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PACIFIC CITIZEN
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JACL, APA Groups Reach
Out to Hurricane Victims

Many lack the skill and
resources to navigate through
federal bureaucracy. Community
leaders are offering free legal help in April.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

For many Gulf Coast Asian Pacific Americans, "home" is a small space on the floor of a Buddhist Temple, a parked car or simply a pillow and blanket next to mountains of debris. Six months after hurricanes swallowed their world, the APA community is still struggling to get back on its feet. Like other affected communities, they are having trouble accessing federal support, but language barriers and cultural reticence further hamper their plight. For too many, just filling out forms is impossible.

Help, as it usually does, is coming from within the community. APA lawyers and groups including the JACL will be offering free legal assistance to help victims navigate through the bureaucracy and understand their due process rights. The first Legal Community Education Clinic is slated for April 1-4 at the Hong Kong Mall in New Orleans.

"There was a sense of outrage and frustration over the inequality," said Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) Staff Attorney Juliet K. Choi about the region's APA community. Since disaster struck, she has been dedicated to the recovery efforts traveling to the devastated regions and talking to victims.

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UIC Students Fight for an AA Studies Program

More than 16 years after students demand the establishment of an AA Studies program, UIC students are still waiting.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

Political science major Brandon Mita, 21, first took an Asian American Studies course at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) during his freshman year and immediately wanted to learn more about his AA roots. Unfortunately, his interest in AA Studies would have to be put on hold since UIC does not currently have an AA Studies program.

Mita's unrealized interest in learning more about AA history and culture is something UIC students have experienced for the past 16 years. Since 1990 students here have lobbied for the establishment of an AA Studies program to no avail. But this year the Asian American Coalition Committee (AACC)—a UIC student group—is stepping up efforts and refusing to take no for an answer.

"Many administrators and faculty already know the Ethnic Studies arguments and verbally support it, but they have failed to do anything about it," said Mita, 21, chairperson of AACC. He added, "Asian American Studies is not just for Asian American students. It's for everyone."

The AACC has produced a detailed proposal on the need to establish an AA Studies program at UIC and have demanded immediate

See UIC/Page 4

An ESPN Foul Up

In World Baseball Classic series, ESPN uses 'JAP' in box score during a Korea vs. Japan game.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

Baseball fan Roberto Ryukiishi Santiago, 29, had just sat down to watch a World Baseball Classic Korea vs. Japan game on ESPN when something caught his attention during the second inning.

In large capital letters the word "JAP" was scrawled across Santiago's television screen. ESPN was giving its viewers the box score before going to commercial and

had decided to use the derogatory term as the abbreviation for Japan.

"I was shocked. I couldn't believe it," said Santiago of Washington, D.C., a self-described
calls to ESPN, the sports channel's communication department released the following statement: "We made a mistake which was corrected after the first telecast. The JPN abbreviation will continue to be used going forward." The use of "Jap" has long historical roots as a racist term that was often used to disparage JAs during World War II. But even today many individuals and corporations are unaware that the term is offensive. Elly has long used the term to abbreviate Japanese on its popular auction site and recent bat­tings in Texas to rename "Jap" Roads and Lanes has gotten a lot of media exposure. Slip-ups like the recent ESPN incident illustrate that much more education still needs to take

ESPN (Continued from page 1)

"Baseball fan" he had decided to watch the game with his Korean roommate. "I'm shocked that anyone involved in mass media wouldn't know that 'Jap' is an offensive term."

"As a Japanese American I grew up hearing the intermittent, discrimination .. . the term is historically offensive," he said. "My grandmother's blood still boils whenever she hears it." Santiago immediately wrote a letter of complaint to ESPN encouraging the network to use the accepted "JPN" abbreviation for Japan but is still waiting for a response from the sports network.

"Subtle racism against Asians is not a well-publicized issue ... but some things we should not tolerate. Someone [at ESPN] wasn't thinking."

Robert Ryukichi Santiago

And he was not the only baseball fan to be shocked by ESPN's use of "Jap" that continued to appear throughout the entire game. Bill Kawaguchi of Salt Lake City, Utah, 63, had decided to take in the game when he too noticed derogatory word appear on his television screen Mar. 2. "Jap" is offensive. If ESPN doesn't know it, they are ignorant. I grew up being called a slant-eye "Jap," said Kawaguchi, a Vietnam War vet who does not want his grandchildren to have to put up with people using the offensive term.

The World Baseball Classic has been trumpeted as a first-time international event to promote the sport of baseball. In addition to Asian countries Taiwan, Korea, Chinese Taipei and China, the United States, Italy, Cuba, and Mexico are also taking part. The final round of games for the international tournament will take place this weekend on ESPN.

In response to Pacific Citizen's place, "It's unfortunate that ESPN used the abbreviation 'Jap' for Japan on the WBC game involving Japan," said John Toshima, National JACL, executive director. "My experience with ESPN has been that they're sensitive to this type of thing, so my guess is that they're not aware of what they're doing."

Both Santiago and Kawaguchi plan to watch the upcoming games and will continue to root for Japan. They hope that ESPN will learn from this incident and use the accepted "JPN" abbreviation for Japan.

