Retiree Heads to Iraq

Dr. Richard Asami decided to come out of retirement to do his part in the current Iraq war.

By CAROLINE AYOAGI-STOM

Executive Editor

When Col. Richard Asami first learned that a soldier from the 34th Infantry Division currently serving in Iraq had been killed while on duty, the news hit the 71-year-old dentist particularly hard.

Asami had just returned from Iraq himself earlier that same month after serving in the same division.

Although Asami had never met Sergeant Kyle Randall Miller who was killed June 29, the Fresno native felt his death deeply and realized it could have been any of the men in Iraq he had served with while in the service. He immediately decided to take up their offer to serve in Iraq.

Asami retired in 1999 after serving in the U.S. Army for 40 years, mostly in the reserve units and the National Guard. His service has taken him across the country, twice to Korea, Italy and to Germany. But when the offer to serve in Iraq came up, he dusted off his dental tools and headed to Fort Bliss, Texas to sign up.

For 90 days from March to the end of June of this year Asami served his country, mainly looking after the dental health of his fellow soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division. Working closely with U.S. Army dentists, he performed the necessary procedures to maintain the dental health of his fellow soldiers.

When he recently received an email from the U.S. Army asking Dr. Richard Asami to once again serve in Iraq, he immediately decided to take up the offer.

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Rhode Island's V-J Day Holiday Called Discriminatory

Critics say the state celebrates the U.S. victory over Japan, but not Germany.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

The commemoration was not as jubilant as it was in 1945, but Rhode Island residents and veterans groups gathered Aug. 14 to mark the day Americans learned that the Japanese had surrendered, ending World War II. It is a tradition that has endured since 1948 and Rhode Island is the only state that still celebrates the holiday.

The holiday is commonly referred to as Victory over Japan Day, or V-J Day, because of its association with the Japanese surrender. Critics say it’s discriminatory, and would like to eliminate the holiday or at least remove any reference to the victory over Japan.
Readers Continue to Debate Watada

If the JACL is not one of the many civil and human rights organizations in the United States to speak out about the injustices done by our government, please name me the proper organization(s) recognized by you and the White House to petition.

Today's JACL is responding almost exactly as it did in regards to the 63 men of conscience who were tried in the Federal Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming during WW II. That trial too had to do with an ungodly act committed by our government.

Lt. Watada's civil and human rights to refuse an unlawful order according to the Nuremberg Trials are to be tried by a military court. Any organization or individual with a conscience or love for others would wholeheartedly support any one of Lt. Watada's courage.

If the JACL to have any respect and honor for the US Constitution, it would pay attention to the JACL Honolulu chapter.

"The JACL's Hawai'i, Honolulu chapter supports Lt. Ehren Watada's thought that he might refuse an order, which we believe, is a staunch defense of the Constitution. If the JACL at Hawai'i's primary mission of protecting the civil and human rights of all." - Hiroshi Sekiguchi

VPW lifetime member

Thank you for the thoughtful statement issued by National JACL on July 20.

As a retired Marine officer and a former Marine judge advocate you have captured my sentiments and those of many others in Hawai'i.

As a vet having served combat tours in Vietnam, the statement also is supportive of the thousands of Asian and minority soldiers, sailors, Marines and airmen in Iraq or are about to deploy.

Well done.

Henry Nakata
Kingston, CA

A division of opinions exists among Japanese-Americans regarding Lt. Ehren Watada's refusal to serve in a war he believes to be illegal and immoral.

I am George Aki, a retired marine. I had the distinct privilege of serving as a chaplain with the 442nd Combat Team during World War II. Working with the chaplains in Camp Ashfield and Yamashita was a memorable joy.

I wish to pen my thoughts on Lt. Ehren Watada and his decision not to deploy to Iraq. He honestly believes that the war against Iraq is not only illegal but immoral. For anyone to come to this decision and proclaim it publicly took courage for there are many who only believe in a side of the war.

Lt. Watada came to this conclusion after a long soul searching study of the facts, speaking with so many people, especially with his parents. He knew definitely that this would end his Army career with a property court martial.

I surmise that the lieutenant is a fine person with a high IQ. An excellent soldier. For an Army officer to come to this conclusion and swear by it is truly amazing. Yes, there are many who oppose this war but few who would stand and be counted to it publicly and to jeopardize his own career.

Lt. Watada has taken a position asserting a higher loyalty than patriotism, which is the guarantee of our American principles. His refusal to participate in a war that he throws around “honor” and “loyalty” so casually and conveniently when he clearly possesses neither. His supports admire his “courage” while I find this OFFICER’s “lack of courage” harmful and destructive to military order and morale while providing misleading publicity for use by our enemies.

For whatever reason, Watada, VOLUNTEER leader of young American men and women, got cold feet, chickened out and abandoned his unit prior to deployment. But to do so by violating the principles of law and legal and media support to masquerade his desire to escape out of harm’s ways is even more disgusting, despicable and unforgivable.

Watada’s actions have brought permanent shame and disgrace to the superb reputation of Asian American veterans, past and present, who have served with pride and distinction, many giving the ultimate sacrifice for their country. Nothing he says now can reverse the damage already done.

You definitely don’t speak for me Watada; but you may be right about the “quiet, obedient Japanese” stereotype you label us in your interview. The silence from all JAs is very disturbing and troublesome. Why isn’t there a clear and vocal response in opposition to Watada’s actions? Will those of us who feel strongly against his behavior please come out and write to the P.C. or JACL? Or is this just a handy card of us Spartans who are willing to stand up to Watada’s unjustified, anarchic, anti-America propaganda campaign?

Haruyo Yamada
West Los Angeles

Re: ‘A J-POP Culture Identity’

The Pacific Citizen article titled ‘A J-POP Culture Identity’ (July 20, pg. 8, Aug. 3, 2006) was an interesting read for us who are Japanese born and living in Japan. The piece helped us to understand some of the trends amongst the young generation of Japanese Americans. We are grateful to know that J-POP or the media helps JAs get a glimpse into their roots in Japan.

