



JA community works to save social hall — PAGE 3

PACIFIC CITIZEN

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Saving Minidoka

Former internees and their families attend the Jerome County hearings on a controversial feedlot.

NATIONAL NEWS PAGE 3

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Online Forum Reaches Out to HIV-Positive APA Youth



William Ching, 21, tested positive for HIV this past July.

William Ching tested positive for HIV in July but found few resources and support groups for APA youth. Frustrated, he launched the HIV Youth Project.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

It started off as a simple case of the flu but 21-year-old William Ching's symptoms weren't getting any better. On a hunch he decided to go and get tested for HIV. Within days he received the news he had been dreading: he tested positive for the virus.

For the next few weeks William, a senior at UC Berkeley, stayed locked up in his room barely able to eat or sleep. Thoughts about his mortality and a future cut short filled every waking moment.

"It was a complete shock. I'm still trying to cope with it," said Ching.

See HIV PROJECT/Page 11

Is There Room for JA History in the Sport of Kings?

Santa Anita recently announced revitalization plans to pluck its parent company out of debt, but at what cost?

By LYNDALIN
Assistant Editor

There is a longstanding joke in the Okimoto family: all great men are born in stables.

When the Okimotos arrived at the Santa Anita Assembly Center in Arcadia, Calif. during World War II, Ruth Okimoto's mother, Kirie, was six months pregnant.

They lived in an "apartment" just big enough for five cots. Ruth, then 6, had the cot closest to the window and at night, the searchlight would pour into the window and jar her awake.

"It was hardly a home," said Ruth.

The Okimotos lived that way at the famous Santa Anita racetrack from May 1 to Aug. 27, 1942, until they were taken to Poston in Arizona. Ruth's short stay there didn't allow for many clear memories to embed. Sometimes she wondered if the hazy images of the racetrack were real or her mind's way of filling in the blanks.

But there will always be a part of the Okimotos at Santa Anita — Ruth's younger brother Daniel was born at the racetrack that August. His state-issued birth certificate lists the Santa Anita Assembly

See SANTA ANITA/Page 13



'We are mindful of history and working to do a better job.'

— Ron Charles, Santa Anita president

Critics are not convinced that the racetrack will preserve its JA history. During WWII, Santa Anita was home to the Okimoto kids (right) and thousands of other JA families.



Worshipping Under a New Blended Identity



PRAISE: Chatsworth West United Methodist Church's members harmonize Sept. 23. (L-r) Geri Shiraki, Sets and Bob Sato and Sam Uyehara.

A JA and a white church merge to create a whole new body of worship, but not without growing pains.

By LYNDALIN
Assistant Editor

CHATSWORTH, Calif.—Sunday services are usually filled with song at the Chatsworth West United Methodist Church. Between prayers, the congregation of Japanese Americans and Caucasians sing their praises with eyes downcast and hearts open.

It's a unity that has been a long time coming.

For years, the JA congregation was a part of its own church, the West Valley United Methodist Church, which paid a monthly fee to share facilities with the mostly white Chatsworth United Methodist Church located at 10824 Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Both churches also shared the same pastor who would give the same sermon to the Chatsworth group at 9:30 a.m. and then again to West Valley at 11 a.m.

In May, the two churches officially merged and became the Chatsworth West United Methodist Church. The move was beneficial for both sides, said Rev. Ruy Mizuki, who has headed

See BLENDED IDENTITY/Page 12

'Shocked and disgusted': Nurse Files Suit Against H&M for Racial Slurs

By ELAINE LOW
Special to the Pacific Citizen

Frannie Richards stopped by the Michigan Avenue H&M on her lunch break hoping to walk out with a dress or a new suit. She never expected to emerge with a different kind of suit — a lawsuit.

The Filipino American nurse is filing a complaint against the corporate clothing behemoth for an alleged racial slur one of its employees made to her in mid-September at an H&M in downtown Chicago. According to Richards, she had just entered the store and was browsing the racks when an employee near her raised his hand and exclaimed loudly, "Mail order bride in the house!" before running over to a fellow employee and bursting into laughter.

"I was shocked and disgusted," said the 33-year old retired U.S. Air Force reserve staff sergeant in an interview. In her complaint to the Chicago Commission of Human Relations, she stated: "I felt he was implying that I was a whore and couldn't understand why he would say anything so derogatory."

Richards then approached the employee, a Caucasian male in his late twenties or early thirties, and asked for a fitting room.

Frannie Richards has filed a discrimination lawsuit against the H&M company.

See H&M LAWSUIT/Page 11



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Song Birdie

This Hmong American wants to be a pop princess.

ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 9



JACL Supports 'Jena 6'

The national JACL expresses concern over the unfair treatment of the 'Jena 6.'

SEE NATIONAL PAGE 5

PACIFIC CITIZEN

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Letters to the Editor

Re: Nat'l JACL Resolution on Watada

As a former Judge Advocate in the Marine Corps, I was pleased
to see that the national board's Aug. 21 resolution regarding 1st
Lt. Ehren Watada did not discuss double jeopardy or other pecu-
liarities of military law.

I am pleased that the resolution stayed on the fairness issue
which is also deeply ingrained in me as a Sansei who is a Vietnam
combat veteran who served alongside many
AJAs, Asians, Hawaiians and Pacific
Islanders and native Americans.



WATADA

With respect to military law, I believe it was
EDC Governor Kristine Minami in the dis-
cussions preceding the vote on the resolution
who urged that the board understand that
court-martials and military law are different
from civilian criminal proceedings. Kristine
of course is correct. The Uniform Code of Military Justice enables
the creation of court-martials for the military. The UCMJ is legis-
lation by Congress and therefore, court-martials are sometimes
referred to as Article I courts or legislative courts.

While I do not agree with what Watada did in refusing orders
and missing movement, I must in good faith acknowledge that he
volunteered to serve in the Army, has served honorably as an offi-
cer in regular Army for four years and three months, has served a
full tour in Korea, has trained with the Stryker combat teams, and
has volunteered for combat in Afghanistan. He is not in pretrial
confinement and is presently performing his assigned duties.

I hope the best for Ehren and believe that he will serve whatev-
er sentence is adjudged him by the court-martial as he has previ-
ously indicated he would. However, I am mindful that felony con-
victions will exact a heavy price on him when he returns to civil-
ian life.

I ask that the board also remember the many AJAs, Asians and
Pacific Islanders men and women who have lost their lives in Iraq
and Afghanistan — at my last count over 75 patriots of Asian-
Pacific Islander descent have made the ultimate sacrifice, 20 of
them from Hawaii.

ERNEST M. KIMOTO
Kailua, Hawai'i

A Demonstration of Courage

Actions by the national JACL
board to approve the resolution
in support of 1st Lt. Ehren
Watada are to be lauded as
demonstrations of courage.
Many of us who have analyzed
the issue have come to the same
conclusions as former national
director John Tateishi.

Specifically, as U.S. citizens,
whether serving in the military or
not, we are all entitled to our civil
rights, including the right to free
speech, as outlined in the
Constitution. Furthermore, any-
one acting in the capacity as a
member of our Armed Forces
has the responsibility to consider
the actions they take as being
representative of what we the
people wish of them to do. To
abrogate this responsibility on
the basis of "just following
orders" is to risk violating our
moral obligation to the people of
other nations as it is unmistak-
ably delineated in the Nuremberg
Principles.

Like it or not, serving in the

military can mean being in the
position of deciding to take
another person's life or not, and
the moral ramifications of this
act obviously need to be weighed
most carefully. Undeniable, too,
whether one believes we were
simply mistaken or deliberately
misled into pursuing this conflict,
is our breach of the principle
against waging a war of aggres-
sion, in this instance, against the
Iraqi people.

Lt. Watada had studied these
issues and correctly concluded
their wrongful nature. Now, the
national board has declared like-
wise. It is up to the rest of us to
endorse these actions, for they
form a critical element of the
solution towards our stopping the
bloodshed on both sides of the
war that continues unabated at
this time. And ending this con-
flict is definitely the best way
that we can support our troops
and bring them back home.

DON INO
San Francisco, Calif.

JACL Should Take a Neutral Stand on Watada

I can't believe that the national
JACL has taken further steps to
"strengthen support for Lt.
Watada." 1st Lt. Ehren Watada vol-
unteered for the Army and by
doing so the Army has every right
to assign him to wherever his serv-
ice is needed.

The action taken by Watada is a
complete contradiction to the prin-
ciples upon which the JACL was
originally founded.

In my opinion, the JACL should
take a neutral stand in this regard
because it involves a Military Code
of Justice and Watada is a member
of the Armed Forces, not a civilian.
He will be given a fair trial under
the military court. As for this dou-
ble jeopardy and all these other

legal arguments, let the profession-
al lawyers iron this out in court.

I was extremely distressed to
learn that members of the NCWNP
district have "pushed for a stronger
show of support for Watada." After
sponsoring a wonderful "Salute to
the Veterans" on Aug. 12, the very
act of supporting Watada is another
slap in the face to these veterans
who were honored by this
"Salute."

Now with the Watada episode
the JACL has been involved in
another faux pas which will
undoubtedly have an additional
effect on its membership role.

LEO H. HOSODA
WWII and Korean War Veteran
Roseville, Calif.