"People take it for granted that 'Jap' is offensive," said Kawaguchi. "Some people are so callous in their way of thinking but they are offending my race."

Subtle racism against Asians is not a well-publicized issue," said Santiago. "But some things we should not tolerate. Someone [at ESPN] wasn't thinking."

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Pacific Citizen's Web site is already an ongoing development of the site so that it can be the best resource possible to move into the future.

The Pacific Citizen just began its online journey, and it needs your support to move into the future.

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National Postpones Monuments Decision

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

GRESHAM, Ore.—Dr. Herbert Hughes delivered thousands of local babies and was Gresham's longest-serving mayor. On the day he left office, he requested the city declared it "Dr. Hughes Day."

Leaders in Oregon's fourth-largest city planned to again put the spotlight on Hughes by voting to honor him with a monument. But the city council postponed a March 7 vote after getting criticism from Japanese Americans and others who read an article in The Oregonian newspaper that recounted Hughes' involvement with the anti-Japanese group during World War II.

Mayor Chuck Becker on March 7 called for a new task force to establish criteria for considering citizens and community leaders. Hughes appeared to have a brief history with Oregon Anti-Japanese Inc., a group formed to oppose people of Japanese ancestry returning to their Gresham-area homes and to keep Japanese workers or camps or serving in the U.S. military.

The head of Gresham's Historical Resources Council Advisory Committee, which is proposing the memorial, said the former mayor's contributions outweigh any perceived missteps and the new effort to honor his service should move forward.

David Lindstrom, who serves as the advisory committee chairman, said he spent two months in 2003 researching Hughes' involvement with the group. He could find only a single reference to Hughes in a newspaper story about the group and uncovered no further evidence of anti-Japanese sentiment by Hughes in talking to local residents who remember the era.

Lindstrom said even though there isn't a lot of hard evidence, his personal belief is that "because the (anti-Japanese) movement was so nasty, when something doesn't appear after, and knowing he was a very humane person, I feel he saw the fact it was wrong and quietly said goodbye to it."

The city's inquiries, however, were largely limited to newspaper archive research, and did not seek out first-hand accounts of Hughes ancestry. That, in the view ofJA advocates, was an oversight.

"When presented with a council, reacted to the groundwork," said Chip Larushe, treasurer of the JACL, Portland chapter.

It was a lot too much to ask for public support on March 7. But letters of concern were entered into the public record.

"No one wants to disparage him," said Rich Wasaki, another JACL leader. "But we need more information."

The proposed monument would be placed at the location of the doctor's former office. At first, it would include a brick marker, to be replaced after about $2,500 is raised with a boulder with a brass plaque attached to it.

Aspi Alliance Meetings Requested With CBS Radio and KLSX FM Over Carolla's Racist Remarks

LOS ANGELES—An alliance of media groups that represent APIA communities across the West Coast have requested a meeting with KLSX CBS Radio and CAROLLA to officially discuss several requests that were not addressed by CBS Radio.

"Carolla did apologize during his show," said Alyne Yonemoto, JACL PSWD governor. "However, he did not mention any of the remaining requests that have yet to be addressed."

It took almost one month for CBS Radio and Carolla to officially respond to the community's complaint. In the meantime, the APIA alliance launched a letter campaign demanding an apology and for the company to take certain steps to prevent a similar incident from happening in the future including disciplinary action for Carolla.

"It's clear that Carolla needs an education on the dangers of using racist stereotypes ... he has a history of utilizing racial slurs as part of his performance."

—Gay Aoki, MANAA

After several sponsors including many Fortune 500 companies dropped their advertisement with Adam Carolla's show, CBS executives met with Karen Narasaki of the Asian American Justice Center in Wash., D.C. and have expressed willingness to meet with APIA representatives from the West Coast.

"The support of these sponsors is critical to changing attitudes. Without these companies voicing their concerns to the executives at CBS, I highly doubt the apology Carolla issued. We appreciate the companies' support and respect for the APIA communities," said Grace Yoo, executive director of the Korean American Coalition.

The alliance hopes to meet with CBS Radio and CAROLLA to discuss policies addressing racist stereotypes, to implement sensitivity training for all executives and employees and for CBS Radio, KLSX-FM, and CAROLLA to pursue educational programs regarding race and ethnic stereotypes.

"Carolla needs an education on the dangers of using racist stereotypes," said Gay Aoki, founding president of Media Action Network for Asian Americans (MANAA). "MANAA has been monitoring Carolla since he has a history of utilizing racial slurs as part of his performance. We've sent more letters of complaint to Adam Carolla than anyone else in our 14-year history."

Rep. Becerra Introduces Bill to Study JLA Internment


In an interview with the Associated Press before addressing the American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee's New Jersey chapter Mar. 11, Yee said one of the things that makes Americans story of utilizing racial slurs as part of his performance."

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Rep. Becerra Introduces Bill to Study JLA Internment

Between December 1941 and February 1948, approximately 2,300,000, men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry were subjected to what amounts to mass incarceration and deportation from 13 Latin American and Pacific Islands countries to the United States. The U.S. government orchestrated and financed the deportation of JLAIs as to be used as hostages in exchange for American hostages in the Middle East. They were held in internment camps, which were sometimes referred to as "the camps of the Americas.