Whatever opportunity, let the youth amongst the youth. Culture can be a bridge to cross the divide between the two countries where our brave ancestors came from and in which they made their journey.

Thank You Arizona Chapter!

To all the members of the Arizona JACL, in particular to the hard-working and dedicated members of the host chapter’s convention committee, thank you for your hard work and sweat and commitment that made the 2006 convention the great success it was.

The 2006 JACL went without a single “hoop” and not a detail out of place and not one thing that went even slightly askew. This convention was remarkable and was the result of a group of hard working, dedicated volunteers from the chapter who showed their cheerful and bright spirits.

Thank you Arizona JACL for your remarkable achievement in putting on such a great convention.

John Tateishi
JACL Executive Director

A New Leadership

With the retirement of John Tateishi, now is the opportunity to change course. Let’s try to look back and to the brighter future by selection of a person not connected with the past.

There are many learned men who have spent many years in the JACL, but does knowledge of the organization alone necessarily prepare one for community leadership? We think not. The JACL community across America is in desperate need of a level-headed, well educated and young-spirited leadership.

The Nikki community needs strategic thinkers and fearless leaders. We need to create a new generation of modem civil rights leaders who can guide us in the civil rights arena and understand the value of our cultural heritage.

We need to pump the veins of JACL, with fresh blood. We need to look for young (20-30s), preferably Yonsei women, a law school graduate, in contrast to the current generation of a JACL organization alone necessarily preparation community leadership? We think not. The JACL community across America is in desperate need of a level-headed, well educated and young-spirited leadership.

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National Newsbytes
By F.G. Staff and Associated Press

Two Charged with Racial Attack on Asian Youths

NEW YORK—Fugitives said they have charged two men with hate crimes, after four Asian youths were seriously beaten in what prosecutors say was a racially-motivated attack.

The incident occurred Aug. 12, when the two defendants, aged 19 and 20, allegedly pulled up beside the four Asians on a street near a college. They asked, "Are you saying that you are not hiring me because of my name or my religion?" 

"Are you saying, yes, and JetBlue considers you a security risk," according to the report.

Faisal Baig, a U.S. citizen who was raised in Yongkong, claims in the suit that an airline manager told him in March that he was a "security risk." 

"You're saying you're not hiring me because of my name or my religion?" Baig, whose suit seeks an unspecified amount of money, is now living in Raleigh, N.C., where he is continuing to look for work as a pilot.

Councilmember Liu Sued by Disc Jockey

NEW YORK—Councilman John Liu is facing a $55 million defamation suit from a radio disc jockey for calling him a pedophile.

Troy Tom, 42, was recently fired from the hip-hop station Power 105.1 FM as a result of a feud he was carrying on with rival DJ Rashawn Casey (DJ Envy) of Hot 97 FM. Tomin allegedly made sexual and racist remarks about his rival’s four-year-old daughter. Torres was then arrested by the NYPD Hate Crimes Unit on May 12 and charged with harassment and endangering the welfare of a child.

APAs in the News
By Pacific Citizen Staff

Inouye Receives High Honors from DND

The Department of Defense awarded its highest recognition to Sen. Daniel Inouye for his continual fight for the rights of Filpino World War II veterans. Inouye received the Outstanding Achievement Award while visiting the defense department in Camp Aganidado. Inouye is also lobbying to amend U.S. immigration laws that would grant children of Filipino World War II veterans special immigrant status.

Spokane JACL Honors the Takaokas

Honoring (frt. to bck): Doug Hoy惘oto, Senior Consul Hidehiro Hosaka, Hiroshi and Michiko Takaoka, Spokane Valley Mayor Diane Willes, Spokane Mayor Dennis Hession and Ed Tauttawawa.

The Spokane JACL honored Hiroshi and Michiko Takaoka at a luncheon recently celebrating the couple’s 16 years of support to their chapter and to the Spokane community.

The chapter’s annual Nikkor Appreciation Lunch was held at Mukogawa Fort Wright Institute (MFWI), a branch of the Mukogawa Women’s University in Nishinomiya, Japan. Hiroshi in MFWI’s executive vice president while Michiko is the director at the Japanese Cultural Center at Mukogawa. Spokane JACL presented them with an original framed picture of the city of Spokane and the waterfalls that run through it.

NATIONAL NEWS

\"I will never forget what happened 61 years ago.\"

— Kikuyo Nakamura, 82, a Nagasaki atomic bomb survivor.

Each year, participants observe a moment of silence to remember the tragedy of the bombs.

In Japan, Nagasaki and Hiroshima Observe 61st Anniversary of Atomic Bombings

By CHISAKI WATANABE
Associated Press Writer

Tokyo—Japan remembers the 61st anniversary of the atomic bombings.

The city of Hiroshima marked Aug. 6 by criticizing the world’s nuclear powers for their failure to halt the spread of nuclear weapons.

The mayor of Nagasaki, the second city attacked with an atomic bomb, marked the 61st anniversary of the bombing Aug. 9 by criticizing the world’s nuclear powers for their stalled efforts to disarm.

Last year’s bombing, by B-29 Bock’s Car, dropped a bomb dubbed "Fat Man." The bomber, Enola Gay, dropped the "Little Boy" bomb on Hiroshima, killing at least 140,000 people in the world’s first atomic attack.

The day before, the B-29 Bock’s Car dropped a bomb dubbed "Fat Man" on Nagasaki, with estimates of the immediate death toll ranging from 60,000 to 80,000.

Participants in Nagasaki observed a moment of silence at 11:02 a.m., the exact time the atomic bomb was dropped on the city.