A JACL Name Change

Winston Churchill said, "the fur-
ther back you look, the farther
ahead you will see." I looked back



MASAOKA

to the insightful
words of that
JACL icon,
Mike Masaoka,
who wrote in
1942, his expla-
nation of the
alphabetical
sequence of the
letters J-A-C-L:

"J" stands for Justice. We
believe that all peoples, regardless
of race, color or creed, are entitled
to enjoy those principles of "life,
liberty, and the pursuit of happi-
ness" which are presumed to be the
birthright of every individual ...

"A" stands for Americanism. We
believe that in order to prove our-
selves worthy of the Justice which
we seek, we must prove ourselves
to be, first of all, good Americans
— in thought, in words, in deeds.

"C" stands for Citizenship. We
believe that we must be exemplary
citizens in addition to being good
Americans, for, as in the case of
our parents, one may be a good

American and yet be denied the
privilege of citizenship. ...

"L" stands for Leadership. We
believe that we have the inspired
leadership and the membership
necessary to carry into living effect
the principles of Justice,
Americanism, and Citizenship for
which our League was founded. ...

JACL is the name which all of us
readily use and identify with.
JACL is the name by which we are
most recognized, not our full name.
I agree with National Director
Floyd Mori that it may be time to
use the acronym JACL with some
progressive tagline showing our
representation of the entire APA
community.

It has been 25 years since the
tragic killing of Vincent Chin, and
the entire APA community must
never forget how colorblind (or
ethnically blind) hate can be. I feel
that our community's changing
demographics show the need for
the JACL to be a more inclusive
APA organization.

DAVID KAWAMOTO
San Diego JACL

If We Must Change, Let's Keep it JACL

I'm a firm believer in interra-
cial/interfaith affairs, but it fills
me with regret to think of chang-
ing the name of an organization
that has been so important in the
lives of Japanese Americans. If
you feel you MUST change, why
not simply JACL? At least most
of us know what those initials
mean.

We can still cooperate with other
similar organizations even if we
keep our Japanese designation.

After all, my grandchildren may be
only half Japanese, but they
KNOW and are proud of being of
Japanese background!

In other words, I would prefer to
keep the entire name as is but if a
change is a MUST, then let's at
least keep it JACL! It does not pre-
clude cooperation with other ethnic
groups.

FUJIKO KITAGAWA
Via e-mail

So. Calif. JA Community Center Hoping to Rebuild

For decades, the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center brought the JA community together. The years have taken its toll on the popular social hall.

By **LYNDA LIN**
Assistant Editor

Since the 1960s, the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center's social hall has hosted countless bingo games, serene Ohigan ceremonies and sweaty Aikido practices for the local Japanese Americans who used the center as a hub of cultural and community activities.

"I grew up here," said Pearl Omiya, the ESGVJCC executive director. Omiya, a Yonsei, has been involved with the community center since she was five years old because her parents thought it was important to soak up some culture.

Now, the social hall located at 1203 West Puente Avenue in West Covina is a shadow of its former self. Years of water and termite damage have worn down the multipurpose room built in the 1930s forcing the ESGVJCC board members to officially close the doors of the social hall in July 2007.

"It's a sensitive building. Every time someone touches it, it seems to fall apart," said Omiya.

A Community Gathering Point

Dry rot and termite damage on the social hall's roof and beams were first discovered and repaired about 10 years ago, but repair efforts were as successful as bailing water out of a sinking boat. During storms, rainwater would seep through and form

unsightly brown stains on the ceiling. A Buddhist temple service was leaked on, said Omiya.

In the back of their minds, ESGVJCC officials knew the social hall was structurally damaged, so they kicked off a fundraising campaign in September 2006.

Finally in June 2007, a structural engineer confirmed their fears — the social hall was not up to earthquake safety codes, so the ESGVJCC staff and board members decided the only logical plan was to completely rebuild.

They're hoping to build a bigger, better and soundproof social hall with an additional 1,500 square feet for all their JA organizations to enjoy.

The goal is to raise \$1.5 million, said Glenn Nakatani, ESGVJCC board president. They need to reach 40 percent of their fundraising goal in order to start construction. They are currently at about 30 percent.

The community center needs an extra nudge in donations to start rebuilding.

The center has been central to Nakatani's family since Glenn first took his daughter Jamie to Buddhist temple services 15 years ago. Over the years, Jamie enrolled in Aikido and Japanese school and practiced jump shots with her basketball team members in the community center gym.

"So is the center worth it?" Nakatani wrote in this September's ESGVJCC newsletter. "And wouldn't it be a travesty if we let the center fade away? Where would our kids and seniors go?"

The community center has faced its share of crises since 1936 when Eijiro Machida donated the original 40 acres of land located in what is

today the Westfield West Covina Mall. The center bustled with cultural activities until the outbreak of war when it was turned into a grammar school run by Ted and Hazel Roberts, who took care of the center until JAs returned home in 1946.

In 1964, the city of West Covina used the power of eminent domain to force the community center out of its original location to make room for the mall. Now in its current location on Puente Avenue, the ESGVJCC faces the current battle to rebuild and remain viable.

A Home Away from Home

"I hated Japanese school! I took it for granted," exclaimed Omiya, who nevertheless graduated from the ESGVJCC Japanese language school and went on to teach English in Japan after graduating from the University of California, Los Angeles. When she returned home, the community center seemed to be frozen in time.

"Not much had changed."

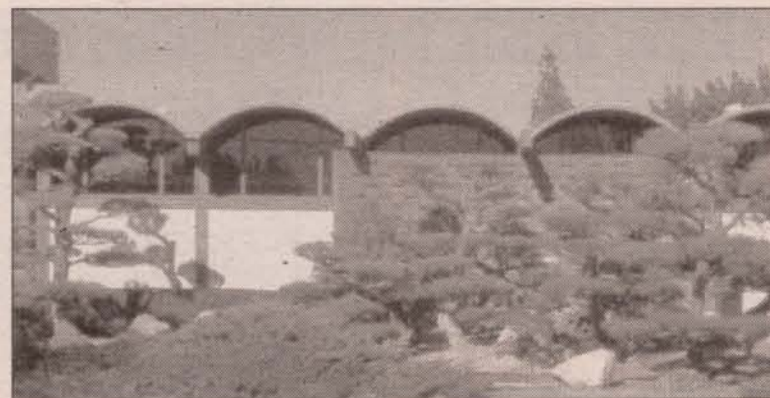
She was hired as the ESGVJCC operations manager in 2005 and promoted to executive director in December 2006. From the beginning, she started tackling maintenance problems, especially in the social hall.

"Now that I work here, I have a whole new appreciation for the building. It got used every single day," said Omiya.

The social hall's closure has resulted in a virtual game of musical chairs.

The Gakuen Japanese Language School classes, which were held in the social hall, are now relegated to the gym and breezeways.

"The students for the most part make the best with what they have,



'Where would our kids and seniors go?'

— **Glenn Nakatani**, ESGVJCC president

The West Covina social hall (top) was built in the 1930s. It was closed in July because of water and termite damage.

but acoustics are poor, and room temperature is difficult to control. Showing video, or audio presentations to those classes in the gym has yet to be solved, but the students and the faculty are working hard to reach those goals they set for this year," said Michael Lee, Gakuen board president.

The West Covina Buddhist Temple is currently sharing classroom space with Aikido classes and ballroom dancing. For larger ceremonies, the temple takes over the gym and cuts into basketball practice time.

"Oh my gosh, there's a lot less room," said Hideko Ikehara, who teaches a ballroom dancing class once a week at the community center with her husband Jim Ikehara. They are currently teaching about 40 students to twirl and dip in a limited space. Before and after every class, their students also have to move the Japanese school's desks. But they have all been understanding, said Hideko.



"People are working with us," said Omiya, but she sees looks of frustration. That's why they want to start construction as soon as possible. Once started, the project would take about nine months to complete. They've hired an architect and recently received city approval on their building plans.

Now they need the funds to keep the historical ESGVJCC alive for new generations of young leaders.

"It's all about the community," said Omiya. "For me, the center has always been a home away from home." ■

Help rebuild the social hall



Send checks or money order to: 'ESGVJCC' at 1203 W. Puente Ave., West Covina, CA. 91790 or donate online through PayPal at www.esgvjcc.org
INFO: 626/960-2566

Idaho Commissioners Mull Over Proposed Controversial Feedlot

Residents and former internees are concerned that the proposed feedlot will bring pollution to nearby Minidoka national monument.

By **Pacific Citizen Staff**

Over a two-day period of marathon public hearings, Jerome County Commissioners in Idaho took up the controversial issue of a proposed 13,000-heifer feedlot that has become a contentious issue not only for locals but also nationally.

The commissioners are taking up a feedlot application submitted by Big Sky Limited Partnership. Owner Don McFarland hopes to build a controversial feedlot in the eastern end of the county.



Karen Yoshitomi (left), PNW regional director, submits a photo of her maternal family during the recent Jerome County hearings on the Big Sky proposed feedlot.

AP PHOTO

McFarland's attorney John Lothspeich took less than 15 minutes to present his client's case to the commissioners, noting that all laws and regulations had been followed throughout the application process.

But the majority of those attending the hearings were opposed to the proposed feedlot. Locals expressed concern about the pollution such a

feedlot would bring to the area. Former World War II internees worry that the close proximity of the feedlot to the Minidoka Internment National Monument would have an adverse effect on those visiting the historic site.

"The Minidoka Internment National Monument is an American story ... and part of the heritage of

Jerome County," said Neil King, National Park Service superintendent, in the *Times-News*. The NPS currently oversees the historic site.

King noted that although only a few thousand people currently visit the Minidoka site each year, the NPS is working to develop the site and it could attract close to 80,000 visitors annually in the near future. The proposed feedlot would be about two miles from the historic site.

