raised in excess of \$6,000 per year in individual contributions.



## Two South Asian Authors Win '05 Kiriya Prize

Pacific Rim Voices recently announced two winners for the ninth annual 2005 Kiriya Prize. Nadeem Aslam's novel, "Maps for Lost Lovers," is this year's fiction winner along with Suketu Mehta's, "Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found" for non-fiction.

Aslam and Mehta will share equally the U.S. \$30,000 cash prize presented by Pacific Rim Voices, the independent non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating literature that contributes to greater understanding of and among the people and nations of the Pacific Rim and South Asia. ■



Mehta

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## Manzanar Committee Announces Program for 36th Annual Pilgrimage

The Manzanar Committee announced plans for this year's 36th annual pilgrimage to be held April 30. Co-sponsored by the Manzanar 9/11 Committee, the theme is "Retrospection and Relevance: Commemorating the First Manzanar Pilgrimage and its Meaning for Today."

Taiko drummers will open the program at 11:30 a.m. Featured speakers include Los Angeles Community College Board Trustee Warren Furutani, UCLA Muslim American student Yousef Tasjar and Manzanar Committee Chair Sue Kunitomi Embrey.

In the tradition begun by the Manzanar Committee to "Raise the Banner" and recognize the various internment camps, Minidoka internees will be honored this year, and Lisa Joe will sing in honor of her mother, the late Sue Okabe, "Songbird of Minidoka," and will also speak about her family's experience living behind barbed wire. Minidoka was designated as a National Monument on Jan. 17, 2001.

A roll call of all ten WRA camps will also be led by Corey Miyano, followed by an interfaith service led

by Rev. Paul Nakamura of the Lutheran Oriental Church. The pilgrimage will conclude with a gathering for all to participate in traditional Japanese circle dances, to be led by Kerry Kunitomi Cababa, Colleen Kunitomi Miyano and Ruth Miyano Beadles.

During the day, there will also be an art activity for youth near the pilgrimage site sponsored by the Wall of America Foundation as well as an exhibit of works by renowned artist Henry Fukuhara at the Manzanar Interpretive Center.

The young adult/family discussion program, "Manzanar at Dusk" will also take place this year at the Manzanar Interpretive Center from 5-8 p.m.

The Manzanar Committee is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all-volunteer organization that depends on community support to hold its yearly pilgrimages to the Manzanar National Historic Site, where approximately 10,000 persons of Japanese ancestry were held without due process during World War II.

For more information, visit <http://www.manzanarcommittee.org> or call 323/662-5102. ■

## Houston JACL to Honor WWII Veterans

The JACL Houston chapter will recognize and pay tribute to "The Japanese American Experience in World War II" April 16. The goal is to recognize the veterans who brought honor to the JA community, the innocent families who suffered relocation and confinement in concentration camps, and those who worked toward redress to recognize the harm that had been done.

The event will recognize the storied units, such as the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Battalion, the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, Merrill's Marauders, and the Military Intelligence Service, that fought valiantly in Europe and Asia on behalf of the United States. Most of

the members of these units were JAs.

In the town of Bruyeres, France, JA troops rescued the "Lost Battalion," comprised of Texans, thereby earning the profound respect of their fellow soldiers. Gov. John Connolly made all members of the 442nd "Honorary Texans" in 1963. Survivors of the Lost Battalion and the 36th Texas Infantry Division are specifically invited.

Soldiers from the 522nd were among the first to liberate the infamous Dachau concentration camp in Germany. The 442nd suffered 314 percent casualties to become the most decorated unit in U.S. military history for its size.

The event will be held at the Warwick Hotel's Versailles Room, 5701 Main Street, in Houston. The public is invited.

A panel discussion from 9:30-11:00 a.m. will focus on the Children's Village at the Manzanar internment camp, a young married couple's experiences in the Tule Lake camp, the effort to gain redress for the injustices suffered by innocent JAs, and the drive to protect other Americans after 9/11. A reception and photo exhibit will take place from 11-12:00 p.m. A luncheon and program to honor veterans will be held from 12:00-2:00 p.m.

For more information, see Houston JACL's Web site: <http://jacl-houston.org/>. ■

## NJAMF Holds Awards Dinner Gala



The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation held its awards dinner gala April 7 at the Capitol Hilton in Washington, D.C. Honored were President Ronald Reagan, Sen. Daniel Inouye, and Congressman Peter W. Rodino, Jr. Pictured here are JACLers who attended the gala dinner (l-r): Sid Mukai, former JACL National Presidents Helen Kawagoe and Floyd Mori, Warren Minami, NJAMF chairman, Claire Minami, and Carol Minami. ■

Photo courtesy of Kristine Minami

## YOUTH FORUM

### Asian American Heritage Month: Celebrating the Visible Asians, Overlooking the Invisible

By ALEXIS HISAKA

As Asian Americans, we have much to honor and be proud of. For hundreds of years, we have struggled for acceptance and acknowledgement in the workforce, in our schools and in our nation. We have endured through the difficult times during War, Internment, racial discrimination and profiling. Through it all, we stood by and fought for our country, for our reputation and for ourselves. And we have prevailed.

We celebrate Asian American Heritage Month to proclaim the accomplishments of every AA. But as an AA, I feel that we are selective as to whom we celebrate and embrace as "one of us."

The majority of Asians connect with those personalities that they perceive to be the best representatives of Asian people and Asian cultures. If you are graceful, beautiful, and polite, you are well respected. If you pay tribute to and honor your Asian family and culture, you are well publicized. And if the common Asian person can or wants to identify with your occupation/interests, you become a person of stature and significance.

And most importantly, we honor the ones who are non-controversial and non-abrasive. Public Asians that cause us to feel uncomfortable and

squirm in our chairs are hardly supported by the mass Asian audience, despite popularity amongst general audiences.

In sports, we favor the sports that we thrive in, the sports that we watch, and the athletes who are the top players. We prefer elegance over inelegance and sophistication over awkwardness, despite one's popularity and talent.

We marvel over Olympic medalists, Kristi Yamaguchi and Michelle Kwan, but laugh at Yao Ming just as much as he is praised for his skills. We want Tiger Woods to identify with his "Asian-ness" because he enhances the profile of an Asian superstar.

We ignore star athletes like Jeannette Lee because billiards is not a popular sport. We overlook the talent of so many Asian athletes and yet we wonder why there are so few Asians competing in the athletic field.

As a culture in general, we embrace the popular, the elite, and the appealing musicians amongst our peers, which is why Yoyo Ma and Utada Hikaru are well respected. Classical, hip-hop and pop are genres favored by Asian audiences. Rarely are Asian rock stars like James Iha, Doug Robb, and Mike Shinoda appreciated.

We take pride in those who have pride in their family and praise their culture. Yet if you are outspoken, hypersexualized, or a comic in your public life, you are criticized and discarded.

Margaret Cho was zoned out immediately for her graphicness

about her addiction and recovery; Lucy Liu was condemned for her overly sexual characters on screen, and John Cho was neglected for his slapstick comedic performances. We praise Kurasawa for his depiction of Japanese culture, and cut Hideo Nakata and Lee Tamahori for their frank depictions of the negative aspects of the same culture.

Not only are selected mainstream personas denied our cultural embrace, but so are everyday people as well. We measure success by wealth and prominence, but overlook the hard work and the passion that the Asian farmers, mothers, housewives, self-employed and men and women of our churches and civic organizations have put forth towards our culture.

These people formed a foundation for the rest of us. Without them, the rest of us would be invisible.

But who is invisible and who has contributed? The invisible Asians tend to be the people who do not fit our standards of achievement and profile of a good American. But what makes a good American? Who decides who to embrace and who to discard when it comes to acceptance?

Asian American Heritage Month is a month we are supposed to honor all AAs, but do we really? Perhaps we need to change our views, and appreciate who has benefited our culture, because there are so many Asians we must praise.

We need to re-examine and redefine the meaning of Asian American Heritage Month and celebrate the triumphs of every AA. ■



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By YUMI SAKUGAWA

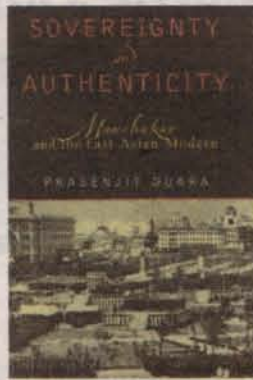


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Prasenjit Duara  
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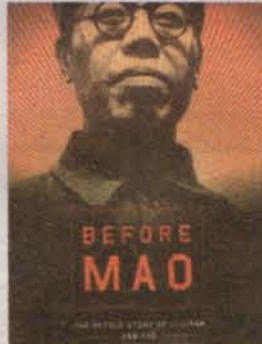
ies Manchukuo, the Japanese puppet state in northeast China from 1932-1945 to raise broader questions about how this "nation-state" later catalyzed new global trends that appeared in much of the twentieth century. Exploring contradictory principles of imperialism and nationalism, and modernity and tradition, Duara brings together origi-

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Li Lisan was Mao's predecessor at the head of the Communist Party and also a key member of the Russian and Chinese revolutions. In this biography that moves from China to France to the Soviet Union and finally back to China, Lescot writes the story of Li's life with the dramatic flair of a highly engaging



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Columbia University Press  
Donald Keene

pp. 208; \$29.95 cloth  
Donald Keene, the prominent



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who is remembered mostly as the builder of the Temple of the Silver Pavilion, also helped shape the aesthetic sensibilities of Japan, such as the No theater, the Japanese gardens and the tea ceremony.