An identical version of Rep. Becerra's legislation was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (HI). Joining Sen. Inouye on the bill were Sens. Ted Stevens (AK), Patrick Leahy (VT) and Carl Levin.

"Further studies of the event surrounding the deportation and incarceration of Japanese Latin Americans is both merited and necessary," said Rep. Becerra.
Debts in the New Orleans area were prevalent this March, six months after the hurricanes. Most APAs continue to rebuild despite being homeless and lacking federal resources. Tim (right) struggles to rebuild his boat. He has had no help from the community.

NATIONAL NEWS
JACL 2006: An ‘Oasis’

The Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa is a four-diamond resort that includes two 18-hole golf courses. The Gila River Casino is also just a short boat ride away.

The National JACL Executive Director John Tateishi has secured a great convention rate of just $95 per night for this four-star resort. Room rates at the Wild Horse Pass Resort this time of year are more than quadruple our convention rate ($350-$450). If you have either seen parts of the whole show of "Jeopardy" and/or "Family Feud," imagine the categories are all about JACL or Japanese American community related. I guarantee that these games will test your knowledge and you will have a fun time.

Enter the resort, you will immediately notice the beautiful murals on the high ceiling. Straight ahead through the large windows, you will get a glimpse of the large pool, which features a water slide that is a replica of the Casa Grande Ruins. Also, you will notice a canal boat that takes guests from the resort to the nearby Gila River Casinos (if you enjoy slots, blackjack, poker and bingo). There is also the Koll Equine Center on the property and the nearby Huhugam Heritage Center, which is a wonderful place that tells the stories of the history, cultures and language of the peoples of the Gila River Indian Community (Akimel O’odham and Pee Posh), and honors the ancient Huuhugam.

Now, we all know that our biennial JACL national conventions are all about getting together for the national council meetings but we also realize that after meeting all day on Thursday and Saturday, it will be a nice treat to stay at a beautiful resort where we can enjoy good food and fun activities.

JACL 2006: An ‘Oasis’

Do you know what you are doing over the summer? I have an idea on how to spend one week of your summer vacation. Come out to the Biennial Convention in Arizona. If you are wondering what is going to happen for the youth other then soaking up the Arizona sun by the pool then keep reading.

Some of the activities that are being planned will test your knowledge of JACL and the Japanese American community. I know that you have either seen parts of the whole show of "Jeopardy" and/or "Family Feud." Imagine the categories are all about JACL or Japanese American community related. I guarantee that these games will test your knowledge and you will have a fun time.

Other activities that are being planned will not test your knowledge but it will test other skills you have acquired, like using hashi. One of these games is the Hashi Race, where the objective is to get all the anko beans from one end to the other end. Another fun activity will use a classic character: Godzilla. This is where your creative side can come out with dandy candy and toothpicks to create your own version of Godzilla.

Blessing, Dedication Ceremony for Bainbridge Island JA Memorial Set For Mar. 30

Leaders from six different faiths will consecrate and dedicate the final phase of the "Nidoto Nai Yoni - Let it not happen again" Japanese American Memorial on Bainbridge Island.

The Mar. 30 special ceremony will be held from 10-11 a.m. at the site of the former Eagledale Ferry landing on Bainbridge Island.

The Bainbridge Island/North Kitsap Interfaith Council — whose organization seven years ago initially proposed creating a memorial to honor the first Americans of Japanese ancestry to be forcibly removed from their homes and displaced to internment camps — will be joined by members of the Bainbridge Island Buddhist Temple; the Islamic Center of Washington, Idtriss Mosque; the Kol Shalom congregation; the Tsukabi Grand Shrine of America & Tsukabi Kannagara Jinja; the Suquamish Tribe; the Seattle Baptist Church; and the Unitarian Universalist Church.

This American story began on March 30, 1942, when 227 Bainbridge Island men, women and children were gathered up by armed U.S. Army soldiers and taken to the Eagledale Ferry Landing. There they boarded the ferry Keltloke and departed on a lonely journey with an unknown destination and fate. These Bainbridge Island families were the first of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans — two-thirds of them U.S. citizens — to be exiled from the West Coast.

The National Parks Service has completed a two-year study that could lead to the memorial becoming a satellite unit of the National Parks System. To date, the $5 million memorial project has raised more than $1.1 million for development and $1 million for land. A scale model of the proposed national memorial will be on display at the event.
Last Call for Submissions for San Jose Japantown Book

Later this year the San Jose Japantown History Book will be available featuring a collection of images, stories and information about one of the last remaining Japantowns in the United States. This will be the last chance for anyone wanting to contribute materials or photos to this project to contact the committee.

For the past several years, the team of Curt Palafox, Jim Nagareda, Janice Oda and Ward Shimizu has been conducting interviews, archiving photos, and developing the 100-plus years of the only Japantown that exists in its original location. Readers will enjoy the comprehensive written history and the largest collection of unprecedented photos from public and private collections.

The participation of the community is essential to the success of this legacy project. The project committee is still looking for photos in and around San Jose Japantown, news clippings, and family documents which illustrate the people, places and events that distinguish this community.