Former WWII internee Gus Tanaka, 84, presented written testimony at the hearings. Karen Yoshitomi, PNW regional director and a descendant of former internees, submitted a photo of her mother and grandparents as evidence and urged the commissioners to vote down the proposed feedlot.

Janeil Stewart lives near the proposed feedlot and testified that she

worries about the health effects her family could suffer if the feedlot is built.

"It's your responsibility to protect me and my family," she said to the commissioners as reported in the *Times-News*.

After two days of lengthy public hearings the Jerome County Commissioners are now reviewing the 500-page case file of testimonies and documents.

The commissioners are scheduled to deliberate the application on Oct. 9 and at that time a final decision could be announced. The meeting will be open to the public although testimony will not be allowed during that time.

Either way, a lawsuit is likely to be filed by those who are unhappy with the commissioners' pending decision. ■

Pentagon: Dropping Yee's Porn, Adultery Reprimand was a Mistake

By GENE JOHNSON
AP Legal Affairs Writer

SEATTLE—The Pentagon's inspector general has concluded that for the most part, the Army properly handled the case of a Muslim Army chaplain who was detained for 76 days and then cleared in an espionage probe.

A two-page, unclassified executive summary of the inspector general's review released Sept. 19 cited two mistakes: That a general exceeded his authority by throwing out Capt. James Yee's reprimand for adultery and downloading pornography; and that a deputy public affairs officer violated policy by writing a letter to *The New York Times* about the case.

"In my view, what was reported was utterly ridiculous," Yee, 39, told *The Olympian* newspaper. "It's a huge cover-up. That's why independent investigations are necessary. People conducting this investigation were not unbiased."

Yee's attorney, Gene Fidell, told *The Associated Press* the document was "preposterous" and that he was never contacted by the Defense Department's Office of the Inspector General. The office launched its investigation in mid-2004 at the request of Democratic lawmakers who questioned whether Yee was unfairly targeted because of his religion.

"What kind of investigation is this?" Fidell asked. "Why is it took them three years? Three years, and they come up with two pages? This is a deep insult to Congress, not to mention Chaplain Yee. Congress had a right to expect more, better, sooner."

Yee, who had been based at Fort Lewis south of Tacoma, was arrested in 2003 and charged with mishan-

dling classified material and other crimes in a suspected espionage ring at the Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba, but the criminal charges were dropped as the Army determined there was no such conspiracy. He was then reprimanded for adultery and downloading porn.



CAPT. JAMES YEE

Gen. James T. Hill, commander of the U.S. Southern Command, threw out that reprimand in early 2004, saying, "I do not believe,

given the extreme notoriety of his case in the news media, that further stigmatizing Chaplain Yee would serve a just and fair purpose."

Hill's decision exceeded his authority under Army regulations, the summary said, but no corrective action was recommended.

Lt. Col. Bill Costello, a deputy public affairs officer with the Army's Southern Command in Miami, wrote a letter to the editor of *The Times* in March 2004 defending the handling of the case. Doing so violated policy, the summary said. It recommended that Costello's commander consider whether he should be punished.

The inspector general's review was launched in mid-2004 at the request of Democratic lawmakers who questioned whether Yee was unfairly targeted because of his religion.

"Our review concluded that DOD officials acted properly in initiating a counterintelligence investigation of Chaplain Yee and later in apprehend-

ing him after a search by Bureau of Customs and Border Protection, Department of Homeland Security personnel and military authorities revealed he possessed suspected classified information," the summary said. "Further, we found that DOD officials acted in good faith and within applicable standards in ordering Chaplain Yee's initial and continued pretrial confinement and Chaplain Yee was not targeted because of his religious affiliation."

Yee told *The Olympian* he didn't understand why the report concluded he had not been abused.

"I was strip-searched daily. I was subjected to sensory deprivation, blocking my eyesight and hearing," he said. "That borders on torture."

The review found 54 documents containing secret information, according to the footnote. Yee has said there were no classified materials in his possession, and most of the documents had been downloaded from the Internet for a postgraduate course in international relations.

"Why was this gentleman put in confinement for 72 days?" Fidell asked. "If this stuff was really classified, why didn't they charge him? Why didn't they persist?"

Yee said the documents were actually notes he had taken on the treatment of prisoners at Guantanamo Bay.

"They weren't classified. It's to cover up the war crimes at Guantanamo," he said.

A Pentagon spokeswoman said no one was immediately available after hours to discuss the summary.

Yee received an honorable discharge in January 2005, followed by an Army commendation for "exceptionally meritorious service." He wrote a book about his experience at Guantanamo, "For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire." ■

National Newsbytes

By Pacific Citizen Staff and Associated Press

Wisconsin Hunter's Murder Trial Revives Fears of Racial Tension

WAUSAU, Wis.—Jury selection is underway for the trial of the Wisconsin man who killed a Hmong man after a clash in the woods.

James Nichols, 29, is accused of shooting and stabbing 30-year-old Cha Vang of Green Bay, whose body was found Jan. 6 in a wildlife refuge where both were hunting squirrels.

Nichols claims the killing was in self-defense, but prosecutors contend he disliked Hmong hunters. Nichols is charged with first-degree intentional homicide, hiding a corpse and being a felon in possession of a firearm. If convicted of murder, the mandatory punishment is life in prison.

The case raised fears about racial tensions between white and Hmong hunters.

In 2004, deer hunter Chai Soua Vang of St. Paul, Minn. fatally shot six white hunters. He said the whites shouted racial epithets at him and one opened fire first.



CHA VANG

Mattel Apology Overdue but Will Boost Confidence in China Exports



BEIJING—China's state media recently welcomed U.S. toy maker Mattel's apology over its recalls of Chinese-made toys.

Mattel apologized in Beijing for recalling 21 million toys this summer, the majority of which had small magnets that could fall out and be harmful to children if swallowed.

Mattel admitted the problem was a design flaw — not the fault of Chinese manufacturers.

However, the recalls also included hundreds of thousands of toys with hazardous lead-tainted paint. Mattel said it pulled more of those toys than necessary and made Chinese manufacturers look bad.

Suspects Perpetuated Hate Crime Against APA High School Student

AVON LAKE, Ohio—Two Avon Lake High School students vandalized an APA classmate's car by scrawling a racial epithet and smearing fecal material and urine on her vehicle.

The Sept. 21 incident occurred while the victim, a school marching band member, was performing at an away football game.

The two male suspects, 17 and 15, were suspended and removed from school. They now face expulsion hearings and criminal prosecution.

APA Students Condemn Police Arrest as Race Based

NEW YORK—A Columbia University APA student group is calling for a thorough investigation in the Sept. 14 arrest of Garam Sohn, the APA student who is accusing police officers of racism.

Sohn was stopped by police officers on the corner of 114th Street and Broadway. He was holding an open beer can. According to witnesses, one of the officers asked the mostly APA crowd, "Have you had too much sake tonight?"

Sohn was released but charged with four misdemeanors.

The Columbia University Asian American Alliance condemns the incident and says it may point to a larger issue within the NYPD and its treatment of minorities.

Asian Fishermen are Targeted in a Series of Hate Crimes

TORONTO—Since April, Asian fishing aficionados have faced a series of attacks, some locals disparaging call "nippertipping."

Sometimes they are thrown over a bridge along with their equipment.

According to published reports, an Asian fisherman was fishing near Westport when a white pickup truck slowed on the bridge and a woman told the group to go away because it was not a fishing site. The fisherman moved under the bridge.

Later, four men carrying axes and baseball bats charged at the fisherman and swung the axe within an inch of his face.

Local police have launched a hate crime investigation into four such incidents near Lake Simcoe. ■

Stamp Committee to Review Nisei Veterans Stamp Proposal

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

A grassroots campaign to honor Nisei World War II veterans with a postage stamp recently received news that their proposal will be officially reviewed by the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee.

In a letter dated Sept. 24 to Wayne Osako, campaign coordinator and nephew of five Nisei soldiers, USPS Stamp Development Department Manager Terrence McCaffrey relayed the good news.

"You may be pleased to know that this proposal will be submitted for review and consideration before the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee. The Committee is responsible for reviewing stamp proposals and making subject and design recommendations to the Postmaster General."

The Nisei WWII soldiers stamp proposal will be considered for stamps printed in 2010 and subsequent years. Stamps for 2008-2009



Could a stamp like this be in the future?

have already been selected by the Postmaster General.

The grassroots campaign is encouraging supporters to continue sending in letters of support to the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee and to sign their petition at www.minorityvetstamps.org for those who have yet to do so.

Letters of support should be mailed to: Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, United States Postal Service—Stamp Development, Attn: Mr. Terrence McCaffrey, 1735 North Lynn Street, Suite 5013, Arlington,

Virginia 22209-6432

"Let's keep up the pressure, and really make a good push now," said Osako.

The Nisei WWII soldiers stamp series proposal will also feature the Tuskegee airmen and the Navajo code talkers.

The mostly JA units that served in WWII received more than 18,000 individual decorations, including 21 Medals of Honor, 559 Silver Stars, 4,000 Bronze Stars and an astounding 9,486 Purple Hearts.

The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which suffered more than 800 casualties during the war, is considered the most highly decorated combat unit of its size and length of service in U.S. military history. Its members received eight Presidential Unit Citations. ■

For more information: www.minorityvetstamps.org.