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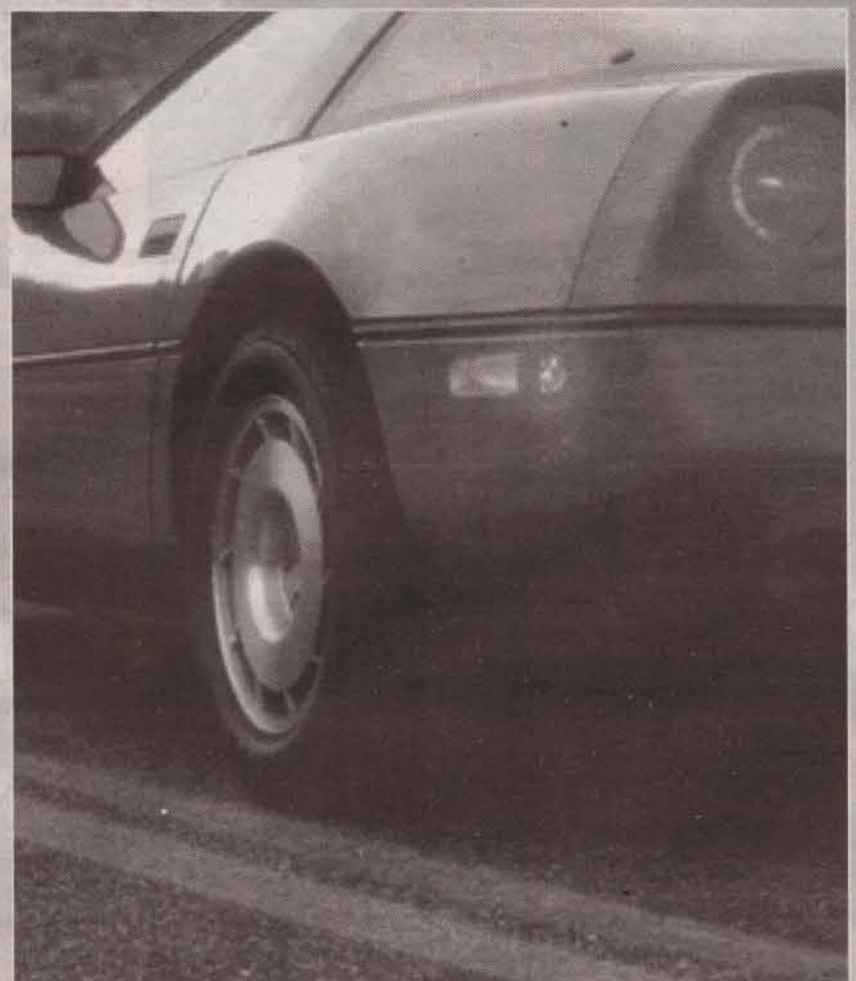
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## GOLF

## Wie to Try U.S. Open Qualifying

She's hoping to compete in the 'men's world.'

By DOUG FERGUSON  
AP Golf Writer



AUGUSTA, Georgia—Fifteen-year-old Michelle Wie, who already has played 20 times on the American PGA Tour and twice on the men's U.S. PGA Tour, has entered qualifying for the U.S. Open and will begin her qualifying attempt in May.

The Hawaiian school girl will first play an 18-hole local qualifier May 13 at Turtle Bay on Oahu, the same course where she tied for second in an LPGA Tour event in February from a shorter set of tees.

Wie likely would have to finish first or second at Turtle Bay to advance to a 36-hole sectional qualifier in June.

"Michelle is excited about this," her father, B.J. Wie, said from the University of Hawaii, where he is a professor. "To make it through local qualifying will be challenging. I hope she can make it into sectional. That would be a good experience. For her making it into the main event will be difficult. Her chances will be low."

Her entry left the USGA officials scanning the record books to see if any other woman had tried to qualify for the U.S. Open, the second-oldest championship in golf.

Wie also entered the U.S. Amateur Public Links qualifying for the second straight year, which she sees as her best chance of ever playing in the U.S. Masters.

The winner of the Public Links gets an invitation to Augusta National.

A year ago, Wie came up two shots short of making it through the first stage of qualifying.

She has been criticized for not playing against girls her own age and piling up trophies, but her father said she is driven by playing against the best.

"That's her main interest, going into the men's world," her father said.

In three LPGA tournaments this year, including a major, Wie has tied for second, tied for 12th and tied for 14th two weeks ago at the Kraft Nabisco Championship.

If she were a pro, she would have enough money to be 10th on the money list. ■

## SUMO

## Controversial Yokozuna to Take on Las Vegas

By ADAM GOLDMAN  
Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS—The Japanese media have called sumo champ Asashoryu everything from bully to Genghis Khan.

Some might see him as an overly flamboyant 317-pound troublemaker who doesn't always honor the staid traditions and rituals of his revered sport.

But that's in the Land of the Rising Sun. In this city where ostentatiousness is a time-honored tradition, he should find plenty of approving fans.

For the first time in two decades, a Grand Sumo tournament will be held in the United States, Oct. 7-9 at the Mandalay Bay hotel-casino.

A champion will be determined each day and a Grand Champion will be crowned on the final day of the competition. Gambling on the outcome of bouts will not be permitted.

The Las Vegas tour, which is being staged by the Japan Sumo Association, will feature most of the sport's top wrestlers.

But the baby-faced, Mongolian-born Asashoryu who became a Grand Champion in 2003 and won sumo's top prize, the Emperor's Cup, for the 11th time last month, is



sure to be the biggest draw.

The 24-year-old Asashoryu is a yokozuna or Sumo Grand Champion, who consistently conquers his competitors as a master of the dohyo, the hand-crafted ring made out of clay and sand.

And he's no stranger to controversy.

The title of yokozuna is considered a mark of honor, and its holders are held to high standards, so Asashoryu shocked sumo convention and sparked a national scandal

two years ago when he was disqualified for taking down an opponent by pulling his hair.

He's also his own man, intentionally missing a scheduled interview with a reporter April 6 during a three-city tour to promote the fall competition. So, any insights about fighting in Las Vegas will have to stay in Las Vegas until he returns for the tournament to answer questions.

Uragoro Takasago, the Las Vegas event's director, said that people attending Grand Sumo Las Vegas will see a lot of tradition and get an education about the 1,500-year-old sport, which traces its roots back to ancient Shinto religious ritual and has deep significance in Japanese society. Wrestlers follow a strict communal training regimen, dress in traditional kimono and have a disciple-master relationship with coaches.

If the Las Vegas event is successful, Takasago said it could return to the United States in three to five years. A Grand Sumo tournament was last held in the United States in New York's Madison Square Garden in 1985.

Mandalay officials expect the 12,000-seat venue to be sold out for all three days. Tickets went on sale April 6. ■

## BASKETBALL

## Yao, Magic Co-Star in AIDS Video

Houston Rockets' Yao Ming stars with Lakers legend Magic Johnson in a TV public service announcement released in Hong Kong that urges people not to fear or discriminate against those with AIDS.

The 30-second clip shows Johnson playing a game of one-on-one with the Rockets center as both men push against each other and exchange high fives.

Johnson says, "I have been living with HIV since 1991."

The clip then shows Yao teaching Johnson how to use chopsticks as they share a meal of take-out Chinese food on the basketball court.

Yao says in Mandarin, "Hugging, shaking hands or eating together will not transmit HIV. Don't be afraid. Don't discriminate."

"Please show you care for people living with HIV/AIDS and learn more about HIV/AIDS prevention." ■

## BASEBALL

## Lotte Manager Says Majors Should Expand to Japan

By JIM ARMSTRONG  
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO —Former New York Mets manager Bobby Valentine likes to think big and says Major League Baseball should be eyeing expansion to Japan.

Valentine, who just kicked off his second season in his second stint as manager of the Chiba Lotte Marines in Japan's Pacific League, said baseball needs to become more global.

"I think there needs to be an expansion of MLB to Asia and I think Japan is the place to be," Valentine said. "True expansion should be the ultimate goal of everyone who deals with baseball on both sides of the pond."

Valentine said Japan's game has made great strides in recent years and that many teams in Japan's professional leagues, like the Softbank Hawks, are good enough to compete with the best teams in the majors.