Materials can be scanned and returned within a short amount of time. To date, numerous recorded interviews, hundreds of photos and countless hours of research have already been completed. Proceeds from this project will benefit the Japanese American Center Memorial Project DOR Dinner.

Fresno Hosts Pinedale Assembly Center Memorial Project DOR Dinner

A Day of Remembrance dinner sponsored by the Pinedale Assembly Center Memorial Project Committee to remember the forced exclusion and detention of Japanese Americans during World War II was held recently in Fresno, Calif.

The Pinedale Committee hopes to establish an appropriate memorial at the site of the former Pinedale Assembly Center. The committee’s fund-raising goal for the dinner was to raise $15,000 towards the cost to acquire State Historic Landmark No. 134 and to develop and display interpretive materials about internment, the Nisei soldiers, and Redress at the site. With generous sponsors including County Bank and United Security Bank, the committee raised over $20,000.

James Ardati, president of the Fifth District Court of Appeal and chair of the Pinedale Advisory Committee, was the keynote speaker. Justice Ardati has done extensive research about the internment of Japanese Americans and the accomplishments of the JA soldiers during WWII.

“Marking the Pinedale Assembly Center is important … to ensure that the lesson of Order 9066 never be lost to the shadows of history else how will we aspire to not repeat history’s failures?” said Ardati.

Joan Conway, district manager for Rep. Juan Arambula, presented a resolution from four State Senators and four Assemblymembers prepared by Sen. Chuck Poochigian. The Pinedale Assembly Center Memorial Project Committee is planning another Day of Remembrance dinner to be held Feb. 17, 2007.

White House Commission Encourages AAPI Seniors to Call Medicare Prescription Coverage Multilingual Helpline

The President’s Advisory Commission for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders is on the road to urge AAPI seniors nationwide to take advantage of the new Medicare Prescription Drugs coverage.

“The Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization Act of 2003 is the most comprehensive change to the Medicare system since its inception in 1965,” said Jimmy Lee, executive director for the White House Initiative for AAPIs. “Many people who don’t have prescription drug coverage are unaware that they can save thousands of dollars on the cost of their medications under the new Medicare Part D Benefit.”

Everyone on Medicare is eligible to join a drug plan under Medicare Prescription Drugs coverage (Part D). Under Part D, there are many drug plans to choose from and for the AAPI populations, this can be somewhat complicated without someone’s assistance.

The Commission strongly encourages AAPI Medicare beneficiaries to call the NAPCA Multilingual Helpline for individual assistance in finding and enrolling in the most suitable plan before the enrollment deadline on May 15.

The National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) is a national nonprofit organization and a leading advocate for Asian Pacific American seniors. The NAPCA Helpline was set up specifically to help AAPI seniors navigate through the Medicare Part D process so that they can have access to the best plans for their specific situation.

Over 20,000 seniors have called the NAPCA Helpline and get the assistance they needed from bilingual counselors in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and English.

“We’ve helped a number of API seniors who will save anywhere from a couple of hundred dollars to a couple of thousand dollars a year on their prescription drugs,” said Clayton Forge, president and CEO of NAPCA. “In one case NAPCA helped a Vietnamese senior enroll in a plan that will reduce the monthly cost of her five prescriptions from over $300 to just $16.”

Reserve a Seat for the April 29 Manzanar Pilgrimage

Seat reservations on the 60 passenger air-conditioned bus for the April 29 Manzanar Pilgrimage are now being accepted.

On that morning, the bus will depart from Little Tokyo, Los Angeles at 6:30 a.m. All passengers are expected to be at the departure point by 6:15 a.m. They will return to the same place at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Participants must bring their own lunch, drink and snacks as there are no facilities to purchase food at Manzanar National Historic Site. The bus will have restroom accommodations and water will be provided at the site.

The theme for this year’s program is “Footsteps in the Hallway: The Effect of Internment on America’s Youth.”

To reserve a seat, make a pre-paid, non-refundable fee of $25 payable to the “Manzanar Committee.” Payments must be mailed before April 9. For address and information, call: 818/894-7723.


Fresno Hosts Pinedale Assembly Center Memorial Project DOR Dinner

Joan Conway (center), District Manager for Assemblyman Juan Arambula, presents a resolution to Judge Dale Ikeda (left) and Justice James Ardaiz of the 5th Court of Appeal. Photo courtesy of Robert Shintaku

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The National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) is a national nonprofit organization and a leading advocate for Asian Pacific American seniors. The NAPCA Helpline was set up specifically to help AAPI seniors navigate through the Medicare Part D process so that they can have access to the best plans for their specific situation.

Over 20,000 seniors have called the NAPCA Helpline and get the assistance they needed from bilingual counselors in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and English.

“We’ve helped a number of API seniors who will save anywhere from a couple of hundred dollars to a couple of thousand dollars a year on their prescription drugs,” said Clayton Forge, president and CEO of NAPCA. “In one case NAPCA helped a Vietnamese senior enroll in a plan that will reduce the monthly cost of her five prescriptions from over $300 to just $16.”

Reserve a Seat for the April 29 Manzanar Pilgrimage

Seat reservations on the 60 passenger air-conditioned bus for the April 29 Manzanar Pilgrimage are now being accepted.