APAs in the News

By Pacific Citizen Staff

San Jose JACL to Recognize Community Leaders in Upcoming Dinner

The San Jose JACL has selected the honorees for its upcoming community recognition dinner on Oct. 27. The 2007 recipients are: **John Hayakawa, Tom and Helen Masuda, Jack Matsuoka, Tom Oshidari, Terry Oshidari, Aki Toyoshima** (posthumously) and **Sue Toyoshima**. The **San Jose Taiko** will also be honored.

The honorees were selected for their dedication to upholding the mission of the San Jose JACL: education, civil liberties, community partnerships and social/cultural activities.

SF Suspends Jew, Names New Interim Supervisor

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom suspended Supervisor **Ed Jew** on charges of official misconduct and named an interim replacement to the board of supervisors.

Newsom named deputy finance director **Carmen Chu** as Jew's temporary replacement on the board.

The district attorney has already charged Jew with nine felony counts of perjury and vote fraud on the question of his residency.

The FBI has also filed a criminal complaint against Jew, charging him with one count of federal mail fraud for allegedly soliciting bribes from local storeowners.

Jew has pleaded not guilty to all the state and federal charges.

Four APAs Among 'Genius Grants' Recipients

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation recently awarded 24 new genius fellowships to artists, engineers and others who display creativity, originality and potential to make important contributions in the future.

Each will receive \$500,000 over the next five years. Among the winners are:

Cheryl Hayashi, an associate professor in the department of Biology at UC Riverside; **My Hang Huynh**, a chemist at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico; **Shen Wei**, the founder and artistic director of the Shen Wei Dance Arts in New York City; and **Yoky Matsuoka**, an associate professor in the department of computer science and engineering at the University of Washington, Seattle.

JCCH Gala Honored Hawai'i Educators

The **Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i** honored four educators in Hawai'i's community and a corporate honoree at its Sept. 29 "Celebration of Leadership and Achievement Dinner."

The JCCH recognized educators **Jane O. Komeiji, Richard H. Kosaki, Ph.D., Margaret Y. Oda, Ed.D., Dennis M. Ogawa, Ph.D.** and corporate honoree **Island Insurance Companies Ltd.** at its gala event of the year. The **Makiki Japanese Language School** also received special recognition.

Chiang Receives Leadership Award



Calif. State Controller **John Chiang** received the 2007 Leadership Award from KHEIR (Health, Education, Information and Research), a service agency providing multilingual and culturally sensitive healthcare to the underserved and uninsured residents of Los Angeles and neighboring communities.

Chiang was presented the honor Sept. 20 for his commitment to his community and increasing access to healthcare.

Living Legacy Receives \$10,000

The Americans of Japanese Ancestry World War II Memorial Alliance awarded Japanese American Living Legacy \$10,000 to continue their educational program on JA soldiers killed in action during WWII.

The funds will also be used to develop and maintain the Alliance's Web site.

The JA Living Legacy projects preserve the memories and experiences of WWII JA soldiers. ■

JACL Expresses Concern Over Unfair Treatment of 'Jena 6'

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

The JACL expressed concern over the apparent unequal treatment of six black youth from Jena, La. known as the "Jena Six" who have been charged with the beating of a fellow white student.

Thousands of people converged in this small city Sept. 20 in a massive show of support for the six youth.

Five of the black teenagers were initially charged with attempted murder in the beating of a white classmate but that charge was reduced to battery for all but one, who has yet to be arraigned; the sixth was charged as a juvenile.

The six teens were charged amid racial tension that had been growing after the local prosecutor declined to charge three white teens who hung nooses in a tree on their high school grounds.

The JACL's National Youth Student Council, which represents the voice of JACL members under the age of 25, declared the issues surrounding the Jena Six of particular relevance, as it involves clear violations of civil rights with regard to race and youth in a school setting.

"As student and youth representatives of the JACL, we empathize with the black students in Jena as we have also been the target of discrimination and racism on school playgrounds and inside classrooms. We hope that this incident sheds light on



The tree where the nooses were found.

the critical state of race and youth in our society," said Brandon Mita, a representative from the Youth Student Council and law student at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

The JACL did not condone the violence, but instead expressed its disappointment with the way the case has been handled by school officials, local law enforcement and the Louisiana judicial process.

"Equal treatment and fairness under the law remains the critical concern of the JACL," said National Director Floyd Mori. "The Jena Six case is troubling and has overtones of the Vincent Chin incident where

the victims have more reason for concern than the perpetrators of hate."

The beating victim, Justin Barker, was knocked unconscious, his face badly swollen and bloodied, though he was able to attend a school function later that night.

The district attorney who is prosecuting the teens, Reed Walters, denied that racism was involved in the charges.

He said he didn't charge the white students accused of hanging the nooses because he could find no Louisiana law under which they could be charged. In the beating case, he said, four of the defendants were of adult

age under Louisiana law and the only juvenile charged as an adult, Mychal Bell, had a prior criminal record.

"It is not and never has been about race," Walters said. "It is about finding justice for an innocent victim and holding people accountable for their actions."

"This is the most blatant example of disparity in the justice system that we've seen," Rev. Al Sharpton told CBS's "The Early Show" before arriving in Jena. "You can't have two standards of justice."

"We didn't bring race into it," he said. "Those that hung the nooses brought the race into it." ■

U.S. Senate Democrats Try to Advance Hate Crime Bill; Opponents Say it will Fail

The Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007 would strengthen existing federal hate crimes law, something JACL is strongly in support of.

By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

WASHINGTON—The Senate used a legislative maneuver Sept. 27 to try to advance a proposal to help U.S. states prosecute attacks on homosexuals, but opponents predicted it would fail.

They attached a hate crime measure to a must-pass bill to fund the war in Iraq in an effort to force President George W. Bush to sign it into law. Opponents, citing Bush's earlier veto threat of the hate crimes legislation, predicted it ultimately would fail.

"The president is not going to agree to this social legislation on the defense authorization bill," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Republican. "This bill will get vetoed."

Attaching hard-to-pass legislation to must-pass bills is a well-established strategy used by lawmakers of both parties, no matter who controls

the chamber. Success means forcing squeamish lawmakers to technically vote for controversial policies embedded in massive spending bills — then hold them accountable at re-election time.

Nonetheless, the Senate agreed by voice vote — with no dissenting votes — to attach the hate-crimes provision to a pending defense authorization bill that designates billions of federal dollars to the Defense Department and the Iraq war.

The bill is named for Matthew Shepard, a gay college freshman who was beaten into a coma in 1998. He died five days later.

The White House had no immediate comment Sept. 27.

The national JACL has long been in support of the hate crimes bill better known as the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2007. The organization has been encouraging its chapter members to ask their Senators to vote for the bill.

"The JACL strongly supports the passage of this amendment," the JACL stated in an action alert. "The JACL was founded out of a need to protect those suffering under dis-

criminatory practices directed toward minority Asian populations in 1929. Today, the JACL continues to fight for victims of hate through supporting measures such as this Kennedy-Smith amendment."

The White House has contended that state and local laws already cover the new crimes defined under the hate crimes proposal and that there is no need to provide federal sanctions for what could be a wide range of violent crimes.

The hate crimes amendment is especially tempting for majority Democrats because of Bush's weakened status — he has less than 16 months left in office — and some support for the measure among Republicans.

But given Bush's veto threat against the provision, it seemed headed for a familiar fate. The Senate in 2004 attached similar legislation to the same authorization bill, but it was stripped out in negotiations with the House.

Republicans were careful not to attack the intent of the legislation, focusing instead on what they said was the "non-germane" nature of the amendment to the overall spending bill. ■

Heart Mountain Foundation Launches Campaign for Interpretive Center

The Heart Mountain, Wyoming Foundation (HMWF) has launched a campaign to raise funds for a \$5.4 million Interpretive Learning Center to be placed on original Heart Mountain Relocation Center land purchased by HMWF. Heart Mountain was recently designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

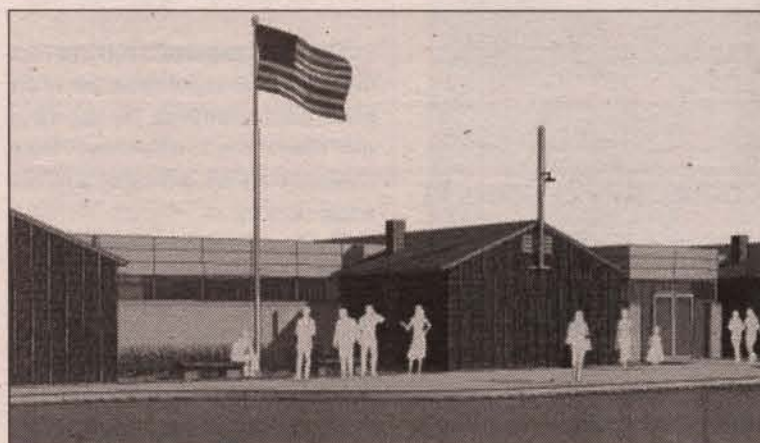
Other recent on site HMWF accomplishments have included the restoration of the original Honor Roll containing names of those who served in the military during WWII from the Relocation Center and a multi-station self-guided Walking Tour dedicated to the memory of Setsuko Saito Higuchi. HMWF privately raised \$275,000 to purchase the land, reconstruct the Honor Roll and build the Walking Tour.

Honorary campaign co-chairs are former U.S. Sec. of Transportation Norman Mineta and former U.S.