"I'd put that team against any team in the world in a 10-game series," said Valentine. "Their owner is willing to spend the money to try to get the best team in the world. I think that's ambitious and good for him."

Softbank owner Masayoshi Son signed former major leaguers Tony Batista and Jolbert Cabrera in the offseason and added them to what already was one of the best lineups in Japanese baseball. The team is off

"True expansion should be the ultimate goal of everyone who deals with baseball on both sides of the pond."  
— Bobby Valentine



to an impressive 5-0 start.

Like the major leagues, there are vast disparities in the wealth of Japan's professional teams, but Valentine doesn't think that's necessarily a bad thing.

"I think the model of all leagues is Major League Baseball without a salary cap," said Valentine. "Every year you see teams that don't spend a lot of money make it to the playoffs. I think that's wonderful, it's like McDonald's versus 'mom and pop.'"

Valentine, who is entering the second year of a three-year contract with Lotte, would not rule out a return to the major leagues someday. The native of Stamford, Conn., has previously managed the Texas Rangers and the New York Mets, and led the Marines to a second-place finish in his first year in Japan in 1995.

Valentine's team finished fourth last year, just missing out on the third and final playoff spot.

Valentine is hugely popular among the Lotte faithful and is probably the team's most recognized personality. Unlike other managers in Japan, Valentine likes to take part in batting and fielding practice and his energetic approach appeals to Japanese fans. ■

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6/20-6/27	Yamato 8-Day Voyage of the Glaciers Cruise aboard the Dawn Princess - Anchorage, College Fjord, Glacier Bay, Skagway, Juneau, Ketchikan, Inside Passage, ends in Vancouver.	Lilly Nomura
6/25-7/5	Yamato Summer Tour to Japan - Tokyo, Kurashiki, Hiroshima, Kyoto.	Peggy Mikuni
6/30-7/12	Yamato Hokkaido Tour - Sapporo, Sounkyo, Kawayu Spa, Kushiro, Ikeda, Obihiro, Lake Toya, Hakodate.	Lilly Nomura
9/12-9/22	Yamato Eastern Europe Tour - Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Vienna, Danube Cruise, Munich.	Peggy Mikuni
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## Odds and Ends in Our #10 and #9 Envelopes

**T**HIS BIT might be "an April Appendix" — an alliterative choice over "hodge podge." As a recipient of numerous solicitations from charities around the country (some we selectively support), their envelopes, sizes #10 and #9, are recycled to store newspaper clippings. For example:

**Asian Influence in San Gabriel Valley** — We live in this valley covering the eastern half of the county, boasting the "highest concentration of Asian Americans in Southern California." The valley boasts six cities with a majority Asian population — Monterey Park 64%, Walnut 55.8%, Rowland Heights 50.3%, San Gabriel 50%, San Marino 50%, and Rosemead 50% — so goes the *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* (2-4-2005).

**Book Reviews** — Haruki Murakami's latest novel, "Kafka on the Shore," with talking cats and Colonel Sanders "may be the weirdest novel yet, but also one of his best," so notes Malcolm Jones in *Newsweek* (1-24-2005). ... Best spread I've seen yet for David Mas Masumoto's "Epitaph for a Peach" was front-page in *San Jose Mercury News Arts & Education* section (1-27-2005).

**Hugh Hewitt** — A radio talk show host, he thinks our local daily, the *Los Angeles Times*, "needs to reorganize its way to cover the war on terror as a war" (1-23-2005). "Imagine a newspaper during WWII giving so much space fretting that the Army's victory over the Japanese at Guadalcanal would only make the combined enemy forces more eager to fight at Iwojima and Normandy." His citing Guadalcanal and Iwojima caught my eye to clip & save. Which led me to his latest book, "Blog: Understanding the Information Reformation that's Changing Your World."

### VERY TRULY YOURS



Harry Honda

**Lillian Nakano** — A timely piece, "1942-Style Bigotry Targets Muslims in the U.S. Today" (*L.A. Times*, 2-19-2005), concludes: "There is no justification for racism or denial of civil liberties — not in 1942 and not in 2005." In the heart of her op-ed page article, the Hawaiian-born Sansei emphasizes: "Yet today there are renewed attacks on civil liberties in the name of the 'war on terrorism'." If there were readers commenting on this, I missed seeing any in Letters to the Editor.

**Act of Reading** — Advice to Gramps (and others) from op-ed editor E. Ray Walker of *San Gabriel Valley Tribune* (1-28-2005), that working the gray matter keeps your brain functioning, is one sentence we relish. "Gray matter calisthenics" includes playing word and board games, learning a foreign language, doing your own arithmetic instead of a calculator, and writing.

"As long as the wiring and synapses are in tune, all's well," say the brain specialists. "It's when they slip into disuse that mental abilities begin to fade." Plus, seniors can reduce their risk of dementia 35% by reading several times a week, according to a report in the June 2003 *New England Journal of Medicine*. Even more beneficial: playing a musical instrument, 69%; and learning new dance steps, 79%.

**Seattle's Central Library** — This colorful feature about the new Seattle Library was wonderful to behold (*Wall Street Journal*, 1-13-2005). Its exterior may be bizarre. It's all glass — like a "greenhouse" encased by steel protractors, one might say. One doesn't expect a similar spread in a newspaper outside of Washington State.

But showing another slant, one Seattle reader threw stones at the library story in his letter to the editor: "Modern architecture — like its hideous parent, modern art — is designed not to resonate with humans, not to please them, but to get in their faces." Lou Kado and I (both Loyola Marymount University grads) returned to the campus last month and enjoyed an art history lecture on artists, 1900-1960, from the Los Angeles area. No mention of local Nikkei artists, perhaps not avant-garde nor cool.

**SooJee Lee** — According to her friends, she was Dick Grasso's secretary when he was chairman and CEO of the New York Stock Exchange. A graduate of SUNY-Binghamton and New York Law School, the 38-year-old secretary also made big bucks: \$240,000 p/year (*Wall Street Journal*, 2-4-2005).

She began as a "temp" in 1990 at the exchange while finishing college and law school, and became the "ultimate gatekeeper." "When her boss was ousted in September, 2000, Lee's salary was also found to be 'excessive and unreasonable.'" The rate should have been "around \$85,000, typical for high-powered executive assistants," the article adds.

More "recycled" envelopes remain filled with clippings of interest. Let's not delve into them for awhile. Maybe next April with another batch of clip-&-saves. ■

## AAAUNITY

(Continued from page 1)

and AA communities, whether it is about relationships, community events, entertainment, food, travel, or books. Couples can post their pictures and tell their stories and there's also a store where people can go to buy artwork, bonsai, or African imports.

When Michael and Jenny first started dating in the early 1990s, the Internet was still in its infancy and very few sites discussing unity amongst the African and AA communities existed. In fact most of what they discovered were discussion forums with most comments leaning towards the negative side.

To fill the void, Michael began to learn everything he could about Web site design, pouring over book after book and learning everything he could about designing a Web site. And so far AAAUnity.com has been well received.

AAAUnity.com "has a real positive philosophy," said Michael. "It is clear to our visitors that we stand for something; unity being the primary agenda, but also for the fact that they feel they have a place where they can come and see positive reinforcement of their type of relationships."

"It's like any community comprised of families, friends and acquaintances," he added. "That's how we treat it. In our forums it is like inviting other members of this African and Asian community into our home for discussions, that is why we would not promote nor tolerate negativity in our home ... promoting the celebration of Afro-Asian relationships is the purpose of our forums."

Although it's been more than a decade since Michael and Jenny first fell in love, the Kings still believe there is a need to educate people about mixed race couples and forums like AAAUnity.com go a long way in creating the perfect venue for discussion.

"I can start off by saying that we are an intercultural couple. When we use words like 'race' it is so often associated with separation and differences," said Jenny. "Like any other intercultural couple, we receive our share of stares, snickers and comments. And that hasn't changed much since we've been together, but so what? We are very happy with each other and wouldn't have it any other way."

"There are some out there who are still afraid to profess there like or love for either an African or Asian

person; afraid of what their respective families or community would say if they found out," said Michael. "My wife has corresponded with some other Asian women who are in relationships with African American men but are absolutely petrified to profess the love they share with their mate to their friends and family. And I'm talking about grown adults here."

The Kings are hopeful that through Web sites like theirs, people will come to learn more about couples like them and the similarities the African and AA communities share.

"I certainly have noticed a rise in African and Asian couples in the New York area since we first met, but I think more than anything, the difference now is that more people are communicating more about it," said Jenny. "That's the whole thing; communication."

"Both African and Asian people have been plagued by so many unsavory and demeaning stereotypes for such a long time, that's all we knew about each other," she continued. "When we actually take the time to get to know the true person beyond the stereotype, almost all the time African and Asian people get along."

The Kings are now working on their next African and Asian American Unity project: an online dating site for African and AA singles around the world that will be launched shortly called Cocobutter love.com.