Kikuyo Nakamura, 82, said she was concerned the attack could soon be forgotten because many of those who survived have passed away.

"I will never forget what happened 61 years ago," she said.

"Now I feel compelled to tell others how stupid, scary and cruel the war was."

― Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said Japan would honor its commitment to the 1968 nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

Europe and Asia have called for the principle of nuclear nonproliferation, Japan is a signatory to the nuclear treaty but also has its own moratorium on seeking or developing atomic arms.

The Aug. 9 ceremony followed a memorial service Aug. 6 in Hiroshima, where about 45,000 people gathered in the city’s peace park. Embassies officials from seven countries, including Germany, Russia and Australia, were among those who attended in Nagasaki; city officials said American diplomat did not attend, according to a city statement.

Nagasaki this year added 2,831 people to a list of those who have died from aftereffects of the attack, raising the total number of fatalities blamed on the atomic bomb to 140,144.

MANAA Upset Over Racial Slur in Movie ‘Night Listener’

Media Action Network for Asian Americans, an AA media watchdog group, is upset over a line in the new Robin Williams film "Night Listener."

In one scene across Sandra Oh (who plays an accountant) calls William’s father “a nice old coot."

"And if ever met you he’d call you ‘that cute little chink girl,’" Williams just says, "I’m him.”

In a letter to Miramax President Guyl Aoki they’d given ABC the right to choice of airing one of two clips from the movie. Oh and warned them to bleep out “chink” if they used the clip that included that slur, but they didn’t.

MANAA asked both Miramax and ABC to make public statements addressing the controversy, but both refused, although Miramax said they removed the clip from future electronic press kits.

We have so many dreams, but this one has come true."— Maureen Swartwood, a native of Fiji about Alaska.

Immigrant Shift Seen in Alaska Job Market

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANCHORAGE, Alaska—Over the past 20 years, a wave of immigration has washed across the West Coast, and it has extended to Anchorage, where minority and immigrant populations have grown rapidly.

What sets Anchorage apart from many cities is the diversity of the minority and immigrant groups—there is not just one or two or three groups, but new ones are coming all the time.

For example, Anchorage now ranks third in America in the per capita number of Pacific Islanders and Native Hawaiians (behind only Honolulu and Sacramento). The city ranks 19th per capita for Asians, ahead of bigger cities like Chicago, Minneapolis and Washington, D.C.

ANCHORAGE is second in the country in the number per capita of people who are two or more races. For Alaska Natives or Native Americans, it ranks first.

While the black and white populations stayed relatively constant in the 1990s, thousands of Pacific Islanders from Samoa, Western Samos, Tonga and other states, especially Hawaii, moved to Anchorage. Already-established communities of Koreans, Filipinos, Mexicans, Southeast Asians and Central Americans grew through immigration and births.

Since 2000, hundreds of Hmong refugees and their families from Thailand and other states, have settled here. There are small but growing communities of Africans, Middle Easterners and Eastern Europeans.

"What’s the draw? The biggest pull may come from the promise of work, especially in small business, service economy, jobs at hotels, restaurants and big-box retailers.

Maureen Swartwood, 24, came to Anchorage six years ago after her father was selected in a green-card lottery.

The family, which has Indian roots, is Mexican and was part of a religious minority in Fiji. Alaska offers more religious tolerance, Swartwood said. She looks forward to starting a family here and expanding her business.

"I always wanted a shop for myself," she said. "We have so many dreams, but this one has come true.”
VIDEO GAMES
(Continued from page 1)
and half Chinese, was happy just to see a character that looked like him, but as his cultural awareness heightened he began to notice a problem.
Mainly, Lo Wang stereotypes were rampant in a six billion dollar industry that capitulates on riveting young minds. So he made race representation in video games the topic of his honors thesis at the University of British Columbia, and suddenly he was being interviewed by BBC News and maligned by other gamers who accused him of pulling the race card.
Obviously, Parungao hit a nerve. The gaming industry is used to weathering criticism about violence and sexism, but racism? "I'm raising issues that have never been looked at before," he said.

Academic Reading Meets a Culturally Mixed Up Samurai
"I was coming at it with gamer sensibility," Parungao said about his research, which involved eight months of academic reading and video game playing — two of his greatest passions. He is now pursuing a master's degree in sociology.

For his thesis, Parungao chose four video games: "Kung Fu," "Shadow Warrior," "Warcraft 3" and "Grand Theft Auto III." He initially borrowed the research model of race representation from film and television and applied it to video games, but found that it really didn't fit. Games speak to its audience in a way that television and film don't.

"It's the aspect of play. You yourself are the protagonist. You're the one in [Grand Theft Auto] that picks up the hatchet and runs through Chinatown and kills a Triad [gang member]," he said.

"In "Kung Fu," the main character chops and kicks his way through a temple to save his love, giant pan­

"Shadow Warrior," "Warcraft 3" and Chinese gangs vie with the Yakuza for territory in GTA "Warcraft 3" and "Chinese gang wars with the Yakuza for territory in GTA 3. But Parungao said the most blatantly offensive is the culturally mixed up Lo Wang character, who throws grenades and yells, "Just like Hiroshimal!" and preys on bathing girls, sometimes with chopsticks.

Sterotypes like those in "Shadow Warrior" are so blatant that they can be held up to ridicule, it is to the continued rei­

Asian Pacific American faces while serving in Iraq but was disappointed with the lack of participation.

"It was disappointing to see so few APIs. I thought there would be more but I guess times have changed," he said.

"This country did a lot to us but they did a lot for us later," added Asarni. "We owe this country to serve." Asarni hopes to see more retirees return to service and encourages them to consider helping out in the war with Iraq.