Sen. Alan Simpson. Mineta was an internee along with his family and then met Simpson at a Boy Scout Jamboree held at the Relocation Center. Both later served in Congress at the same time and have remained friends for over 65 years.

The Interpretive Learning Center (ILC) will provide an overview of the wartime relocation of Americans of Japanese Ancestry, including the background of Asian prejudice in America and the factors leading to the enforced confinement of West Coast Americans of Japanese ancestry. Special emphasis will be given to constitutional issues, civil liberties and rights, diversity education/training and ethnic understanding.

The ILC will also provide visitors with a more intimate connection to the personal stories of the internees and local residents dur-



The Learning Center (above) will also provide visitors with a more intimate connection to the personal stories of former internees.

ing WWII. The Center will include a theatre, two re-created barrack living quarters, interactive exhibits and research capabilities, as well as a reconstructed sentry station at the park entrance, and a re-created guard tower in its original location.

Its location next to Yellowstone National Park will make it an important and accessible cultural and historic learning resource for thousands of tourists who visit the area every year.

HMWF fundraising co-chairs include Douglas Nelson, president

of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Hon. Raymond Uno, retired judge of the Third District Judicial Court of the State of Utah, and Shirley Ann Higuchi, assistant executive director for Legal and Regulatory Affairs at the American Psychological Association and past president of the District of Columbia Bar.

HMWF has already raised \$784,000 toward the Center and expects to have enough funding in place by the fall of 2008 to allow a formal ground breaking to occur. Key naming opportunities are incorporated into the Center, with information available upon request.

Requests for fundraising packets or for information may be directed to HMWF at 307/754-2689 or pwolfe@wavecom.net.

More information may be accessed on the HMWF Web site at www.heartmountain.net. ■

Nina Fallenbaum Selected as New Masaoka Fellow

Nina Kahori Fallenbaum is the recipient of the 2007-2008 Mike M. Masaoka Congressional Fellowship, the JACL announced recently.

Fallenbaum will spend approximately three and a half months beginning early in 2008 working in the Congressional office of Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii. She will learn about policy-making and public service first hand.

Fallenbaum received an undergraduate degree in interdisciplinary studies from UC Berkeley. She is currently attending Meiji Gakuin University for a master's in public policy.

The fellowship is named for Mike M. Masaoka (1915-1991), who spent a lifetime of outstanding public service for the

causes of the JACL and Japanese Americans.

The JACL established the Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship Fund in 1988 with its main purpose to develop leaders for public service and provide opportunities for college seniors or graduate students to work for a U.S. senator or member of the House of Representatives. ■



Want to be the Next Fellow?

College students who are interested in the fellowship should check out the JACL Web site at www.jacl.org.

The next deadline for applications is April 1, 2008.

The fellowship provides a stipend of \$10,000. Applicants should be members of the JACL.



(l-r) Current U.S. Sec. of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez with immediate former Sec. of Transportation Norman Mineta and JACL National Director Floyd Mori at the Sept. 17 portrait unveiling.

U.S. Dept. of Commerce Unveils Official Mineta Portrait

By Pacific Citizen Staff

The U.S. Department of Commerce recently unveiled the official portrait of the Honorable Norman Mineta who served as its Secretary from July 21, 2000, to Jan. 19, 2001, when the Administration changed. He was then appointed U.S. Sec. of Transportation under the new Bush administration.

The Honorable Carlos M. Gutierrez, the current U.S. Secretary of Commerce, unveiled Mineta's portrait on Sept. 17. The portrait will hang alongside the various Secretaries of Commerce who have served over the years.

Mineta's portrait represents the family, history, and accomplishments of the Secretary over the years. In addition to Mineta, it shows a photo of his family at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, where they were interned during World War II. It also features Sather Gate on the U.C. Berkeley Campus from which Mineta graduated before joining the U.S. Army.

In honoring Mineta, Gutierrez noted his life of extraordinary service to the nation and his devotion to opportunity and justice. Although Mineta served for only a short time as U.S. Secretary of Commerce, he was instrumental in his work on oceans, fisheries, and NOAA (National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration).

Mineta was the first Asian American to be

appointed to a Presidential Cabinet and became the first person to switch directly from a Democratic Cabinet to a Republican Cabinet when he was appointed to the post of Sec. of Transportation under President George W. Bush. Mineta resigned his position last year and to date he is the longest serving Sec. of Transportation in the history of the country. He currently works for the renowned public relations firm of Hill and Knowlton in Washington, D.C.

Mineta's portrait unveiling was held on the 20th anniversary of the passing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 by the House of Representatives, which occurred on Sept. 17, 1987. Mineta was a driving force behind its passage. The Redress bill was later signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1988.

Speaking at the event were Susy Smith, Mineta's chief of staff at Commerce; Glen Roberts, who wrote the Redress legislation; and Chris Stroebel, who was director of Legislation for Congressman Mineta in 1988. Former California Congressman Don Edwards, who helped get the Redress legislation through the judiciary committee, also attended the ceremony.

In addition to his wife Deni, Mineta's sister, Etsu Masaoka, and Etsu's son-in-law and granddaughter, Richard and Michelle Amano, attended the unveiling. ■

Fresno Chinatown's Secret Tunnels



AP PHOTO/GARY KAZANJIAN

Fresno, Calif.'s Chinatown has a secret: tunnels underneath the neighborhood.

Archaeologists are beginning to map out the brick-walled passages using ground-penetrating radar.

Chinatown Revitalization Vice President Kathy Omachi (left) said they will try to match the findings with the memories of older residents who remember the neighborhood in its boom days.

NAT'L DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Many Thanks for a Successful Gala

By FLOYD MORI

Although you may have already read about the JACL gala dinner, I want to add my thanks and comments. While it is impossible to mention everyone, I want to express my personal thank you to all who supported the event in any way.

When John Tateishi (former national director) and I began talking about doing a gala in the nation's capital, we realized it would be a huge task. However, we felt that the JACL needed the exposure that a gala would bring, and it could be a

means of raising additional funds for the organization.

Norman Mineta, who has been generous to the APA communities, consented to be the honorary chairman. A committee was formed and the planning began. Debee Yamamoto was willing to serve as co-chair of the event. She was invaluable in that capacity and was later hired to be the JACL director of public policy.

There were some mistakes and criticism, but all in all, the inaugural national JACL gala was a success. We wanted it to be different and

memorable and hoped people would be enlightened and inspired. Some commented that it was the best gala they have attended. They may have been overly kind, but it did turn out well.

Thanks to George Takei for being an excellent master of ceremonies. Tamaki Kawakubo came from her tour in Germany and performed exceptional violin solos during the program. Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA) members — Brigadier General Bert Mizusawa, Joë Ichijui, and Grant Ichikawa — posted the colors with General Mizusawa's boy scout sons leading the Pledge of Allegiance. David Lin from AT&T offered remarks on behalf of the sponsors.

The honorees are true "Champions." State Farm Insurance was represented by vice president Vance Yoshikawa and our good friend Leslie Moe-Kaiser, among others. Sen. Daniel Inouye and Karen Narasaki were eloquent and gracious. Ambassador Kato had to be in Japan and sent a video of his acceptance. Sen. Larry Craig, who was helpful with Minidoka, was unable to attend and was presented with the award later in his office.

A number of out of towners supported the event including Bronze Sponsors: JACL President Larry Oda with his wife Ann, and Vice



JACL CHAMPION: Idaho Sen. Larry Craig (second from right) receives his Champions Award from (l-r) Debee Yamamoto, Meilee Wong and Floyd Mori. Sen. Craig was honored for his work with Minidoka.

President of General Operations Sheldon Arakaki. Former JACL President Helen Kawagoe was also a Bronze Sponsor. Vice President of Planning & Development Carol Kawamoto and her husband David donated to the gala.

George and Janice Higashi purchased a table and came from California along with Fred Oshima, Edith Ichijui, Harry and Micki Honda, and Judge Dale Ikeda. Maya Hata Lemmon represented the Intermountain District Council although she now lives in Union City, Calif. Special thanks to Jim Tashiro of Salinas who provided the beautiful flowers and to Jennifer Iba for putting together the centerpieces.

It was especially gratifying that John and Carol Tateishi were able to attend. Bill Yoshino, Midwest regional director, came from Chicago. Past National President Lillian Kimura and Ron Uba attend-

ed from New York. Steve Yagi, Renee Tuck, and Cheryl Mori came from Salt Lake City. Elsie Taniguchi, along with Arakaki and Maya Yamazaki, represented PNW.

The Eastern District Council with Hiro Nishikawa as governor expressed early support when they first heard about plans for the gala. New EDC Gov. Kristine Minami helped out. The EDC was well represented with the Washington, D.C. chapter, under the direction of President Craig Uchida, and other EDC chapters buying tables and turning out in force.

We are also grateful for the support from our coalition partners, our friends in D.C.'s APA community and the many staff members from Congressional offices who attended.

Of course, we owe much gratitude to the planning committee and volunteers and to those who purchased tables, individual tickets, and ads. ■

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Oregon Family's License Plates Deemed Offensive to APAs

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

MERLIN, Ore.—A Merlin family has been ordered to turn in the vanity license plates for their cars because the state finds their Dutch name can be interpreted as offensive to Asian Pacific Americans.

The plates, UDINK1 UDINK2 and UDINK3 are on the vehicles of Mike and Shelly Udink and their son Kalei.

Two of the plates are five and seven years old. One was issued last year.