Although their new project is keeping them busy, the Kings are dedicated to continuing their efforts to build a bridge between the two communities. In fact, both Michael and Jenny believe creating AAAUnity.com has been an invaluable learning experience.

"I can go on and on for days about how much I have learned about Chinese history and culture from being married to my wife, and other Asian cultures as a whole, but the most important thing I've learned is that there really aren't many differences between our people or our communities other than a few cultural standards," said Michael.

"It's funny, but I actually learned to appreciate more about my own culture and community after meeting Michael, since he himself had such a profound interest and understanding of Chinese culture and history," said Jenny. "Ironically, it was Michael's interest in me and my culture that inspired me to appreciate myself and my own culture as well as his." ■

## COMMENTARY

### Reflections on the JACL/OCA Wash., D.C. Leadership Conference

By Larry Oda  
JACL Nat'l VP. of Operations

**A**s part of a follow up of my participation in the 2005 JACL/OCA Washington, D.C. Leadership Conference was a written evaluation. One question asked for my reflections on the conference. Going in, I understood what the D.C. leadership conference was hoping to achieve, but did not realize the depth of coverage each aspect would receive nor the support it gets from a myriad of other groups.



The process for getting involved in local politics and advancing through to state and national elective office has been covered in many other lectures and workshops, but to hear from a diverse collection of individuals about the reasons why we need to do this was inspiring.

The most important part of this conference, besides making acquaintance with our fellow JACL participants and OCA counterparts from across the country and hearing their stories, was the personal stories

of each of the presenters, leaders in their particular discipline, each working toward advancing a small piece of the overall Asian Pacific Islander agenda.

This is the part of the picture that I had not seen. There are many little pieces that we need to combine in order for us to have an effective voice in our government. Right now we have from our communities, many support staff of legislators who can offer their opinions but until we get more Daniel Inouye's, Norm Mineta's and Gary Locke's into office, we will remain only as staffers who influence the opinion of our bosses.

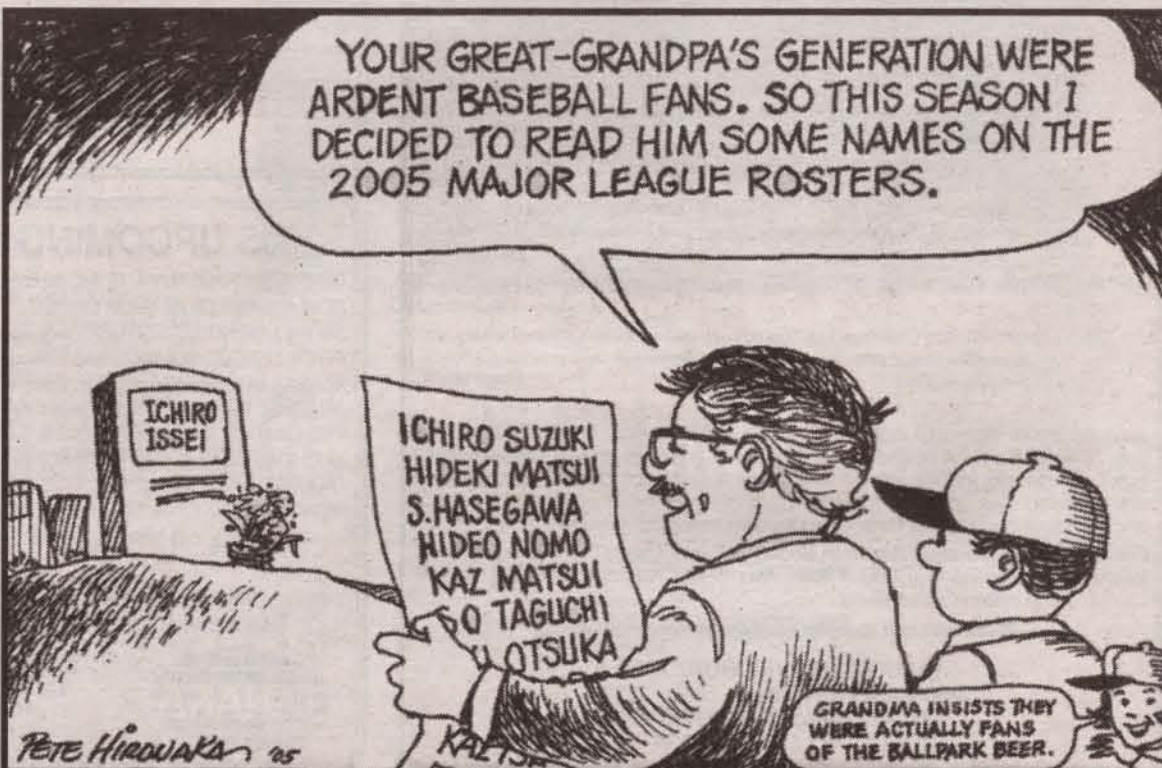
It is clear that we will never have a real voice until we have the numbers to influence the larger community. We can only do this by cooperating with each other and forming coalitions to advance the larger API agenda.

This is what I brought away from the conference, that, more than just the progression of getting involved in the political process, but why it is we must intervene and the importance of forming coalitions and aligning ourselves with like-minded groups.

I thoroughly enjoyed the compa-

ny of my fellow participants and learned as much from them as from the conference speakers. I have seen the bond that has been formed by previous conference attendees and understand why.

The shared revelation of what must be accomplished and that we are the agents of change can form the basis for a lasting relationship. I look forward to the collaboration. ■

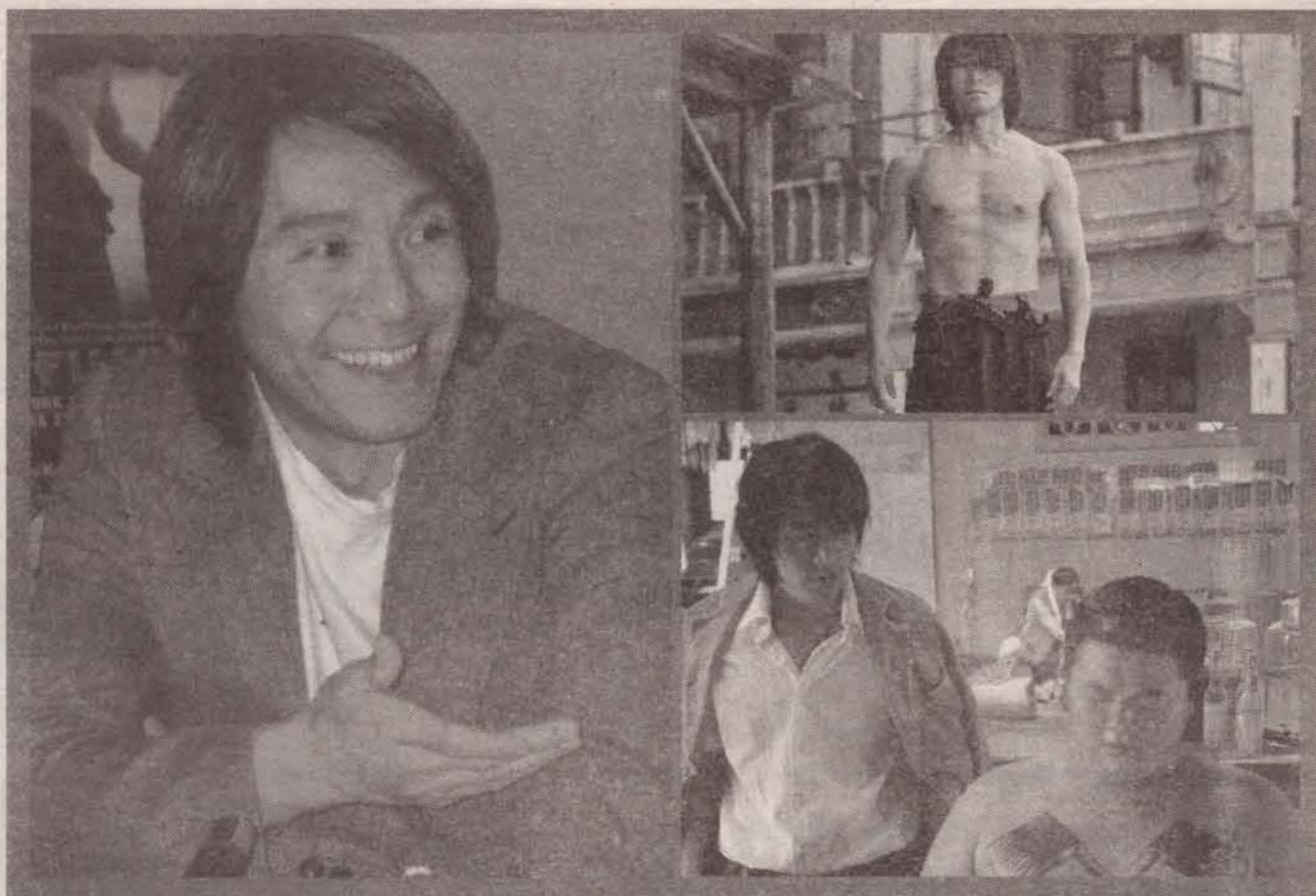




He's a Hong Kong superstar looking for success in the U.S. Oh, and he ♥ Bruce Lee.