"Retirees have the training, the background, and experience," he said. "They are a great asset to the Army ... and I wish more would volunteer." Asarni is now back in his hometown of Fresno. He still volunteers his dental services locally and is enjoying his time with his only grand­

"I would go back to Iraq," he said. "I can still do some good."
1ilm foundation is in file and shown to a select group at the university. Whitaker said the footage online for everyone.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered residents of Japanese ancestry who lived along the West Coast to leave their homes and live in relocation centers. At the Gila River camp in Pinal County, he said there were no such fronts that were likely owned by the Nikkei Community Internment Council (CJACLC) to support their Nikkei Community Internment Council, a program designed to cultivate future leaders with a statewide perspective of the Japanese American community. The NCL, coordinated by the CJACLC, is a statewide program which offers college students an opportunity to obtain experience by supporting the work of various community organizations while increasing their understanding of contemporary issues affecting Japanese Americans.

This program offers young Japanese Americans the tools to sustain the rich culture and traditions of the Nikkei. According to George Tanaka, v.p./Japanese segment manager for Union Bank, the club is part of a movement that was spreading across the country where a few friends would gather or pool their monthly dues and participate in the stock market. As the years rolled by, Assistant (safe) Investment Club members replaced as many members replaced them. Wives also joined. Members of the club's stockbroker at the outset. Herb Kawabu, a cousin of one of the club's members, assisted and speeded the plan. Shortly after he became president of the Pacific Stock Exchange, he brought the club's leadership to becoming more of a social club than one for investing, according to club president Susan Nakayama.

The club met at a member's home on a rotating basis, elaborate refreshments served by the club members on a rotating basis, slowly becoming the highlight of the meeting. Eventually the club felt they were knowledgeable enough to invest on their own and perhaps without advice from brokers. However, members had their own brokers whose recommendation were considered during the meetings.

While ACI CLC Receives $14,000 Grant from Union Bank of Calif. Foundation.

For the 7th consecutive year, the Union Bank of California Foundation recently announced a $14,000 donation to the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJACLC) to support their Nikkei Community Internment Council, a program designed to cultivate future leaders with a statewide perspective of the Japanese American community.

For further information, call (213) 626-4471 or email office@jaclpsw.org. Bid proposals must include knowledge of web development, samples of work, vision for the new website, project timeline and package cost. Bid deadline is August 31, 2006.

For more information, visit the Nikkei Community Leadership Council website at www.jaclpsw.org.

Avoid the Terri Schiavo Mess

WEB DESIGN

The WEB DESIGN of the JACL PSW Website Development Committee is now accepting bids to redesign the district's current website, jacadwp.org. Bids must include knowledge of web development, samples of work, vision for the new website, project timeline and package cost. Bid deadline is August 31, 2006.

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I hope that all of you are enjoying a great summer season. I want to update you on a great new membership benefit as well as give you an update on membership numbers.

First, the Protective Tru-Script Discount Prescription Drug and Dental Programs are now available to all of you not covered by Medicare Part D. These programs are unique because they are not insurance programs but discounted price programs. Therefore, the only requirement to joining is that you are a national JACL member.

There are no restrictions on income levels, health issues, no reinsurance issues, and you do not have to pass any medical tests to qualify. AND you can join or leave the program at any time. For instance, if after three months you think that you are not saving any money on the programs you can leave. But after two more months you realize that it was a mistake or have a change in medication, you can rejoins.

This is a great opportunity to see if you can save money in your prescription drug and/or dental costs.

You can sign up for one or both of these programs by visiting our JACL Web Site at www.jacl.org. The Web site will answer your questions, give you a list of the drugs and their prices; a list of the participating pharmacies and much more. The same is true for the dental program.

If you still have specific questions, you can contact Cary Wong, Chicago chapter member, at jactrdmembers@jacl.org and he will get your answers. Also, your chapter president and/or membership chairperson have already received an informational flyer to be mailed to you. If you haven’t received one, please contact them.

Below is a membership scoreboard comparing where we are now (as of 7/30/06) compared to the end of 2005. Listed are the top five chapters by number increase and also percentage increase. Congratulations to these chapters for their fine work. Let’s work hard and get your chapter on this list.

I will be writing regularly to keep you up to date on membership benefits and issues such as the JACL National Credit Union’s vacation promotions and changes in dues for the next biennium. Finally, my sincere thanks to all of you for your commitment to JACL. I leave you, as always, with our motto: “For Better Americans in a Greater America.” ■

New Membership Benefits

We are inviting all avid golfers to play in an exciting golf tournament — different from others in which you have played — and golfers don’t have to be JACL members. Why not “swing” a golf club for justice and a chance to win the $10,000 Hole-in-One prize?

Our tournament will be played at the beautiful Harding Park Golf Course in San Francisco on Oct. 2. You may remember that Harding Park course was made famous by Tiger Woods’ win over John Daly in the World Golf Championships last October.

Golfers with handicap indexes are challenged to beat Tiger’s final round score of 67. There will be several flights, including a woman’s flight and a Callaway flight. Since the field is limited to 144, all golfers are encouraged to sign up before Sept. 1 to take advantage of the “Early Bird” green fee of $200.

Harding Park’s regular weekday green fee for “out-of-towners” is $125 and carts $20 for two. Our $200 entry fee includes golf, cart, range balls, bento lunch, golf shirt, tee prizes and dinner. For dinners only, the cost is $50.

The tournament’s theme, “Swing for Justice,” encompasses the goal of the national JACL, an organization devoted to social justice and human dignity. Its dedicated members have made the JACL a most highly respected national organization.

Your commitment to JACL is a great new membership benefit as well as a summer season. I want to update you on a national tournament. There are no restrictions on income levels, health issues, no reinsurance issues, and you do not have to pass any medical tests to qualify. ADD you can join or leave the program at any time. For instance, if after three months you think that you are not saving any money on the programs you can leave. But after two more months you realize that it was a mistake or have a change in medication, you can rejoins.