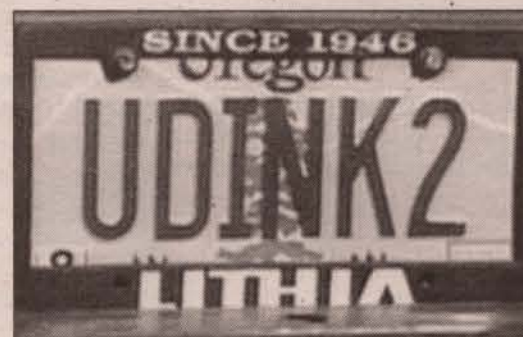
Last summer Kawika Udink's application for Udink4 was rejected and the state ordered the other three plates returned.

The plates are now invalid and the 90-day temporary registrations sent to the family in June are also likely expired, according to David House, spokesman for the state Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Division.

The plates were deemed offensive by a 10-person DMV panel that approves custom, or "vanity" plates, which cost an extra \$80.

House, who serves on the panel, said the reasons were the sexual references that can be associated with the name, which can be treated as a verb.

"DINK has several derogatory meanings," wrote panel member



appears, are not immune.

"When people drive down the street nobody knows your name," House said.

"We know some people have names that match something. We've also had a lot of references to ecstasy that we've pulled back

in the past five years, because it became a nickname for a drug," he said.

Michael Udink's second cousin, Dennis Udink, of Price, Utah, tried to get a rule change allowing family names to be exempt but failed.

The DMV denies requests for any combination of letters and numbers that may be viewed as objectionable, in any language, by use of phonetic, numeric or reverse spelling, or when viewed as a mirror image, or that would alarm or offend a reasonable person, although some howlers have gotten through.

Intimate body parts or sexual or bodily functions are taboo as are references in an alarming or offensive manner to race, color, gender, ethnic heritage, or national origin or to alcohol or drugs or paraphernalia. ■

Yvonne Bell. She said it also can be a racial slur, especially toward Vietnamese.

House said the "U" in the front could be construed as "You."

It seems unreal to Mike Udink, whose name is Dutch. He says it is a common name in The Netherlands.

"Since when can a panel dictate whether your name's offensive or not?" asked Udink, a lineman for Pacific Power.

The family wonders why the plates were fine for years, then recalled.

"Somebody pointed it out to us," said House. "We get dozens of requests every day. We can miss things, and we have. Sometimes we let it go and see if we get complaints."

House said the state has the right to censor license plates, because the state owns them. Family names, it

• YUMI SAKUGAWA •

MEMOIRS OF A NON-GEISHA

It's a Wander-ful Life



One of my fellow teachers, who is in the same English-language teaching company as I am in Japan, had just come back from an English-language-teaching stint in the Czech Republic for adult students. Another fellow teacher had already taught English language to fifth-graders in Honduras, where she lived on a salary of \$500 a month and was once nearly mugged in broad daylight. The teacher whom I shadowed for a week had already taught English in Bolivia and was already looking for another teaching job in Central America.

I have freshly entered the global subculture of the vagabond English-language teacher.

However different our upbringings and backgrounds, we all more or less fit a very similar profile. We have wanderlust. We probably don't have much money. We are somewhat fresh out of college and have absolutely no idea what to do for our careers — or we do, and we don't want to confront it quite yet. We want to buy ourselves a year or two or three before we inevitably confront the economic reality of even more formal schooling — or moving back home to our parents.

In Japan, I imagine that such a Western sentiment would be considered indulgent and ridiculous. Once you graduate from college in Japan, it is rather formulaic: work for a big company, get married, and extra bonus points if you make a lot of babies to reverse the country's declining birth rate.

Japanese college graduates may be more efficient than we are in immediately joining the workforce with a financially feasible job. The country fails miserably, though, in providing an educational infrastructure that actually teaches their students decent, conversational English. And this is where the native-English speaking, unemployed vagabond with the useless college degree steps right in.

Vagabonds like me.

It's not a bad life, to be an English-language teacher in Japan. I will only be working 25 to 30 hours a week, which allows me adequate free time to pursue other activities, such as traveling and writing. I am paid a decent salary that allows me to send substantial money back home.

For some people, this lifestyle becomes addictive. They were only planning on teaching for a year, but then it stretched to three. Or they get promoted into higher positions within the company and stay even longer. In extreme cases, they end up marrying a Japanese person and have half-Japanese kids.

I am living now with my relatives, in the house where my mother grew up in. She lived here until at the age of 24, she went on a trip to America and decided that she had fallen in love with California's mild, Mediterranean climate.

She ended up never coming home.

Earlier today, I had a video-chat session with my mother while my grandmother sat next to me. Grandmother, mother and daughter — three generations of women all framed within a tiny window on my Macbook monitor. It was a rather surreal experience.

"Of course you don't have to worry about her for the next year while she's with us," my grandmother told my mother. "And maybe even another year if she wants ..."

"One year," my mother interrupted. "She's only there for one year." Thousands of miles away and 16 hours into the past, I could hear in my mother's voice an underlying command to squelch further ideas of working abroad or country-hopping for an even longer period of time. I wondered if she was afraid I would do the same thing that she did decades before, but in reverse migration.

The three of us laughed. Of course I was going to come home a year from now. Or was I? ■

Yumi Sakugawa is currently teaching English in Japan.



Yumi with fellow English teacher Jillian Leeder (right) in Japan.

• JOHN TATEISHI •

FOR THE RECORD



NASCAR: A Barometer of America

Earlier this year, Toyota entered three racing teams in the NASCAR circuit and was caught off guard when their entry created a backlash by other sponsored teams and by fans. They mistakenly thought they would be welcomed on the famed racing circuit, especially with one of their teams owned by NASCAR icon Michael Waltrip.

The negative reaction by other teams was based on the unfounded assumption that Toyota would invest undue amounts in the development of their cars' racing engines to give them an edge, despite NASCAR's strict uniformity rules. But it was the fan reaction that Toyota completely misjudged, even as they undoubtedly were being advised by a large mainstream PR firm.

Back in the late 1970s, when Toyota agreed to invest over \$1 billion to create over 3,500 jobs by putting a plant in Kentucky, they were baffled by the reaction of Kentucky residents and the outcry of the UAW in the area. After all, they were bringing money and jobs to the area and couldn't understand why there was so much negative reaction at their announcement.

The South, with all its southern hospitality and southern gentility, was still the South. And Toyota thought all they had to do was announce their arrival and they would be greeted with open arms. Wrong. So wrong.

The result was predictable in the 1970s when there was so much Japan-bashing focused on the auto industry. And once again, Toyota has been caught off guard with the hostile and volatile reaction to their announcement that they were entering the NASCAR circuit.

What Toyota doesn't seem to realize about NASCAR is that it's a southern sport, something that belongs to the good old boys. It's as exclusively southern as anything is in that region. Just listen to the drivers. They almost all speak with heavy southern accents.

Stock car racing on dirt tracks began back in the days of prohibition, when moonshiners in the South used to drive at break-neck speeds over backcountry dirt roads to avoid law enforcement. Some of them were amazing drivers who used to get together to race each other when they weren't busy delivering their moonshine. Over the years, stock car racing remained a southern sport run on oval dirt tracks until television saw entertainment value in it and made it a multi-billion dollar industry.

At the time NASCAR hit television, many of the cars still ran with confederate flags painted on their roofs and

hoods. For the American viewing public who wanted speed but didn't understand Grand Prix racing, NASCAR was a perfect entertainment item. One sports writer who loved Grand Prix racing for its demands of finely tuned machines, intricate skills and high risks wrote back in the early days of NASCAR on television, it's the dumbing-down of high speed auto racing, perfect for American white audiences, not just from the south, but all over the country.

Unlike the Indy, Cart, or Champ racing circuits, which attracts international drivers from Formula One racing, NASCAR has almost always been exclusively American. It's always been and still is a good old boys sport, and with the occasional exception of someone like Jeff Gordon (from Vallejo, Calif.).

So when Toyota announced it was entering cars in the NASCAR circuit, it was little wonder that the reaction would be so immediate and negative. This wasn't like when Honda entered the Grand Prix circuit, or when both Toyota and Mazda entered cars in European Rally series, both truly international sports.