# Putting the HUSTLE Back In KUNG FU

By LYNDALIN  
Assistant Editor



**B**EVERLY HILLS, Calif.—This side of the Pacific, there is no shortage of starry-eyed Bruce Lee wannabes. Just look at the number of high-kicking Asian and Asian American stars in Hollywood who inspire kids to look in the mirror, puff up their chests and pantomime intricate martial arts moves in the safety of their own imagination.

Stephen Chow was one of those kids. Growing up poor in Hong Kong had him dreaming about flexing muscles to open doors. But when his family's meager existence prevented Chow from taking martial arts lessons past the age of nine, his sharp tongue became the weapon of choice. His rapid fire rambling in comedies like "Justice My Foot" and "All for the Winner" endeared audiences to *mo lei tau* (literally "nonsense") comedy and catapulted him to "superstar" status in Asia.

But even with over 50 movies to his credit, Chow still faced the daunting task of proving himself to an American audience that only knows names like Jackie Chan and Jet Li. He made a dent in 2001 when Miramax bought the U.S. release rights to Chow's hit "Shaolin Soccer," a comedy about a group of rejects trying to put together a winning team, but the studio only half-heartedly promoted the film after shelving it in its famous library for years. Still, "Shaolin Soccer" managed to become a cult hit on DVD prompting Quentin Tarantino (the *au courant* mouth piece of Asian cinema these days)

to sing Chow's praises.

All the while, Chow was dreaming up colorful characters for his next project, a "ridiculous" little film he would write, act, produce and direct called "Kung Fu Hustle."

## 'My Dream Has Come True'

"To make a kung fu film is like my dream and now my dream has come true because I am a big fan of kung fu movies," said Chow at a pre-release press conference in Beverly Hills, California. The film's positive buzz already has Sony (the studio backing "Kung Fu Hustle") employees walking around with permanently plastered smiles.

"Hustle" was named best film at this year's 24th Hong Kong Film Festival. Chow was nominated in the best director, best actor and best screenplay categories, but lost all three.

"Of course I would like to win every award that I am nominated for ... getting six awards in Hong Kong Film Awards is a pretty good response already, so we're pretty happy about it," said Chow.

"Kung Fu Hustle" is set in 1930s Shanghai where the notorious Axe Gang — a band of elegantly dressed (dapper top hats included) killers — rules the streets and bullies locals with their impeccable aim. They aren't the archetypal lowbrow gangsters either. Led by the sinister Brother Sum (Chan Kwok Kwan), the Axe Gang can cut up a rug "Westside Story" style.

Chow plays the clumsy wannabe Sing who along with a sidekick (Lam Tze Chung), tries to con people into thinking that they are a part of the gang. When they inadvertently meet the Axe Gang at Pig Sty Alley (an apartment complex as chic as its name), some martial arts masters come out of disguise to fight.

Like in "Shaolin Soccer," Chow uses his favorite role as the loveable loser to ramble in his self-deprecating style. But wedged between his usual comedic shtick are some references to all-American films like "The Shining" ("One of my favorite horror movies!" exclaimed Chow), "The Untouchables" and "The

Matrix." Brownie points are given to those who can find them all.

Working with Yuen Wo Ping, the action coordinator in "The Matrix" trilogies, also account for some humanly impossible fast-fisted action and flying high kicks made possible by the power of computer generated images (CGI).

## The Accidental Icon

"It's always been my ambition to go international because that's the only way to do business," said Chow cautiously picking over his words. He's fluent in Cantonese and conversational in both Mandarin and English, but keeps a translator nearby anyway. He wants to be a crossover success and work with Steven Spielberg ("Hopefully!").

Onscreen, Chow looks a decade younger than 43 years. In "Shaolin Soccer" and "Kung Fu Hustle" key shirtless scenes reveal a Bruce Lee-like physique, but face-to-face his frame is slight and buried under a brown jacket. He insists that some of "Hustle's" best scenes like the dance sequence and the "Road Runner" chase scene were all "accidental" jewels he inserted while on set. And if a question is too personal, the famously private star shakes a finger in the air and deadpans, "I will investigate that."

Chow said that he's fast at work with the sequel to "Kung Fu Hustle." Even going so far as bringing his writers along with him on the publicity circuit to work on the script.

"That's the plan ... but because of the tight schedule, we may not have a chance [to work] except on the airplane. But in the airplane I always fall asleep!" ■

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## SECRET ASIAN MAN By Tak

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WHEN I WATCH TV WITH MY KID, I CAN'T HELP BUT TO THINK ABOUT THE IMAGES I SEE UP ON THE SCREEN.

NOW I KNOW THAT THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME AND IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO TURN OFF MY ASIAN RADAR BUT I HAVE WATCHED AND REALIZED THAT ASIAN REPRESENTATION IN KID'S TV PROGRAMS IS ONLY SLIGHTLY BETTER THAN IN REGULAR TV PROGRAMS.

THEY SUFFER FROM THE SAME OLD PROBLEMS.

WE ARE STILL MERELY SUPPORTING CHARACTERS OR APPEAR ONLY WHEN A STORY LINE OR LESSON REVOLVES AROUND AN ASIAN THEME LIKE CHINESE NEW YEAR.

THE TWO SHOWS THAT I'VE SEEN WITH ASIAN MAIN CHARACTERS ARE HORRIBLY BAD AND STEREOTYPE ASIAN CULTURE. MUST WE ALWAYS STRUGGLE WITH OUR HONOR AND CONJURE UP THE DRAGON WITHIN?

IF MY KID SAYS HE WANTS TO BE A NINJA I'M GONNA HAVE TO KILL SOMEBODY.



## JACL COMMUNITY Calendar

### National

#### SALT LAKE CITY

**Fri.-Sun., June 24-26**—2005 National JACL Student/Youth Conference; University of Utah; \$40 for members (includes lodging), \$60 non-members (includes youth membership and lodging). Info: Joshua Spry, youthchair@jacl.org or Todd Sato, youthrep@jacl.org.

#### VANCOUVER, British Columbia

**Thurs.-Sat., July 7-9**—XIII COPANI, "Heritage and Health in the 21st Century, 2005 PANA Convention; Hyatt Regency Hotel, 655 Burrard; Info: www.najc.ca.

### East Coast

#### BROOKLYN, N.Y.

**Sat.-Sun., Apr. 30-May 1**—24th Annual Cherry Blossom Festival; Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Info: www.bbg.org or 718/623-7333.

#### TOWSON, Maryland

**Sat., Apr. 23**—Kazue Sawai and the Sawai Koto Ensemble; 8 p.m.; Asian Arts and Culture Center, Towson University.

#### WASHINGTON, D.C.

**Sun., Apr. 24**—Kazue Sawai and the Sawai Koto Ensemble; 4 p.m.; Freer Gallery of Art, Meyer Auditorium.

**Sun., May 1**—Jazz fusion concert by Hiroshima; 6 p.m.; Hirshhorn Plaza; concert will be preceded by a documentary about Hiroshima and discussion about the group's experiences, moderated by Franklin Odo, 4:30 p.m.

**Tue., May 17**—11th Annual APAICS Gala Dinner; Washington, D.C. Capital Hilton; join APAICS for its annual celebration of Asian Pacific Islander Americans in politics and public service. Info: www.apaics.org.

**May 21-Aug. 29**—Exhibition, "Shomei Tomatsu: Skin of the Nation"; 10-5 p.m. Wed.-Mon., closed Tues.; Corcoran Gallery of Art, New York Ave. and 17th Street, NW; Tomatsu is Japan's preeminent post-war photographer and his work has rarely been seen in the U.S. Info: 202/639-1700 or www.corcoran.org.

### Midwest

#### CHICAGO

**Thurs.-Sun., July 21-24**—Bi-District Conference of the MDC and EDC JACL; Radisson Hotel, 160 East Huron; room rate: \$129/night for single, \$139 for two doubles and \$154 for corner suite; room deadline is June 21; a welcome reception is scheduled for Thursday and a dinner on Saturday. Further details to follow.

#### CLEVELAND

**Sat., May 28**—APA Heritage Day, sponsored by the Asian Pacific American Federation; 1-6 p.m.; Cleveland City Hall; keynote speaker, Major Jesse Baltazar, retired Filipino American WWII Air Force officer, defender at Bataan, survivor of Death March; free. Info: David Namkoong, 216/921-3217.

### Intermountain

#### MOSCOW, Idaho

**Through Apr. 29**—Exhibit, "Exposing Anti-Asian Racism and Stereotypes, Past and Present"; University of Idaho Library. Info: Valerie Park, park0013@uidaho.edu or 801/389-0951.