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Communications

Swing for Justice in October

By MAS & MARCIA HASHIMOTO

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The Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL is sponsoring a hole in memory of their founding chapter members of 1928. The chapter continues to carry on their founding leaders’ legacy.

Rinban Ken Fujimoto of the San Jose Buddhist Betsuin recently won $10,000. John Morey, owner of The J. Morey Insurance Company with offices in La Palma and San Jose, provided that prize and is generously sponsoring the $10,000 Hole-in-One prize for our 3rd Annual National JACL Golf Tournament.

We invite individuals, families, chapters, organizations, businesses, et al to support our tournaments by becoming a donor, sponsor, volunteer and/or golfer. Let this be the tournament to support for the year! It’s for a wonderful cause — civil rights — and played on a world class golf course.

For more information, visit our Web site: www.jacl.org and click on the National JACL Golf Logos. Or contact our co-chairs Jim Craig at 916/652-0093, Thaya店主@ubcglobal.net; or Jason Higashi at 707/837-9932, jhj@comcast.net; or our sponsor chair, Dean Suzuki at 925/212-1137, dean.suzuki@ubs.com. Swing For Justice! ■

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• No Limit on the Number of Prescriptions
  Filled

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• No annual limits on savings.
• No limits on the number of visits or services you receive.
• No paperwork to fill out.
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BASKETBALL

Wang Deals With More Tough Luck as World Championships Approach

GUANGZHOU, China—No one would accuse Wang Zhizhi of having a five-year estrangement from the national association after refusing to play for China. Now, just as he's rejoining the national team, he's on the bench with a torn ligament in his right knee. The injury likely will keep him out of action until the world championships, which begin Aug. 19 in Japan.

All this while Yao Ming enjoys acclaim as the NBA's best young center, and 6-foot-10 center Yi Jianlian is touted as China's next NBA prospect.

"There's a continuum. There's Yao, and there's Wang Zhizhi, who is vying to be only a reserve," NBA commissioner David Stern said in an interview Aug. 6 in Guangzhou, China, where the U.S. national team is preparing for worlds.

Wang wrested with the team Aug. 6 and did light exercises with a heavily wrapped leg. He left the Guangzhou Gymnasium without talking to reporters.

"It seems to be coming full circle with rumors of a return to his old team, the People's Liberation Army's Bayi Rockets, which he first joined at age 14," Stern said.

Wang played for the team when Dallas Mavericks coach Don Nelson began to court him after spotting the towering 16-year-old left-hander from Beijing while helping coach the Lithuanian national team.

Negotiations with the Chinese were long and difficult, but Wang eventually ended up with Dallas for two seasons. Relations soured after Wang refused to return for national team duties, breaking a promise to the Chinese Basketball Association and Nelson. Wang played on Golden State's summer league team instead, trying to adapt his field goal-centered game to the more physical NBA style of play inside the paint.

The transition was rough, and Wang found himself spending most of his time on the bench.

"He has not exceeded my expectations," Nelson said of Wang following his first season at Dallas.

Dallas declined to match an offer from the Los Angeles Clippers.

"Wang, who averaged 15.6 points and 1.7 rebounds per game during his NBA career, moved on to L.A. and then to Miami.

"He has the opportunity to be picked up by one team or another..." Stern said.

Meanwhile, China kept him off its national team for the 2002 World Championships and refused to allow Chinese TV to show any game in which he appeared.

Running out of options, Wang reconciled with the Chinese national association, apologizing for his past behavior.

Despite the latest injury, the 27-year-old still might have a future in Chinese basketball and play in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. Getting there won't be easy, and not everyone in China hopes he will make it.

SUMO

Sumo Fitness DVD On Sale in Japan

TOKYO—Exercise videos typically feature soothing, muscular models. But Japan's latest fitness program sports a figure known more for girth than grace: the sumo wrestler.

"Sumo Health Exercises," released by the Japan Sumo Association this month, contains 12 sets of stretches, squats and splits demonstrated by professional wrestlers.

These models are a world away from rail-thin yoga instructors — they include hefty wrestlers such as the 140 kilogram (308 pound) Wakakusawa and 116 kilogram (253 pound) Hokutōshō.

Still, the association says the wrestlers — who compete by trying to push each other off a 'circular ring' — follow a rigorous exercise regimen that would help regular folks.

"The exercises can help strengthen the lower back and legs," said Hideki Yaraki, an association official. "They're fun, so we hope parents can get kids to do them instead of playing computer games all day."

The sumo moves include squats, running and push-ups.

"This while Yao Ming enjoys acclaim as the NBA's best young center, and 6-foot-10 center Yi Jianlian is touted as China's next NBA prospect.

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FOOTBALL

Super Bowl MVP Hines Ward Still One of Hardest-working Steeler

LATROBE, Pa.—As the Pittsburgh Steelers’ all-time leading receiver, and fresh off a Super Bowl MVP performance, Hines Ward could probably ease into his ninth NFL training camp. But then he wouldn’t be Hines Ward.

"I asked him the other day why he takes so many plays," said newcomer Ryan Clark. "I mean, he’s already a superstar receiver. But he said he still has work to do, still has to make the team every year. When you see a guy like that, a veteran leader, a Super Bowl MVP, there’s no reason why a free agent or a young guy can’t work hard every day."

Ward reported to camp at 205 pounds, which he says is the lightest of his career. He stays after practice every day to catch passes from a machine — sometimes using just one hand to perfect his technique. Ward, a four-time Pro Bowler, just turned 30. Ward simply maintains his level of play at that age enough work?

"Technically, yeah," Ward laughed. "But I’m just not running as much as I am. I’m very competitive."