On that morning, the bus will depart from Little Tokyo, Los Angeles at 6:30 a.m. All passengers are expected to be at the departure point by 6:15 a.m. They will return to the same place at approximately 6:30 p.m.

Participants must bring their own lunch, drink and snacks as there are no facilities to purchase food at Manzanar National Historic Site. The bus will have restroom accommodations and water will be provided at the site.

The theme for this year’s program is “Footsteps in the Hallway: The Effect of Internment on America’s Youth.”

To reserve a seat, make a pre-paid, non-refundable fee of $25 payable to the “Manzanar Committee.” Payments must be mailed before April 9. For address and information, call: 818/894-7723.

China's Ice Swimmers Splash Their Way Through Winter

By AUDRA ANG
Associated Press Writer

China's Ice Swimmers Splash their way through Winter.

By GREGG BELL
AP Sports Writer

In China's Ice Swimmers Splash their way through Winter. River, part of a twice-daily show where performers ham it up on diving she beat them in a competition in the 1990s.

Wu Jing, the 52-year-old "Queen of Ice Swimming," said the activity had become more popular as Chinese cities became more westernized and people sought new ways to relax and socialize.
Mainland’s Kansha Project at Bat - ‘In Good Conscience’

NorCal scores high with publishing

Mainland Nisei culled their memorandum people who went to bat for us and stories about them that project “because many of us Nisei

Conscience: Supporting Japanese

those who extended kindness to us this monumental book, “In Good

praised the book as “a most worth-

308 pages, authored by Shizue

community during their wartime

Berkeley, Calif., spent three years
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90 percent of crops in California
mass removal of JAs would seri-

Earl donated

Her grandmother’s barn in Cedar

Rapids, Iowa, had been a stop on

Minton of Mountain View that

Altos recalled the prewar relation-

The children attended school with

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our business card in each issue for 22 issues is $15 per line, three-line minimum. Larger type (12 pt.) counts

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Bismark, ND

The business card of companies listed on the inside back cover of the July 27, 1997, issue must be submitted directly to Pacific Citizen, 1075 Third Ave., San Francisco, CA 94109, for inclusion on the back cover. They are not available for sale. To advertise in PACIFIC CITIZEN, call (415) 389-6721.

Ruby Yoshino Schaar Playwright Award

Rubyo Yoshino Schaar Playwright Award

Playwrights of Japanese descent with American or Canadian citizenship are encouraged to apply for the Ruby Yoshino Schaar Playwright Award, established by the New York JACL.

The Ruby Yoshino Schaar Biennial Playwright Award was established in 1996 to recognize and sup-

At the start of her career in

in musical programs in her commu-

of Japanese ancestry.

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"Harry Honda: Very truly Yours"

Mainland’s Kansha Project at Bat - ‘In Good Conscience’

To borrow some baseball terms, there were some extraordinary people who went to bat for us after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Mainland Nisei called their memo-

ries and stories about them that became the "Kansha Project." In telling these stories, MIS NorCal scores high with publishing this monumental book, "In Good Conscience: Supporting Japanese Americans during the Internment," 308 pages, authored by Shizue Seigel. MIS NorCal assumed the project "because many of us Nisei during WWII volunteered from the very internment camps where we were unjustly incarcerated," Col. Harry Fukasaku (ret.) writes in the preface. "We dedicate the book to those who extended kindness to us and our families when we needed it the most."

Here are some names that are relatively unknown to this column. Dr. Roger Daniels of Cincinnati praised the book as "a most worthwhile effort as it focuses on the al-

but-forgotten few outsiders who stood by the Japanese American community during their wartime ordeal."

Rocce & Gladys Bell of Berkeley, Calif., spent three years at Topaz with their children, ages 6 to 14 at the time. Being on the War Board, Rocce knew with nearly 90 percent of crops in California grown on Japanese farms, any mass removal of JAs would seri-

ally impact the nation's supply of

American contributions in the

Pacific to the war effort," Harry

noted.

For a copy of "In Good Conscience," contact AACP, P.O. Box 1807, 529 E. Third Ave., San Mateo, CA 94401, soft cover ($26.95) and limited hard cover ($39.95), resident CA sales tax, shipping and handling extra, 800-0754-2242.

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Megumi Yokota was last seen waving goodbye to a friend while on the way back to her Niigata, Japan home—then she was gone. Her mysterious journey into the unknown, now almost into its 30th year, captivated the attention of and strained relations between two countries.

But when Chris Sheridan and Patty Kim first came across the story in a newspaper snippet, they saw more than a sensational mystery steeped with politics—they saw human drama.

“There are real people involved,” said Sheridan. “A 13-year-old child. I think about the headspace I was in when I was that age and it’s every parent’s worst nightmare, but for a child of that age who’s afraid of the boogeyman figure that snatches us from our bed in the middle of the night ... that’s terrifying.”

Megumi, a girl who loved to sing and laugh, was one of the 13 Japanese citizens abducted between 1977-82 by North Korean spies to teach language and culture. Her life and her long-suffering family were side notes to the political drama until Sheridan and Kim focused their cameras on the Yokotas’ plight for the documentary, “Abduction: The Mysterious Journey of Megumi Yokota.”