#### SALT LAKE CITY

**Sat., Apr. 30**—Nihon Matsuri; 11-7 p.m.; First South between 200 and 300 West; Japanese cultural craft demonstrations, handicrafts, entertainment, food.

### Pacific Northwest

#### SEATTLE

**Fri.-Sun., Apr. 22-24**—Annual Seattle Cherry Blossom and Japanese Cultural Festival; Seattle Center; art of top spinning, culinary demos, martial arts expo, taiko and antique heirlooms roadshow.

#### PORTLAND

**Sun., Apr. 24**—Presentation and book signing, "The Toledo Incident of 1925: Three Days That Made History in Toledo, Oregon" by Ted Cox; 1:30 p.m.; Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, 121 N.W. Second Ave.; \$3 donation at the door, free to ONLC members. Info: June Schumann, 503/224-1458.

### Northern California

#### BERKELEY

**Through Apr. 30**—Lewis Suzuki's One Man Show; 9:30-2 p.m. and 5:30-9:30 p.m.; La Pena Cultural Center, Cafe Valparaiso Gallery, 3105 Shattuck Ave.; viewing hours are Wed. through Sun.

**Tues., May 10**—"Manzanar: An American Story"; Zellerbach Hall, U.C. Berkeley; under the artistic direction of



Lane Nishikawa's "Only the Brave" will have a private screening, May 7 in Stockton. Tickets can be purchased through the Stockton JACL or the San Joaquin Delta College Theater box office. "Only the Brave" also stars Jason Scott Lee and Tamlyn Tomita.

Kent Nagano.

#### MANZANAR

**Through May 1**—"Reflections of Manzanar" Art Show; 9-5:30 daily; Manzanar National Historic Site Interpretive Center; Henry Fukuhara's works will be on display; free. Info: Manzanar History Association, 877/878-2727.

#### OAKLAND

**Sat.-Sun., Apr. 23-24**—Fashion Fundraiser, Oakland Buhhist Women's Association; Sat. 1-4 p.m., Sun. 11-4 p.m.; 825 Jackson St.; features the Spring Sachiko Collection; designed by Eileen "Sachiko" Fitzpatrick; portion of gross sales to be donated to OBWA.

#### PALO ALTO

**Through Apr. 24**—Exhibition, The Gift: Surimono Prints from Bay Area Collections, Spring Pool/Floating Sky: In Praise to Indigo and Moving Cabinetry; Tansu from The Zentner Collection; Palo Alto Art Center, 1313 Newell Road.

#### SACRAMENTO

**Fri., Apr. 29**—Lecture, Rice and Japanese Culture sponsored by Jan Ken Po Cultural Association; 7 p.m.; Asian Community Center, 7375 Park City Place; limited seating, reservations required; donation, \$5/person. Info and reservations: 916/489-1291 or synsfaze@juno.com.

**Through June 30**—Time of Remembrance: The Japanese American Experience; Tues.-Sat., 10-5 p.m., Sun., noon-5 p.m.; California Museum for History, Women and the Arts; features a replica internment camp barrack, complete with items used in the camps, sets the stage for an exhibit on the experiences of Japanese Americans in California; starting with immigration, the story leads to internment and military service during World War II and culminates with redress for the wartime infringement of their civil liberties. The exhibit includes a tribute to Robert Matsui for his role in the fight for redress. Info: www.californiamuseum.org.

#### SAN JOSE

**Sun., May 1**—28th Annual Nikkei Matsuri; 9:30-4 p.m.; San Jose Japantown; free. Info: www.nikkeimatsuri.org or Warren Hayashi, 408/241-0900.

#### SAN MATEO

**Sun., Apr. 24**—Movie matinee, "Dr. Akagi"; JA Community Center, 415 S. Claremont St.; free. Info: 650/343-2793.

#### STOCKTON

**Sat., May 7**—Screening, "Only the Brave" by Lane Nishikawa; 2 p.m.; San Joaquin Delta College Warren Atherton Theater, 5151 Pacific Ave.; proceeds will go to the film's pre-sale and marketing costs, a portion of your \$25 donation is tax deductible as allowable by law; to obtain tickets by mail, send your order to: Stockton JACL, c/o Nelson Nagai, 1246 Greeley Way, Stockton, CA 95207 by April 25; make checks payable to: Stockton JACL, with the notation "Only the Brave." Tickets also may be purchased through the Delta College Box Office, 209/954-5110. Info: Teddy or May Saiki, 209/465-8107 or Nelson Nagai 209/476-8528.

### Central California

#### HANFORD

**Sat., May 7**—Lecture/demonstration, Ballads of Love and Death: A lecture/demonstration of *shinnai*, Japanese narrative song by Tsuruga Wakasanojo XI; 6:30-8 p.m.; Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art, 15770 Tenth Ave.; \$25 for Institute members, \$35 for non-members; admission

includes wine and hors d'oeuvres reception with the artist; all tickets by advance reservation only; RSVP by May 4 to 559/582-4915.

**Through July 30**—The Ruth and Sherman Lee Institute for Japanese Art Presents: Drawn from Literature: Narrative Traditions in Japanese Art; 15770 Tenth Ave; \$5 for adults, \$3 for children and students with ID. Info: 559/582-4915 or www.shermanleeinstitute.org.

### Southern California

#### GARDENA

**Sun., May 15**—Health Education Day by Gardena Pioneer Project; 1-3 p.m.; Ken Nakaoka Center, 1700 W. 162nd St.; free and open to the public; translation will be provided for Japanese speaking. Info: Karen Uyekawa, 213/894-3235.

#### LONG BEACH

**Apr. 29-May 22**—International City Theatre presents Velina Hasu Houston's, "Tea"; Long Beach Performing Arts Center, 300 East Ocean Blvd.; Thurs., Fri. and Sat. performances begin at 8 p.m., Sun. at 2 p.m. Info and tickets, 562/436-4610 or www.ictlongbeach.com.

#### LOS ANGELES

**Fri., Apr. 22**—CAUSE 12th Annual Dinner; Los Angeles Marriott Downtown, 333 S. Figueroa St.; 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. dinner. Info: 626/356-9838 or www.causeusa.org.

**Sat., Apr. 23**—Screening, Art Nomura's "Finding Home"; 7 p.m.; Mayer theater in the Van der Ahe Communication Arts building, Loyola Marymount University; "Finding Home" is about Japanese Americans who have decided to live in Japan rather than America. Info and reservations: kibeiguy@yahoo.com or 310/338-4568.

**Thurs., Apr. 28-May 5**—VC Filmfest 2005; presented by Visual Communications. For tickets and program info: VC Filmfest, 213/680-4462, ext. 68 or visit www.vconline.org.

**Wed., May 11**—Japan America Society of Southern California's 96th Anniversary Dinner and Gala Celebration; 6:30 p.m. cocktails in the outfield, 7:30 p.m. dinner on the playing field; honoring baseball coaching legends, Rod Deadeaux and Renza Ishii; both founded the Japan-USA Baseball Championship Series. Info: 213/627-6217, ext. 205 or www.jas-socal.org.

#### MONTEREY PARK

**Sat.-Sun., Apr. 16-17**—8th Annual Cherry Blossom Festival; Sat. 11-7:30 p.m., Sun. 10-6 p.m.; Barnes Park, 350 McPherrin Ave.; free; craft booths, cultural displays, game booths, food. Info: 626/307-2541.

#### OXNARD

**Sat., May 7**—Cemetery clean-up; 8 a.m.; corner of Pleasant Valley Road and Etting Road; Ventura County JACL is hosting a clean-up of a neglected cemetery, burial site of many Issei. Info: Ellen Matsuo, 805/987-1470 or vcjacl@hotmail.com.

#### WEST COVINA

**Sat., May 7**—Cherry Blossom Festival; noon-7 p.m.; West Covina Civic Center, 1444 W. Garvey Ave.; free parking. Info: www.westcov.org or 626/960-2566.

### Arizona-Nevada

#### PHOENIX

**Sun., Apr. 24**—Sara Hutchings Clardy Scholarship Luncheon; 1 p.m.; Phoenix College Culinary Cafe; \$25. Info: Marilyn Inoshita Tang, 602/861-2638 or Michele Namba, 623/572-9913. ■

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## IN MEMORIAM

## Japanese Origami Artist Akira Yoshizawa Dies at Age 94

By AUDREY McAVOY  
Associated Press Writer

TOKYO—Akira Yoshizawa, an origami master whose expressive paper gorillas made an art out of Japan's craft tradition, died Mar. 14 of heart failure and pneumonia, his wife said. He was 94.



Moving far beyond paper cranes and hats, Yoshizawa's origami gorillas appeared ready to lumber through the jungle and his frogs looked like they were on the verge of leaping off their lily pads. His international success gave origami a new respectability in Japan.

"At first, people only thought of origami as entertainment for children," said his wife of 45 years, Kiyo Yoshizawa. "Gradually, it won acceptance."