After averaging 95 catches for 1,124 yards each of the previous four seasons, Ward caught 69 passes for 975 yards last season. He did have 11 touchdown passes, just one off his career high, and moved into first place on the Steelers’ all-time receptions list.
HARRY HONDA

VERY TRULY YOURS

Highlighting 10 More Past JACL Conventions (1960-1978)

FOR A GREATER picture of the national JACL organization and its conventions, Bill Hosokawa's "must read" JACL in Quest of Justice (1982) begins when the Nisei in the early 1920s preferred not to identify themselves as "Japanese American." In San Francisco it was "American Loyalty League." In the Pacific Northwest, the Nisei choice was "Progressive Citizens League." Hosokawa's last chapter: "XXIII: Search for Redress"—forecasts JACL's next half century will be unlike its first half-century, "certainly far more progressive as its founders ever dreamed possible." As a sequel, Mitchell T. Maki, Harry H.L. Kitano and S. Megan Berthold's ACHIEVING THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAMS: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress (1999) is recommended.

Religious prejudice and persecution in view of the Middle East conflict may have overshadowed public awareness for racial discrimination. The pull over Homeland Security lingers. Exorcising drugs in America, the search for marijuana, the estimated 12 million undocumented aliens in the U.S. and what happens to JACL if the big quake in California hits (as we've heard many times) are questions not to be ignored. Does JACL national have a disaster plan?

Past & Prologue

The 16th Biennial in 1960 at Sacramento's El Dorado Hotel ended as the "most ragged" of conventions in order to approve a $900,000 budget. Delegates skipped the awards luncheon for sandwich boxes and didn't dance at the Sayonara ball. Also justified was "chaster quotas," a specified amount to support National. The JACL youth movement was formalized with 25 new membership cards and a 21-year age maximum. The 17th Biennial in 1962 at Seattle's Olympic Hotel came during a rare heat wave and this hotel had no air-conditioning. Four poor JACL leaders were honored:

Clarence Anai of Seattle, Suma Sugi Yokotake of Los Angeles, Toshiyuki Sato of Stockton and of Fresno and George Ishihara of Boise Valley. And thanks to Carnegie Corp.'s $100,000 grant, JACL established its Japanese American Research Project (JARP) at UCLA.

The 18th Biennial in 1964 at the Sheraton Cadillac Hotel, Detroit proved a small-number in-chapter like Detroit could stage a successful convention. Murray Ellison Father Clement was honored as JACL of the Biennial for his "never-give-up" spirit as well as being an unofficial national JACL chaplain. The 19th Biennial in 1966 in San Diego at El Cortez Hotel occurred during the major air pilot strike. Keynoter Rep. Paty Takemoto Mink, D-Hawaii, had to deliver her speech by telephone, I met another Harry Honda (Fowler) at this convention. I later met two others at JACL meetings in Seattle and in Spokane and encountered an incident involving a fourth Harry Honda from Honolulu whose baggage and mine continued on to Philadelphia after it had deploined in Cincinnati for an EDC-MDC convention.

The 20th Biennial in 1966 at the Hyatt House, San Jose, honored ten past national presidents: Dr. George Takeyama (1930-32), Dr. Terry Hayashi (1932-34), Saburo Kidu (1940-46), Hito Okada (1946-50), George Inagaki (1952-56), Dr. Roy Nishikawa (1956-58), Shig Watanukis (1958-60), Frank Chumaon (1960-62), Pat Okura (1962-64) and Kumeo Yoshinari (1964-66), a fitting highlight of the national JACL's 40th anniversary.

The 21st Biennial in 1970 at the Palmer House, Chicago, was saddened by the tragic murder of Evelyn Okubo, 18, (Stockton Jr. JACL) in her room on the 6th floor. Her roommate Ranco Yamada, 17, was brutally injured, immediately hospitalized and survived. This happened while 1,000 attended Mike Masaoka's testimonial dinner at nearby Conrad Hilton (formerly the Stevens) Hotel.

The 22nd Biennial in 1972 at the Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C., concluded its first Samel national JACL director, David Ushio (Salt Lake City) by 68 percent over Alan Nishio (Los Angeles). Mike Masahisa terminated his 30-year stint as full-time JACL Washington representative. Harry Tanaka (Cleveland) sat as national president, having served as "president-elect" in 1970. This novel president-elect procedure was abandoned in 1976.

The 23rd Biennial in 1974 at the Sheraton Motor Inn, Portland, was hailed the "most innovative" as the Asian American Fair of 24 AA groups displayed their community action projects. Keynote speech by Dr. Minoru Masuda (Seattle) was called a "must" text for any ethnic studies class.

The 24th Biennial in 1976 at Sacramento Inn opened with a petty fight that lasted four hours as three proxies from PSW chapters were questioned. From a high of 102 chapters, 35 chapters (mostly in small communities) were represented by proxies. Two ideas for redress came up: Henry Miyatake (Seattle) proposed JAs designate their federal tax dollars to a special fund for individual redress payment of $5,000 whether incarcerated or not, and $10 for each day of incarceration. An alternative plan, Ed Yamamoto (Sacramento Basin) fostered a billion dollar reparations trust fund for organizations to promote "Japanese American understanding."

The 25th Biennial in 1978 at Little America Hotel, Salt Lake City, was a milestone -- JACL's 50th anniversary. Unexpectedly, redress garnered national publicity after Sen. S.I. Hayakawa (he was the Sayonara keynoter) told the media the following day that "JACL had no right to ask the U.S. government for reparations." The council sought $25,000 per evacuee and an apology, which Hayakawa called "ridiculous." My personal takes on past JACL conventions conclude next month.

V-J DAY
(Continued from page 1)

months earlier.

The holiday, which is being kept alive by local veterans groups, could contribute to anti-Japanese and anti-Asian sentiment, added Tateishi.

There have been several unsuccessful attempts to change the holiday's name after the failed attempt to eliminate it. Each time, lawmakers met overwhelming opposition, said Sen. Rhoda Perry, D-Providence. She introduced bills in 1992, 1994 and 1995 to change the holiday to Rhode Island Veterans Day. A second 1995 bill would have changed the name to Peace and Remembrance Day.