“Her parents describe her as the light of their lives. She was the oldest of two younger brothers, who are twins,” said Sheridan, a Washington, D.C.-based television producer and filmmaker. “Her parents said when she disappeared, the dinners were quieter ... she’s one of those kids who you know would’ve been successful and loyal to her family.

“Here was this little family dragged into this political web of deceit. I think if I were to present this story as a Hollywood script people would say it could never happen. But it did,” he said.

Above all, they wanted to bring this story to a Western audience. To make, “Abduction,” the husband and wife team traveled to and from Japan over the course of a year.

“We looked at our credit cards to see how much room we had to go on press conferences and formal interviews. We had to plan for this film and that that met Chris and they were married,” Campion said. “Patty and Chris said, ‘Can we send you some material to have a look at?’ And when Patty sent it, I was very excited by the material because it was unusually beautifully shot and had really captured my attention, the subject of it.”

The documentary is set up to allow the audience to go through the same emotional highs and lows as the subject involved. Questions of Megumi’s fate continually resurface in heartbreaking interviews and shocking revelations. To peel away the layers of the story, the filmmakers formed a deep connection with the Yokotas.

“The families were open to talking, but their concept of a documentary was so different. They were used to press conferences and formal interviews. We had to tell them ‘No. We want the in-between stuff. Americans aren’t going to connect with you if you’re dressed in a suit and tie sitting down at a table. They want to see you as you really are.’ At first, it was really difficult for them to understand, but they were able to relax and we would go into their home a lot to film those ‘in-between’ moments,” said Sheridan.

They also convinced a Japanese television network to open up its archives, which provides some of the key moments in the documentary including footage of the Yokotas making a plea on a missing person’s television show for their daughter’s return. Sheridan and Kim popped the tape in and the emotions overflowed.

“If we didn’t get the archival footage there wouldn’t be a film. It’s really indicative of the roller coaster you go on as filmmakers,” he said.

Over the years, there has been much speculation about what happened to Megumi. Stories have emerged about how she may have been locked in the room of a ship bound for North Korea where she hysterically scratched at the door until her fingernails broke off. Others claimed to have seen her alive in North Korea, but the fate of the little girl seen in one haunting photo wishfully looking into the snowy distance is still wrapped up in mystery.

“The fact that a child was taken illustrates the brutality and the criminal act. Who would do that?” said Sheridan.

Filmmakers Chris Sheridan and Patty Kim will participate in a panel discussion at the San Francisco Asian American Film Festival Mar. 20 and screen “Abduction” Mar. 21. For more info: www.asianamericanfilmfestival.org and www.safarinmedia.net.

Photos courtesy: Safarifilms
California

San Francisco

Chandler, Ariz.

East Coast

New York

Philadelphia

Washington, D.C.

Pacific Northwest

Portland

Midwest

GRANDA

San, May 28—Annie: Spring Pilgrimage, 11 a.m. arrival at Annie's camp site and ceremony, noon Granda High School and programs, 1:30 p.m. Annie's museum tour; potluck with refreshments provided by friends of Annie; $2/person. Info: Jan Hada, 302/237-2199.

Paci fi c Northwest

PORTLAND

Through Mar. 20—Exhibit, Out of the Desert, Art and Craft of the Internment; Tues.-Sat. 11:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sun. 12:30-5 p.m.; Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, 121 NW 2nd Ave.; exhibit features a variety of arts and crafts that were made by JAs while confined to the internment camps during WWII. Info: 503/224-1458 or www.oregon Nik lel ogy.org.

Northern California

SACRAMENTO

Sat., Apr. 8—Lecture, "Japanese Design Aesthetics for Your Home and Wardrobe" 10 a.m.; Parkview Presbyterian Church, 727 T St.; $5 donation; talk show and sale of decorative pieces will follow between 11:30 a.m. Info: 916/467-2841 or www.juno newbury.com.

San Francisco

Sat., Mar. 18—Tribute, "Carrying On: A Tribute to Japanese American Family-owned Businesses" in Celebration of Japan's Centennial; 6:30 p.m.; Japanese Friendship Garden, Kelley Park, 1000 Senter Rd.; Featuring Fuy Asayai and Wendy Wright; free and open to the public. Info: sponsored by the Poetry Center San Jose, the John Tanikei Hallo Society and the City of San Jose, JNWS. Info: Roger Abe, 408/777-5783.

Southern California

CALABASAS

Sun., May 7—Hawaiian Feather Lei Making; 2:30-6 p.m. Soka University, 2600 W. Madison Ave.; serves as a prerequisite for three workshops on July 2, 9, 16 and open to the public. Info: 918/678-3341 or natgearden@soka.edu.

LOS ANGELES

Sat., Mar. 18—Book reading and lecture, "The Life of Isamu Noguchi"; RESCHEDULED FROM FEB. 19; 2 p.m.; JANNF: Mano Otsu and Peter Otsu, who collaborated on the biography, will talk about the life and times of Isamu Noguchi. Info: 213/823-0414 or www.jannf.org.

Through Mar. 19—Swaney Todd at the East West Players: 8 p.m. Thurs., Fri. and Sat. 2 p.m. Sat. and Sun. $40 for orchestra, $35 for balcony. Tickets: 213/823-7000 x 520 or www.eastwestplayers.org.