Yoshizawa died on March 14 — the same day of his birth in 1911 — after spending close to two months in the hospital, said Kiyo Yoshizawa.

His first encounter with origami came at the age of three when a neighbor folded him a boat, but Yoshizawa only began intently studying paper folding to explain tasks to younger colleagues at the ironworks factory where he worked during World War II.

After the war, Yoshizawa poured his energy into origami while supporting himself with odd jobs. In the 1950s, his expressive figures captured the interest of Gershon Legman, the U.S. anthropologist who helped exhibit his work at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.

In the decades after, Yoshizawa traveled to countries from France to Indonesia to Peru to the United States, popularizing origami.

He liked to say that origami served as a "common language" for the world. ■

## Japan's Oldest Woman Dies at 114

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

TOKYO—Japan's oldest woman, 114-year-old Ura Koyama, died of pneumonia at a hospital in southern Japan, an official said April 5.

Koyama died April 5 in Iizuka City, where she had been hospitalized, according to Akemi Hiromoto, a city official.

Japan's oldest person is now Yone

Minagawa, 112-year-old in Fukuoka, born on Jan. 4, 1893, according to the Health Ministry.

Japan ranks among nations with the world's longest life spans. In 2003, Japanese women set a new record for life expectancy, at 85.3 years, while men could expect to live 78.3 years.

Experts say a traditional fish-based, low-fat diet may be Japan's secret to long life. ■

## MENTAL ILLNESS

(Continued from page 1)

helping patients with language and cultural needs. They are trying to peel away the stigma surrounding mental disorders, but even to this day, there is still a disproportionate number of silent sufferers.

Lau is the supervisor of the Behavioral Health Program at Asian American Community Involvement

many don't seek help personally," Lau said.

## Still a Silent Killer

Mental disease is a bandit that lurks quietly and robs its victims of all remnants of security. And when it is ignored and only spoken of in whispers behind closed doors, it can grow more powerful and consume victims and loved ones whole.

Recently, the bandit stole Iris

'What's so powerful about the stigma of mental illness that someone would want to take the knowledge of their illness to the grave with them?'

Michael Chang  
Iris Chang's brother

(AACI), a San Jose, California-based nonprofit organization that works with the APA community to improve their quality of life. In her nearly 26-year tenure as a therapist specializing in marriage and children issues, she said the percentage of APAs seeking help has increased over the years. But of those, many have waited until "the very last straw is drawn" and have been pushed to breaking point of a psychotic episode before making strides towards her door.

"Usually, a third party like a teacher or social worker will refer the client because of hospitalization or some other dire situation ...

Chang, the celebrated Chinese American author of "The Rape of Nanking" who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound Nov. 9, 2004. She was only 36 years old and left behind many questions and mixed emotions, but the Chang family was able to push through the pain and point to a more important underlying issue — Iris could still be alive if mental illness didn't carry such a strong stigma among APAs.

Iris had been suffering with "brief reactive psychosis" for some time, but was so ashamed about her sickness that she refused medication. Asian culture places a lot of emphasis on honor and image. Sometimes

Bauer, Fumiko, 81, Oxnard, Mar. 28; Fukuoka, Japan-born; survived by husband, Kenneth; and daughter, Kiyoko Matsumura.

Dengkheim, Tenzin Choeku, 19, Virginia, April 2; first Tibetan-American killed in Iraq; Marine Lance Cpl.; born in India; survived by his mother; and brother, Tenzin.

Fujimoto, Masako, 87, Pasadena, Mar. 14; Los Angeles-born Nisei; survived by sons, Roy (Chiyoko) and William; daughters, Kyoko (Ron) Suzuki and Irene (James) Martin; 6 gc.; 5 ggc.; and sisters, Haruko Ohsuga and Teruko Motoyama.

Hamasaki, Harue, 93, Rosemead, Mar. 2; survived by sister, Shizue Sakamoto; daughter, Jo Ann; and sons, Stanley and Brian.

Ishigo, Alan Yukio, 42, Torrance, Mar. 15; Inglewood-born Sansei; survived by wife, Nancy; daughters, Ashley and Alyssa; son, Bryan; mother, Mitzi; and brother, Kelvin (Nina Oshio).

Iyama, Masayuki, 88, Madison, Wisc., Dec. 19, 2004; survived by daughter, Christina (Dan) Iyama-Kurtycz; and 2 gc.; preceded in death by wife, Mabel.

Kato, Milton, 54, Madera, Mar. 18; survived by wife, Jean; sons, Greg and Kevin; brother, Melvin (Robin); and sister, Jane (Alan) Sato.

Kawaguchi, Misaye, 85, Los Angeles, Feb. 23; San Pedro-born Nisei; survived by sons, Bobby (Jeanie), Ray (Nancy Gilliland) and John (Nadine); 4 gc.; and 2 ggc.

Kojima, George, 56, Mar. 19; Trieste, Italy-born Sansei; survived by wife, Chikako; daughter, Noreen; father, Tom; brother, Mike (Myra); father-in-law, Harry (Yoko) Uneda; brother-in-law, Ronald Uneda; and sister-in-law, Joanne Uneda.

Lew, Albert, 89, Los Angeles, Mar. 18; survived by daughter, Vonnice (Dennis) Kinoshita; and 2 gc.

Matsuoka, Yoneo, 80, Alhambra, Mar. 12; survived by wife, Harue; daughter, Donna (Schuyler) Asari; 2 gc.; sisters, Masako Hanaoka, Shizue Saiki and Yukiye Kitagawa; and brother-in-law, Eddie Yokota.

Miyamoto, Hisao "Bob," San Leandro; WWII veteran, MIS, Korean War veteran; survived by sister, Shizuko Takaoka; children, Howard, Patricia, Steven, Richard and Margaret; and 4 gc.

the pressure to avoid bringing shame to the family is tragically stronger than any other emotion.

"What's so powerful about the stigma of mental illness that someone would want to take the knowledge of their illness to the grave with them?" Iris' brother, Michael Chang, said at a recent fund raising event for mental health awareness.

News of Iris's death reverberated throughout the APA community and has elevated the issue of mental health awareness. Finally, APA mental health awareness may now have a poster child.

"I think to a certain degree, the younger generation could be impacted by [Iris's suicide]," said Lau. "They think, 'What happened to her? How come she did that when she was so successful?'"

## The Problem is on the Outside Too

There are many factors that cause and affect mental illness — every thing from predetermined biology to traumatic experiences — but the way a person is treated in society may also be a determining factor.

APAs face many obstacles even when trying to seek medical help. Wrapped inside the social stigma is

Nakano, Arthur Yoshio, 98, Los Angeles, Feb. 26; Hilo, Hawaii-born Nisei; survived by wife, Ruth; sons, Francis, PhD (Jane), Kenneth (Carol), Milton, OD (Jeanne) and Melvin (Helen); 9 gc.; and 1 ggc.

Nishimura, Shigeru, 87, Kent, Wash., Mar. 16; survived by son, Dennis (Alva); daughter, Arleen (William) Murray; and 6 gc.

Nishimura, Tadao George, 84, Los Angeles, Mar. 9; WWII veteran, Nisei; survived by wife Hazuye; daughter, Kathleen (Nick) Bryan; sons, Glen (Susan), David and Michael (Mary) Nishimura; 5 gc.; 2 ggc.; sisters, Shigeko Yoritsune, Setsuko (Haruo) Murakami and Emiko Ide; and sister-in-law, Helen Nishimura.

Nomura, Yoshitaro, 85, Tokyo, April 1; directed the film, "Castle of Sand"; one of Japan's most prolific and celebrated post-World War II directors, making 89 films; survived by son, Yoshiki; and daughter, Kaori.

Ogata, Jack Masao, 67, Mar. 12; survived by wife, Aiko; and daughter, Pamela.

Omoto, Isao, 96, Los Angeles, Mar. 13; survived by sons, Roland, Milton (Christine) and Clarence; and 5 gc.

Rimes, Garry Wesley, 30, Santa Maria, April 1; Marine Cpl.; killed in Iraq; awarded Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal; survived by his wife, mother and sister.

Seki, Grace, 90, San Diego, Mar. 9; survived by daughters, Judy (Harry) Kikuta and Jean (Mits) Okazaki; sons, Denny, Sr. and Frank (June); 9 gc.; 14 ggc.; sister, Yoshiko Kuyama; and brother, Sam (Pauline) Nakamura.

Shiosaki, Mitsuko "Helen," 77, Gardena, Mar. 16; Los Angeles-born Nisei; survived by sons, Donald (Carmen) and Paul (Christine); 4 gc.; brother, Tetsuo (Akiko) Morita; and sister, Betty Morita.

Tamaki, Margaret N., 78, Los Angeles, Mar. 17; Marysville-born Nisei; survived by husband, Dr. Ben; son, Dr. Robert (Jennifer); daughter, Susan and Ian Song; brother, George (Bette) Morita; and sister, Rose Klee.