Perry said her bills died because veteran groups turned up in force at the Statehouse to rally against them. She received mail from veterans that she described as "Vitriolic." "It was absolutely a non-winner," Perry said. "I did not have support, period.

Though attempts to change the holiday have failed, lawmakers have tried to clarify its meaning. Proponents deny that racism is involved. The holiday is "not a day to express satisfaction in the destruction and death at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, where atomic bombs were dropped. But the mere fact that the holiday is being kept alive is a statement, said Tateishi, who is planning on writing a letter to the governor and state leaders. Tateishi, who announced his resignation in June, said that if he is still with the JACL next spring, he would put it on his calendar to work to eliminate the last celebration of this holiday.

Miki Lima, who runs the Rhode Island Japan Society in Providence, said she is working to educate younger Americans about Japanese culture. Lima said she'd prefer if the holiday were eliminated, but if that can't happen, she hopes it can be celebrated under a new name because of Victory Day's implicit reference to the victory over Japan.

"Someday, Lima said, "this foolish holiday's name will be changed."

"This is the way the veterans feel about it in Rhode Island," said George Panichas, a former state representative who was a gunman on a B-17 bomber during World War II. "They fought against the Japanese, and they just don't forget it." Proponents deny that racism is attached to the holiday.

"July 4 is our national holiday because we defeated England. Do we hate the English? No," said James Brennan, a survivor of the 1942 Bataan Death March in which Japanese soldiers tortured and killed thousands of American and Filipino prisoners. "It's the same with V-J Day. We are the ones who won the war."

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Rich Wong's first feature length film is a musical, and he's proud of it. The San Francisco native and friend H.P. and Mendoza — who is not only one of the stars, but wrote all 13 musical numbers — made "Colma: The Musical" about a group of recent high school graduates you would usually see as the supporting roles in other films, said Wong.

"Colma Baby! — Reviving the Musical"

Q&A with 'Colma: The Musical' Filmmaker Rich Wong

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Rich Wong: I have to say 'Colma' is surprisingly satisfying and upbeat. I noticed other recent high school graduates you would usually see as the supporting entertain and perhaps say something reviews that we have had, but please don't expect them, then I don't think I have any movie that can entertain and perhaps say something as small as ours is a surprise. It's really flattering to have the reviews that we have had, but believe me, H.P. and I are just as surprised as the response. Don't get me wrong. This is the movie he and I put a lot of passion and energy into. We knew it was something we would have complete creative freedom. So we were confident in our own aesthetic and our ability to make a movie that we liked, but I thought it would be a bit more polarizing than it has been.

PC: Any hesitation about working with a dead genre?
RW: Considering 'Chicago' won best picture only three years prior to when we were shooting and 'Rent' and 'The Producers' were about to come out, I didn't think the musical genre was dead. We also didn't care if it were.

Musicals have been something in the world of performing arts for a very long time and I doubt it will ever actually be dead. But a reassurance I thought we had in order to bring it back to the film world. Certainly the world and the public persons have changed and musicals have essentially become the genre to mock when going for laughs. But H.P. and I have always had the love of musicals in common and when no one went to shoot a musical number. I had this vision of people sitting down and three minutes in, some guy would get up and scream, 'What? He's singing?' Which is hilarious. Either we should hold back on the language. I wonder if there aren't musicals if we would have balked so readily. Certainly teenagers speak with foul language, I know I did and still do, along with everyone I know and know. So if we were making a film about kids who we want to feel real, then their language would certainly be this way.

PC: Just the word 'musical' has been known to induce estatic shuddering and excessive drooling. What kind of reactions do you get when you tell people 'Colma is a musical?'
RW: Early on in the script phase, H.P. had talked about taking away 'The Musical' from the title because of that very reason that people tend to shy away from musicals. But we had argued to keep it because if first of all there's a grand title, but secondly, I didn't really want people who didn't love musicals to come see this movie. I had this vision of people sitting down and three minutes in, some guy would get up and scream, 'What? He's singing?' Guy! This isn't for that guy. I get a very interesting response every time I tell someone that 'Colma' is a musical. Most of the time it's curiosity or excitement, but more than once I've simply gotten, 'Why?' Which is hilarious. Either way, I think the musical is far enough removed from the social consciousness in film that there is a newfound novelty to it and I think that has helped the film's visibility.

PC: Musicals usually have a squeaky clean story line with pristine stars. How much fun was it to create a song about going potty at a party?
RW: H.P. never swayed on making the lyrics and the songs about things that are real. These kids are singing but they still feel real to people. I think the language is a very big part of that and H.P. and I both are observers of language and idiosyncrasies.

There have been numerous musicals with character proficiency as part of their language; but when we passed the script around, I was surprised at how many people thought we should hold back on the language. I wonder if it wasn't a musical if they would have balked so readily. Certainly teenagers speak with foul language, I know I did and still do, along with everyone I know and know. So if we were making a film about kids who we want to feel real, then their language would certainly be this way.

PC: The movie is being touted as the first Asian American musical since "Flower Drum Song," but race and ethnicity isn't the focal point. Why?
RW: We premiered at the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival. The wonderful people who run that festival were gracious enough to give us a venue and a chance to be seen and it was kind of world premiere people dream of. However, because it was an AA festival, the natural comparisons to other AA themed musicals and its own AA identity came about.

"Flower Drum Song" was an AA themed musical, but the people behind that film were not AA. 'Colma: The Musical' is not an AA themed musical, but the filmmakers are AA. I think that distinction is very important.

PC: Someone in the office described it as 'Better Luck Tomorrow' meets Andrew Lloyd Webber. What do you say?
RW: Wow really? Never heard that one before. I don't honestly see any similarities to 'Better Luck Tomorrow' except for the fact that Justin Lin and I are both AA. The kids in 'BLT' are quite different and release their anger in a different way than the kids in 'Colma.' I think my experience in high school was closer to that in 'BLT' though.