Fri., Mar. 24—CAUSE 13th Annual Dinner; 6 p.m. reception, 7 p.m. dinner; Los Angeles Marriott Downtown, 333 S. Figueroa St. Sponsorships available. Info: 213/356-0583.

MONTEREY PARK

Sat-Sun., April 22-23—Monterey Park Cherry Blossom Festival; 11-6 a.m.; Barnes Park, 350 S. McPeek Ave. Info: Dan Costley, 626/397-2541 or ci.montereypark.ca.us/home/index.asp?sid=812.

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

Sun., May 7—1st Annual JACL Golf Tournament; noon shotgun start; Tepus Creek Golf Course; sponsorships still available. Info: Kerry Kaneshi, kkaneichi@aol.com, PSW Office, 213/823-4671 or www.jac lwm.org/golf.htm.

WEST COVINA

Sat., May 6—2006 Cherry Blossom Festival; noon-7 p.m.; West Covina Civic Center Courtyard, 1444 W. Garvey Ave; free parking. Info: 626/397-5783.

 registration is being accepted for the Pacific Southwest District JACL's 1st Golf Tournament. Call 213/823-4471 for more info.

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IN MEMORIAM

Former Gardena City Councilman Mas Fukai Passes

By Pacific Citizen Staff

"He was synonymous with somebody who was somebody," said friend and colleague David Shimizu. "He had an interview with the Daily Breeze. "Everyone knew Mas Fukai. If you needed something you could call him. ""

Fukai was born on Jan. 2, 1927, in the city of Gardena. He and his family owned a farm prior to World War II when they were uprooted and sent to an internment camp in Gila, Arizona.

While in camp he joined the U.S. Army and rose to the rank of corporal. He returned to Gardena in 1947. He went on to enjoy a lengthy career in the insurance industry. He first ran for Gardena City Council in 1974. Fukai is survived by his wife Yuri, son Rick and daughter Janice. Private funeral services were held.

All the towns are in California except as noted.

CARL AND KIYOKO COMPTON, Darien, Conn., June 25; survived by daughter, Susan; son, Alan; brothers, Robert and David; and sisters, Patricia; and grandchildren, Cullen and Jesse.

KENNETH AND JOAN MADISON, Bakersfield, June 25; survived by family.

CORA AND DON GOUCH, Buena Park, June 25; survived by sons, Steve and Jeff; daughter, Joy; and grandchildren, Lisa and Josh.

GWENDOLYN AND MIKE HESS, San Dimas, June 25; survived by sons, Todd and David; daughter, Pam; and grandchildren, Michael, Matt, Brian, and Jenny.

EDITH AND JULIAN SENECA, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by husband, Julian; son, Allen; and grandchildren, Sydney and Fred.

RICHARD AND BARBARA JUDSON, Burbank, June 25; survived by son, Richard; daughter, Barbara; and grandchildren, Jeremy and Emily.

FRANK AND DOROTHY KONG, Torrance, June 25; survived by children, Ramona and Frank; and grandchildren, Jennifer and Dylan.

BARBARA AND BILL HAYASHI, Torrance, June 25; survived by son, David; daughter, Linda; and grandchildren, David and Michael.

ALICE AND CHARLES TAKEUCHI, Santa Ana, June 25; survived by son, Jim; daughter, Diane; and grandchildren, Sarah and Andrew.

MARILYN AND WILLIAM TAYLOR, Torrance, June 25; survived by daughter, Linda; and grandchildren, Casey and Sarah.

HARLAN AND PATRICIA MARSHALL, Bakersfield, June 25; survived by children, Marlene (Marc) Akaha and David; and grandchildren, Scott and Steven.

CHAD AND KATHY SYLVESTER, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, Chris; daughter, Susie; and grandchildren, Davis and Lila.

FRANK AND BERTHA KIMOTO, West Covina, June 25; survived by sons, Steven and Gary; daughter, Diane; and grandchildren, Michelle, Emily and Benjamin.

EDWARD AND LINDA KUROKAWA, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, Edward; daughter, Linda; and grandchildren, Robert and Cheryl.

ANNA AND KEN KIMURA, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by sons, Paul and Ken; and grandchildren, Emily and Katelyn.

LAWRENCE AND MILLIE YAMADA, Gardena, June 25; survived by son, James; daughter, Eunice; and grandchildren, Paul and Christopher.

JOSEPH AND TOBIAS MURASAKI, Torrance, June 25; survived by daughter, Yoko; sons, Joseph, John and Jon; and grandchildren, Jocelyn, Christopher and Janet.

HARRY AND KATHERINE KAMIYA, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by children, John, Sharon and Perry; and grandchildren, Matthew, Greg and Claire.

FRANK AND MAYE MURAKAMI, Gardena, June 25; survived by sons, Donald and Michael; daughter, Sherry; and grandchildren, Matthew, Kenji and Laura.

KATSUMI AND HOMA SHINDO, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, Yasuo; daughter, Yoko; and grandchildren, Yuki and Kaori.

MILLS AND BONNIE HEAD, Buena Park, June 25; survived by son, Robert; daughter, Barbara; and grandchildren, Christine and Jennifer.