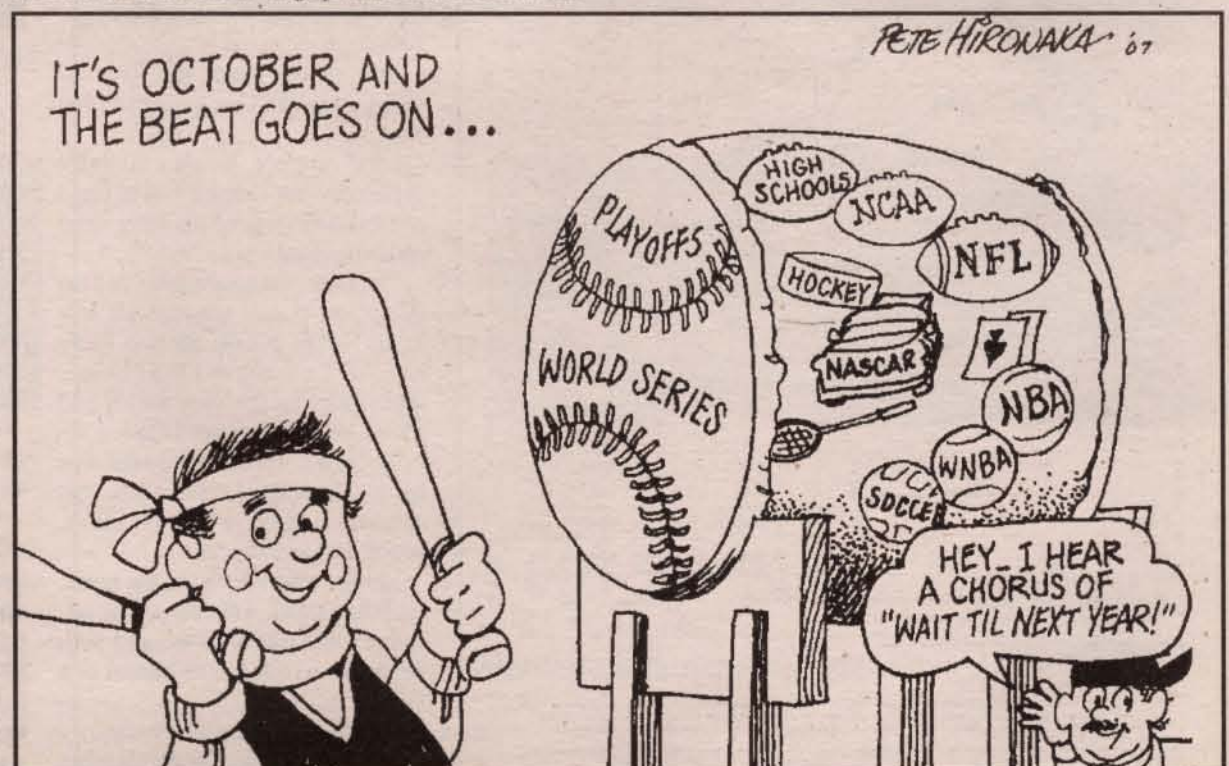
And this wasn't a foreign car manufacturer breaking new ground so much as stepping on sacred ground. If they had thought about it, they would have seen that the reaction could only be negative. Again, it was so predictable.

There's something much more troubling about NASCAR fan reaction to Toyota's announcement. It's not just the good old boys in the South who reacted but was all over the country, and it's not just guys who follow NASCAR: women are also a huge part of the fan base.

What's happened is a barometer of attitudes in this country, and the barometer seems to be turning anti-Asian, reminiscent of the anti-Japan sentiments of the 1980s. In my seven years as the JACL's national director, I saw evidence of a growing anti-Asian sentiment across the country, and this is only symptomatic.

It's difficult to know what's caused it: the explosive increase of the Asian population in the U.S. in the past 30 years, APAs gaining in the job market (up to a point), a growing xenophobia against immigrants of color, or any number of factors. Whatever they are, they've raised the ante on us once again, and this is something we're just going to have to deal with. Once again. ■

John Tateishi is the immediate past JACL national director.



This Birdie Can Sing

She may come from a small Minnesota town, but this 19-year-old Laotian American carries a big voice.

By Lynda Lin
Assistant Editor

It was supposed to be Birdie's time to shine.

Sept. 23 was the night the 19-year-old songstress was going to raise her voice as the headliner at the Trocadero, a popular restaurant and nightclub in downtown Minneapolis, Minn. Clad in a red leather outfit, she was going to silence the critics with her powerhouse voice.

"It was my show," she said breathlessly over the phone days after the event. But like a lot of things in Birdie's life, her debut was marred with drama — not the epic kind, just lies and broken promises.

She was only able to perform half of her 12-song routine. Plus to add insult to injury, every time she walked offstage for a breath, the house DJ would start playing over her music.

"We all had our hands in the air like, *what?*"

But while onstage, Birdie looked out into the crowd of over 300 mostly Asian Pacific American faces and felt right at home.

Birdie (born: Souphak Xaphakdy) has found some relative fame in Minnesota thanks mostly to the Twin Cities' exploding Hmong population. She's seen cars drive by blasting her songs and fans recognize her on the streets when she is "hustling" her newly released debut CD "Underground Pop Xposed."

To be successful in the Twin Cities, you have to have charisma. Birdie oozes it. She chats with patrons at Hmong stores, dishes out a few compli-

ments and then simply asks people to buy her CD — most do without question.

"Asians just buy it. They don't even ask about the genre until after," said Birdie, who describes her music as mostly R&B and pop. "You know, like Beyonce."

Birdie wants to become the first Laotian American pop star, but in a country that most likely first got to know Laotians through the animated Fox television show "King of the Hill," Birdie knows the odds are stacked against her. But then again, she's used to it.

While pregnant with Birdie, her mother Somphiane and father Kaemphet fled their war-torn Laos for America in 1988. Birdie was born in Sacramento, Calif. Soon after, the Xaphakdy family moved to Minnesota to join relatives who had also made the journey from native soil to their adopted homeland.

Birdie's family settled in Magnolia, a Southern Minnesota town so small it lacks its own gas station and

high school. Birdie attended Luverne High School, about seven miles outside of Magnolia.

In a small town, there were small town mentalities. When Birdie was six, a neighborhood boy started spewing racial slurs at her.

"He was saying things like, 'go back where you came from,'" said Birdie. "He even broke my new chair — brand new from Goodwill. My mom was so mad. She went over to the boy's house and talked to the boy's mom. He had to apologize."

The self-described shy girl would come out of her shell when her father, a Lao folk singer who performed at weddings and other community functions, pulled her onstage with him.

she said.

Growing up, Birdie's universe was crowded with Mariah Carey and Britney Spears. She also admired Thai singers like Kathleeya English, but there were no APA pop stars to look up to.

So Birdie bought some editing software, recorded herself singing with friends and uploaded the tracks to Soundclick.com, a social networking Web site for amateur musicians.

Birdie's voice caught the attention of Disraeli Davis, a music producer.

"I thought that she had a lot of potential," said Davis. "I wasn't sold on her until I saw her work ethic. She is very hardworking and focused. She is also very intelligent and understands that a lot of the glitz and glam you see on TV is for show."

Last fall, Birdie moved to the Twin Cities to attend community college. She worked at UPS "punching in zip codes" until her 18th birthday. Then she contacted Davis and began working on her album fulltime.

The resulting "Underground Pop Xposed" is filled with catchy original tunes that show off Birdie's range. She croons about love and heartache in ballads like "Beautiful" and "Behind the Moment," but easily slips into hip hop and melodic techno.

But the standout song is "Text Wars," an ode to modern love that Birdie wrote with a friend after trading angry text messages with her boyfriend.

Birdie's next few gigs are local. She's performing at talent shows and her high school in Luverne, but in the future she's looking to expand beyond the Minnesota scene. There jealousy runs rampant, she said.

First they need to deal with the drama of auditioning new band members and finding a good choreographer. Then Birdie can fly.

But once in awhile, she's grounded by some sobering thoughts.

"There's a lot of pressure," she said about the possibility of being the first breakout APA pop star. "I gotta' work hard and watch myself." ■

Listen to songs from Birdie's album 'Underground Pop Xposed' at: www.birdieonline.com



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A bit about Birdie



REAL NAME
Souphak
Xaphakdy

HOMETOWN
Magnolia,
Minn.

DEBUT
'Underground
Pop Xposed'
— think JoJo
mixed with a lit-
tle Beyonce
and Christina
Aguilera.

DOWNLOAD
'Text Wars'



FOOTBALL

High School Coach Improperly Recruited Samoan Players



FRESNO, Calif.—An assistant football coach at a U.S. high school led his team to a string of victories by improperly recruiting more than a dozen players from American Samoa and offering them housing, according to an investigation by local sports authorities.

The six-month probe alleges a Samoa-based relative of the coach began meeting with the students' parents as early as 2004, and persuaded them to send their sons from the remote South Pacific island to Stockton, a city 50 miles south of Sacramento. Once there, the coach is accused of housing the students at his home, with his brother or with other coaches.

Fourteen students and their families flew to California on tickets purchased by the coach's mother, and were put up in motels for a week paid for by Franklin High School personnel, authorities said. The coaches helped the parents get fake utility bills to establish their sons' residency, and the Yellowjackets gained a new set of recruits to advance their standing within the league, officials said.

"Who knows where they would have been if they hadn't had those kids," said Pete Saco, a regional commissioner of the California Interscholastic Federation, the governing body for high school sports in the state. "Our goal is that everybody has to play by the rules. That's the essence of what high sports is all about."

While not criminal, athletic recruiting at the high school level is not permitted by high school sports governing bodies in the U.S., along with exercising "undue influence" to coerce young students to switch schools, sports authorities said.

Still, administrators in the Stockton Unified School District questioned the report's focus on students from one ethnic group.

Dozens of students of Samoan descent play on other teams in the Central Valley area, and all three Samoan students enrolled at Franklin High School are in compliance with the rules, said Superintendent Jack McLaughlin.

"We viewed this in the beginning as kind of an attack on a culture," McLaughlin said. "We did not violate anything."

If Saco finds the school violated the rules, Franklin High may have to forfeit games when the accused students were on the team or could be suspended from playing in section championships, the federation said.

Stockton Unified School District officials must respond by Oct. 5. ■

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Kwan Named to U.S. Delegation for Opening Ceremonies

WASHINGTON—It's another Olympics for Michelle Kwan.

The five-time world figure skating champion will be part of the U.S. delegation for the opening ceremonies at the Special Olympics World Summer Games this month in Shanghai, China. The 10-person delegation was announced recently by President Bush, and includes baseball Hall of Famer Ernie Banks.