Tanikawa, Hideo Jimmy, 85, Los Angeles, Feb. 24; WWII veteran, Nisei; survived by Betty; son, Harry; daughters, Aileen (Dennis) Maruki, Janis (Morris) Fukumoto and Gale (Léo) Hamabata; 8 gc.; 1 ggc; and brother, Noboru Tanigawa.

Ting, Dr. Sik Woo, 88, Royal Oak, Mich., Mar. 24; retired anesthesiologist and Asian American community activist; survived by son, Jan; daughter, Judith Akaka; and 5 gc.

Uchida, Gloria Hiroko, 60, Santa Monica, Mar. 2; Dalian, China-born; survived by husband, Randy; son, Andrew; mother, Setsuko Lynch; brother, Teruhiko (Keiko) Nemoto; and sister-in-law, Joan (Ron) Watanabe.

Ueki, Sadamu, 92, Culver City, Mar. 13; Newcastle-born Nisei; survived by wife, Harue; son, Masaki (Sumiko); daughters, Keiko (Tommy) Uyeda and Tomoko (Kei) Fukuda; 7 gc.; 2 ggc.; brothers, Minoru, Mitsugi (Fumiko) and Hitoshi (Noriko); and sister, Toshie Uyeda.

Vaughn, Sarah Yoko Yoshida, 72, Cerritos, Mar. 9; Harbor City-born Nisei; survived by husband, Roy; sons, Robert (Julia) Kline, Roy (Katherine) and Timothy (AnneMarie); 4 gc.; sisters, Fumi Tamura, Eileen (Sam) Takemoto and Michi (Bill) Yamaguchi.

Wada, Fumi, 72, Seal Beach, Mar. 12; survived by husband, Katsumi "Kats," sons, Harvey (Rowena), Jerry (Lisa) and Rick (Gayle); daughter, Linda (Garry) Sasaki; and 8 gc. ■

## CORRECTION

The death notice for Kiyoko Yamashita in the April 1 issue incorrectly had a passed away date of Mar. 27. Ms. Yamashita passed away Mar. 20.

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the shame of language incompetence and lack of medical insurance. But other times, the reasons are less tangible.

Cornell University Counselor Wai Kwong Wong, Ph.D. attributes the school's high percentage of APA suicides (50 percent) to a problem he calls "conceptual invisibility" or invisibility based on the model minority myth.

"Asian and Asian American students are rendered 'conceptually invisible' when they are seen primarily through the distorting lens of this myth — that is, when they are seen merely as well-oiled, smooth-running academic machines devoid of emotions or needs," said Wong in a *Daily Sun* column criticizing the university newspaper for running an "Antman" comic strip about super-smart "CyberAsians."

Wong is a staff member of Cornell's Counseling and Psychological Services, an on-campus counseling service that helps over 2,300 students each year, very few of which are APA because they are the least likely to seek help too.

## Help is Within Reach

"When clients come see me for help, I look within their cultural

norm to try to solve the problem," said Josephine Laihin Cheung, a licensed clinical social worker in Sunnyvale, California.

Cheung speaks four languages (English, Japanese, Cantonese, and Mandarin) and specializes in bridging the cultural divide for her clients, which she said is 85-95 percent Asian.

"A first-generation Asian immigrant came to see me after going to see a non-Asian therapist. I asked her why and she said, 'After 45 minutes, the non-Asian therapist told me to get a divorce!'" said Cheung with a laugh. "You have to use the cultural norm to try to help them deal with problems."

There are many more therapists like Cheung all over the country.

Studies from the Surgeon General Office correlate an APA's willingness to seek help with his or her level of acculturation to American life. But even as APAs enter into their sixth and seventh generations, experts foresee an increase in mental illness statistics.

"With a little more education ... the shame will decrease. We have to do a lot more reaching out, empowering and relationship building," said Lau. ■



## HIRAHARA

(Continued from page 1)

Hibakusha (Atomic bomb survivor) sleuth in Altadena, California who somehow manages to solve mind-boggling mysteries with the help of his Kibei and Nisei friends. The book received a number of positive reviews and is in its third printing by Bantam Dell.

Hirahara, who lives in Pasadena, California with her husband, recently launched a tour for her second book in the series titled, "Gasa-Gasa Girl," which takes Mas to New York City to help his estranged daughter Mari solve a mysterious death. The book has also received positive reviews, including *Publishers Weekly*, and a second printing of the novel has been ordered.

In addition to various JA characters, Hirahara uses JA cultural and historic references throughout her books to educate readers about the JA community, but more importantly, she also manages to entertain. Hirahara's style is deceptively understated, slowly taking hold of you, but readers soon find themselves propelled forward as Mas and his band of JA characters struggle to solve the various mysteries.

"I feel so fortunate to be a writer," said Hirahara. "It's a privilege."

Like Mas' character, Hirahara's father is a Kibei, born in the United

States but raised in Japan, and also a Hibakusha survivor. But the author is quick to point out that besides this similarity, her novels are largely fiction. Nevertheless, she felt it was important to include the stories of the Kibei and Hibakusha in her novels since both communities have long been silent about their experiences.

"It's an untold story," she said.

As a JA writer who writes about the JA community, there is always the fear of being pigeonholed, but Hirahara doesn't plan to stop writing stories about her community.

"Some people don't want to be pigeon-holed but [publishers] will do that to you," said Hirahara. "People should be able to write what they want."

She added, "It's a challenge to be an Asian American writer period, no matter what you write about. But we still need more voices. There are not too many Asian American writers, especially JAs."

Hirahara makes it a point of distinguishing between the JA and Japanese cultures in her books because she still sees a lack of understanding in the mainstream about the differences.

"There are still a lot of misconceptions about JAs," said Hirahara, noting her own experiences. At a mystery writers convention she was greeted at the registration desk with

a hearty, "Konnichiwa!" Another time she was welcomed with, "Are you from Japan?"

Hirahara is now a full-time novelist but the road to her current career was not a short one. A graduate of Stanford University with a degree in international relations, she spent nine years at the Los Angeles JA Daily *Rafu Shimpō* where she worked as a reporter and eventual editor of the newspaper.

Her first novel, "Summer of the Big Bachi," took more than 15 years from conception to publication and went through about five overhauls. In fact, the book wasn't even a mystery when she started writing it and she never envisioned her debut novel being turned into a series.

Hirahara easily admits the diffi-

culties of a career as a full-time writer, advising first-time writers to keep their day job to pay the bills. "It's a hard profession," she said. "You're only as good as your next book. But I'm happy."

Although Hirahara's greatest inspirations have been JA writers, including Hisaye Yamamoto and Wakako Yamauchi, she has also found inspiration in various African American writers like Walter Mosley ("Devil in a Blue Dress") and Chester Himes ("A Rage in Harlem").

"African American writers are a model for me," said Hirahara. "Their journey has been a strong model."

Hirahara is currently working on her third Mas Arai story tentatively

titled "Snakeskin Shamisen." The book is set in the Okinawan community of South Bay, California and is scheduled for release this September.

Hirahara plans to continue writing in the mystery genre but is open to exploring other writing types including a more literary work in the future. She would also like to write a novel from a woman's perspective about JA women and their friendships with other JA women.

"Writing is the best part for me," she said. "It is the greatest joy." ■

"Gasa-Gasa Girl"

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## 2005 JACL Youth Conference Registration Begins

The JACL National Youth/Student Council recently announced its 2005 National Conference to be held at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, June 24-26. All youth/students between the ages of 13 to 26 from across America are invited to participate.

Under the theme "Strengthening our Asian American IDENTITY," the 2005 National Youth/Student Conference will delve into contemporary and relevant issues, including conceptions of beauty in America and their effects on the APA community.

Hear the first-hand experiences of AAs in the fields of entertainment, business, and politics. Learn the tricks of the trade for

college applications and how to maximize scholarship opportunities from current students attending schools nationwide.

You will also learn about the intricacies of the history of the Japanese American experience through first handed accounts. You can explore the network of civil action nationwide and how you can be involved. And you will discuss where we as a people are heading through Hapa and hate crime issues.

The conference will also include culturally enriching workshops ranging from taiko drumming, obon dancing, and karate, to calligraphy, tai chi, and easy Japanese cooking.

Early registration is \$40 for JACL youth members, and \$60 for non-JACL youth members (registration includes youth membership). Late

registration starts May 15, with a price increase of \$10. Contact the JACL National Youth/Student Council for possible funding opportunities.

Conference brochures with the schedule, workshop topics and registration form are available by request through JACL headquarters, regional offices, the district governors and Todd Sato, national youth/student council representative.

For more information, visit <http://www.jacl.org/youth>, or contact either Josh Spry at [youthchair@jacl.org](mailto:youthchair@jacl.org) or Todd Sato at [youthrep@jacl.org](mailto:youthrep@jacl.org). ■

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