I'd like Andrew Lloyd Webber, but if you ask H.P., who the musical inspiration for 'Colma' was, he'd tell you they'd be Brits and Burnt Folds.

PC: Have you heard feedback from Colma residents?
RW: H.P. spent four years in Colma during high school, which the script draws from. Colma in the film represents any small town next to a big city and the dynamic between the two. (Town officials) actually asked to screen it but when the town itself saw the film they thought it would be inappropriate to show at a public gathering. Hehe.

I tend to agree. It's not a kid's movie. I always thought of it as a film about kids for adults who had experienced these kids who are going through or something similar and can relate to in retrospect.

PC: That was you in the opening sequence wasn't it?
RW: Hehe. Acting really isn't my thing, though I was always secretly hurt that no one ever asked me to be in their projects when I was in film school. They always wanted me behind the camera. My little role in the film was actually out of necessity. Those scenes were scheduled to be shot on separate days and we didn't have anyone who could step up for both of those days, so the only person left that would definitely be there those days was me. ■

For screening information, check: www.colmafilm.com

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BILBOARDS (Continued from page 1)

NATIONAL NEWS

This is something that's very negative," said Eunsook Lee, executive director of the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium (NAKASEC). "It's counter to a nation that has always welcomed immigrants. We don't see it as an invasion."

"They are inflammatory and clearly meant to tap into bigotry and fear of immigrants," said Karen Narasaki, president and executive director of the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC). The "Stop the Invasion" billboards are the brainchild of Grassfire.org, an admitted anti-immigrant, pro-life, and pro-church grassroots organization. And the signs are spreading rapidly across the nation, fully sponsored by American citizens who are contributing $25 per square foot in donations.

Already the signs have cropped up in eight states, emblazoning neighboring freeways in cities like Dallas, Miami, Chicago, Atlanta, Houston, Phoenix, San Diego, Tucson, and Winfield, La. And if your hometown hasn't yet received its own sign, you may not have long to wait since more billboards are planned in the near future.

Although representatives from Grassfire.org did not return Pacific Citizen's numerous requests for an interview, the organization's president Steve Elliott stated on their Web site: "Immigration is the biggest issue in California and these billboards represent the view of millions of Californians." Similar statements were made regarding the other U.S. cities in which billboards are currently standing.

Grassfire.org is strategically timing the launch of these billboards with national field hearings on immigration currently being held by the House of Representatives. The group is hoping the signs will encourage people to speak out against illegal immigration.

But national APA groups, including JACL, are putting up humane immigration reform and are encouraging members of the APA community to come out in force to ensure their voices are also heard.

"Asian Americans are clearly affected by the immigration debate and its outcome," said Narasaki. "An estimated 10 percent of the Asian American community is undocumented. Over 1 million are waiting for years, even decades for a family based visa. And tens of thousands seek to come legally to work in both low skilled and high tech industries. The immigration system is broken because the visa system has unreasonable quotas that do not reflect the needs of our economy or of our communities."

"The immigration system is not working right now," said Lee. "Our community should care...we are affected by immigration issues. We realize we have an interest in the immigration system and 1.5 million are immigrants and 1.5 million are undocumented. Many millions are also stuck in the myriad immigration backlogs, waiting years to be reunited with loved ones."

Although many of the debates and media stories focus on the illegal border crossings between Mexico and the U.S., illegal Asian immigrants often enter the country on legitimate visas but sometimes overstays after its expiration.

"Because of that, people make choices to come without documentation," said Lee of the huge billboards. Many are women trying to reunite family members.

The House and Senate are currently looking at varying pieces of legislation to reform the current immigration system. The House version calls for an enforcement only immigration policy and includes a provision that would make illegal presence in this country a felony. Groups like Grassfire.org oppose this version and have attacked politicians not in step with them by listing their phone numbers on the "Stop the Invasion" billboards.

On the Senate side, a more humane version is being looked at that provides a pathway to citizenship for some illegal immigrants. But most APA groups see a problem with both versions currently on the table.

"The bill passed by the House of Representatives does not do anything to address these issues and instead seeks to impose unworkable and harsh enforcement schemes that turn on taking away basic due process and other rights from immigrants," said Narasaki. "The Senate bill seeks to address some of these issues but still contains many unworkable and harsh measures."

APA groups also see problems with a recent bill proposed by Senators Mike Pence and Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison which they believe is biased against immigrants from Asia, excluding them from the modest temporary work measures being proposed.

Although pro-immigrant groups believe they have much more support than the anti-immigrant groups like Grassfire.org, many see the mainstream media as contributing to the misperception that the majority of Americans are anti-immigrants.

They note that groups like the Minuteman, a group that pushes full closure of the U.S. borders, gets more media coverage even though their rallies often attract few people, usually in the hundreds. Yet it took a million people marching in major cities before the pro-immigrant side received any coverage.

"Mainstream papers cover anti-immigrant issues more so it looks like they are in the majority. We had to get one million people before we got noticed," said Lee whose group NAKASEC participated in the national May 1 marches demanding humane immigration reform.

NCAPA, a group that has a number of coalition partners including NAKASEC, AACC and JACL, recently launched the "We Are America" picture postcard campaign featuring AAs urging members of Congress to support just and humane immigration reform.

Through the campaign, NCAPA hopes more people will begin to see the APA community as a vital part of the ongoing immigration debates.

"We have the same stake in fixing the system as everyone else," said Narasaki. "Our country's ability to successfully compete in a global economy and the kind of democracy we live in will depend on how we resolve these issues. It is about whether our country will live up to its highest ideals or allow bigotry to take over."

"The immigration reform issue is not just about immigrants. It's something for America," said Lee.

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