KISSU AND JOSEPH KOBAYASHI, Torrance, June 25; survived by son, Eiji; daughter, Tomoko; and grandchildren, Yoko, Tsubasa and Atsuko.

HARVEY AND TERESA KAMINO, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, Gary; daughter, Karen; and grandchildren, Dylan and Robert.

DAVID AND DOROTHY KATO, Torrance, June 25; survived by son, James; daughter, Carol; and grandchildren, Matthew and David.

HAROLD AND CHERRY SELIG, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, Brian; daughter, Carolyn; and grandchildren, David, Sarah, and Andrew.

OLGA AND GARY MURAKAMI, Torrance, June 25; survived by children, Michael and השא; and grandchildren, Jesse, Mimi,桝sy, and Theo.

DAVID AND CAROL HONGO, Torrance, June 25; survived by children, Elizabeth and Robert; and grandchildren, Crystal and Christian.

JAMES AND JOAN METZ, Torrance, June 25; survived by son, Kevin; daughter, Cindy; and grandchildren, Kyle and Andy.

STUART AND MARILYN KIM, Santa Monica, June 25; survived by daughter, Joan; and grandchildren, Ryan and Andrew.

HAROLD AND MARILYN YAMAGA, Torrance, June 25; survived by son, Jerry; daughter, Mary; and grandchildren, Lisa and John.

FRED AND REINE KUJIRA, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by children, Robert, Gordon and Karen; and grandchildren, Jamie, Andrew, Kimberley and Matthew.

DAVID AND MAE KANEKO, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, David; daughter, Jane; and grandchildren, Matthew, David and Laura.

THOMAS AND TAEYOUNG KIM, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by son, Michael; daughter, Cheryl; and grandchildren, Shireen and Kristyn.

DAVID AND MIRIAM KOBAYASHI, Los Angeles, June 25; survived by sons, Mark and Michael; daughter, Karen; and grandchildren, Jeff, John and Ron.

A. RODERICK AND NANCY MORGAN, Gardena, June 25; survived by son, David; daughter, Nancy; and grandchildren, Andrew and Samantha.

DOROTHY AND WALTER KAMIE, Gardena, June 25; survived by children, Mike, Jerry, and Susie; and grandchildren, Gaylene, Susie and Emily.

GREEN AND JUNE KIM, Gardena, June 25; survived by son, Michael; daughter, Marcia; and grandchildren, Brian and Sarah.

JIM AND ROSE KAWANO, Gardena, June 25; survived by son, John; daughter, Jean; and grandchildren, Matthew, Eric, and Ann.
THEATER (Continued from page 1)

"Aki Asakura, a Nisei who was born and raised in Little Tokyo, used to go to the Linda Lea with his parents to see the benshi films. 

"They would read scripts and make sound effects with drums and a lady would play the shamisen," he said. "My dad used to take the family to see Japanese movies on Friday nights." At that time, chundabusu (samurai) films were all the rage.

These days, cars just drive past the dilapidated building at 251 S. Main St. without a second look. But for many former patrons the Linda Lea is more than a movie house, it was a cultural gathering place and with the new redevelopment efforts the theater may come back to life again.

New York based ImaginAsian Entertainment, Inc. in partnership with Cinema Properties Group in Costa Mesa, Calif. announced last month that it was going to turn the historic theater into a modern Asian American theater and cultural center. The $2 million 8,000-square-foot project, which is scheduled to be completed this summer, will include a 300-stadium seat theater, a pan-Asian food cafe and karaoke rooms that double as meeting rooms.

The ImaginAsian Center, as it will be called, will be the city's only theater dedicated to screening Asian Pacific American films and other events. The company has expanded to other forms of media including radio, Internet as well as home video and film distribution. The ImaginAsian Theater in midtown New York is also a key destination for APA film festivals and other live events. For the recent Oscar night, the New York theater was packed with community members who came to see APAs like Ang Lee vie for a golden statue.

"For me it was like an umbilical cord to Japan," said Jim Matsuoka, a Nisei. Asakura, a Nisei who was born and raised in Little Tokyo, said Kirst. For those two decades it was one of only three Japanese language movie houses in Los Angeles. The theater may have also functioned as a burlesque house, but its full history is yet to be unraveled.

"We're about expanding Asian American presence," said Kirst, emphasizing other real estate. They purchased the Linda Lea while scouting for the Linda Lea while scouting for a space in the 1960s, said Kirst. For two decades it was one of only three Japanese language movie houses in Los Angeles. The theater may have also functioned as a burlesque house, but its full history is still shrouded in sensationalism and mystery.

Matsuoka's cultural history.

"I would agree that ImaginAsian's presence will help preserve the historic cultural neighborhood of Little Tokyo, and it's impact could possibly extend out to Chinatown," said Ron Feng of the Little Tokyo Service Center, a community development group which had been involved in fundraising efforts to renovate the theater.

"Of course it was a romanticized version of a Japan that didn't exist anymore ... but it was enjoyable watching the variety of films that

"They would read scripts and make sound effects with drums and a lady would play the shamisen," he said. "My dad used to take the family to see Japanese movies on Friday nights." At that time, shundaburu (samurai) films were all the rage.

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