Also named to the delegation were Eunice Kennedy Shriver, founder of the Special Olympics; Timothy P. Shriver, chairman of the Special Olympics; Clark T. Randt, U.S. ambassador to China; and John H. Hager, former assistant secretary of education. U.S. Education



Secretary Margaret Spellings will lead the delegation

Kwan, who won a silver medal at the 1998 Olympics and a bronze in 2002, makes occasional diplomatic trips as the country's first "special sports envoy," a position created to improve the U.S. image abroad. She visited China in January, and was in Russia in early June. ■

SUMO

Suspicious Death the Latest Problem for Japan's National Sport

TOKYO—Already reeling from the antics of a rogue grand champion, Japan's national sport of sumo now has to deal with a suspicious death.

Japanese police are considering charging the trainer of a 17-year-old sumo wrestler who died earlier this year on suspicion that a beating during a practice session may have caused the fatality.

Tokitaizan (real name: Takashi Saito), collapsed after practice on June 26 while preparing for July's Nagoya Grand Sumo Tournament.

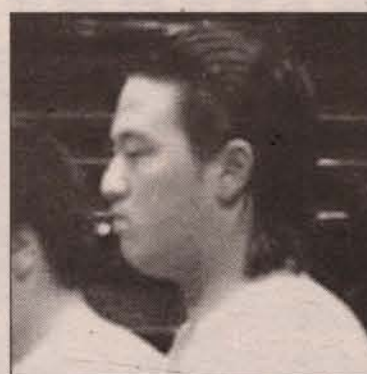
The boy's father, Masato Saito, wants to get to the bottom of exactly what happened to his son.

"Firstly, I want to know the truth," Saito said at a press conference Sept. 27. "I don't want this kind of accident to happen to anymore—I want my son to be the last one."

Police have questioned the trainer, Tokitsukaze, 57, and other wrestlers after deciding Saito's injuries did not appear consistent with those sustained in practice.

On Sept. 28, Japan's education ministry ordered a full-scale investigation into the matter.

Senior vice minister of education Kenshiro Matsunami said there could be possible punishment against those implicated in the case



Trainer Junichi Yamamoto (right) is being investigated in the death of wrestler Takashi Saito, 17.

and ordered the Japan Sumo Association to take steps to avoid a repeat of such a scandal, ministry officials said.

Saito died at a hospital on June 26 and at his family's request, police conducted an autopsy that showed the body had numerous bruises and wounds.

Tokitsukaze (real name: Junichi Yamamoto), has said he struck Saito on the head with a beer bottle the day before he died, and forced him to train so hard that he could barely stand the day of his death.

Fellow wrestlers told authorities

Saito had injured himself while training.

According to the boy's father, members of the Tokitsukaze stable called his family and offered to cremate Saito's body before the family got to see it. The Saito family declined and the body was sent to Saito's house.

The family was shocked to see cuts and burns on his body.

According to Saito, his son fled from the training facility twice, once in mid-June and again on the day before his death but did not tell his father that he had been bullied or assaulted.

Adding to the suspicion is the fact that Takashi's mobile phone, which could have contained information about the situation surrounding his death, was broken in two and it remains unknown who broke it.

The coroner listed the numerous bruises and wounds as the likely cause of death.

The Saito case is just the latest blemish for Japan's national sport.

Grand champion Asashoryu is serving a two-tournament suspension for playing in a charity soccer match earlier this summer in his native Mongolia, after skipping an exhibition tournament. He claimed he was injured. ■

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William Ching (right) frequently talks to college students about the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. He recently founded the HIV Youth Project.

HIV PROJECT

(Continued from page 1)

who learned of his status this past July. "I felt alienated too ... from the gay community and the Asian American community. People don't talk about it."

But dread soon turned to resolve and William started scouring the internet for support and understanding amongst his peers. Surely there were fellow HIV-positive APA youth who were dealing with the same struggles?

Sadly, he couldn't find anything. Although there was a profusion of information on getting tested and prevention, it was largely directed at an older, white audience. True, there were APA groups dealing with HIV/AIDS and some youth sites but there was nothing combining the two.

"HIV is still viewed as a gay, white disease," said William.

He soon heard the same frustrations echoed by some of his APA

friends who were HIV-positive. It was the impetus William needed to launch the HIV Youth Project (www.hivyouthproject.org), an online community forum and support group for HIV-positive APA youth, women, and communities of color.

"I want to put a face to HIV, that APA youth are not invincible to it. It happens."

A Second Coming Out

William's homosexuality wasn't a secret; he had come out to his family and close friends a while ago. But when he learned about his HIV-positive status it was information he kept to himself initially. But the disease has a way of becoming a large part of your life.

The hardest part was telling his family.

"It's been more like a second coming out process. I have to live with it for the rest of my life," he said. "It made my homosexuality more real for [my mother] ... but it also

brought her closer to me."

One of the first people William confided in was his friend Henry Lao, 23. Henry had disclosed a year earlier that he had tested positive for HIV. Ironically, almost a year later, their roles had been reversed.

William and Henry had both interned at the Asian & Pacific Islander (API) Wellness Center in San Francisco and had learned a lot about HIV/AIDS in the APA community. It was an irony not lost on Henry.

"I felt like wow, I am a statistic," said Henry, a recent UC Berkeley grad, of testing positive in August 2006. "I am the people I've been trying to help."

The API Wellness Center notes that from 2000 to 2004 the HIV rate among APIs 18-29 years old in the San Francisco area rose from 2.6 percent to 3.8 percent. Health officials in the New York area have reported new cases of HIV have increased by a third among those under 30 and has doubled among teens in the past six years.

Like William, Henry had a hard time finding resources for APA youth when he was first diagnosed. He tried to attend a few support groups offered by the APA community but most of those in attendance were older men. Why wasn't there a support group for him and his peers?

With the HIV Youth Project, Henry hopes he has finally found one. In between his full-time job at a youth homeless shelter, Henry is volunteering his time helping edit the online site. Although the project is still in its infancy, they're already working on a new design and hope others will contribute their stories, even if it is anonymously.

See HIV PROJECT/Page 16

'There are a lot of anti-Asian incidents in Chicago but people don't know what to do or just suck it up and move on.'

— Myron Dean Quon (below, left), Richards' attorney



H&M LAWSUIT

(Continued from page 1)

her, muttering "Ching, chong, chang" as she walked away.

"I was dumbfounded," said Richards, who was born and raised in Chicago. "When he first said it, I couldn't believe it, but even when I went up to him, he wouldn't stop. He just went on and on and on. [...] I'm not naïve about racism, but for him to say it disgusts me. He didn't understand how degrading it was."

Since then, she has contacted the Better Business Bureau, the Chicago Commission of Human Relations, and the Asian American Institute for help. Numerous attempts to elicit a response from H&M management has yielded few results; Richards said she was bounced from manager to manager before receiving a call from H&M's Midwest corporate manager, who informed Richards she was also of Asian descent and that the company does not condone the employee's behavior. That did little to soothe Richards.

"I couldn't sleep [that night]. I was crying."

The incident follows close on the heels of the drowning death of Du Doan, a 62-year-old Vietnamese American fisherman who was pushed off a harbor into Chicago's Lake Michigan only weeks earlier. Many local Asian Americans believe his death is tied to anti-Asian sentiment. The man being charged with Doan's murder is a member of a skinhead group (though allegedly an "anti-racist skinhead group") and, according to authorities, is prone to violent behavior.

Doan's death has raised the profile of anti-Asian sentiment in Chicago, said Myron Dean Quon, Richards' representing attorney and legal director of the Asian American Institute.

"There are a lot of anti-Asian incidents in Chicago but people don't know what to do or just suck it up and move on. Ever since [the Doan murder] we've been getting reports of all sorts of incidents," said Quon, asserting the belief that if Richards had been in an H&M in a different city, the scenario might have played out very differently.

"I have no doubt that if this happened in San Francisco or New York or even L.A., the response would be different. They might even get beaten up by their coworkers, there are so many Asian Americans [in those cities]," he added.

While Richards said that it is too late for an apology, she hopes that people will learn from this.

"I want people to know that there is no right place or right time to say any sort of racial comment, especially in a professional atmosphere," she said. "If he came to my hospital and was treated like that by any of the doctors or nurses, we would be terminated."

Richards is seeking compensation for emotional distress and legal fees.

Her attorney, Quon, hopes this will lead to better diversity training workshops.

"[Currently] they're kind of pathetic, and people roll their eyes and laugh. They just don't work," he said. "We want people to realize the seriousness of slurs."

At press time, H&M had not yet responded to Richard's complaint and refused all media inquiries. The retailer has until Oct. 21 to file a formal response with the Chicago Commission of Human Relations.

And what if the clothing giant fails to respond by then?

"Then," said Quon, "we go ahead and push." ■

Elaine Low is currently a JACL fellow in the Midwest regional office.

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BLENDED IDENTITY

(Continued from page 1)

both churches since 1997. The merger made financial sense for the JA church and the white church needed more members.

"From the pulpit I would emphasize that the body of Christ should not be divided," said Mizuki.

But the merger was initially resisted by members of both churches who clutched onto traditions and feared losing their ethnic identities.

The Sept. 23 service given by guest pastor Rev. Ed McRae was all about race and tolerance.

"God opens mighty doors on small hinges," said McRae.

A Space of Their Own

"I think people are getting adjusted," said Mizuki. "I think they are looking forward not trying to look at the past."

West Valley was chartered in 1987 after JA families from the San Fernando Holiness Church in Pacoima decided to start their own church in the West San Fernando Valley. Over the years, its members have found unique ways to personalize their religion.

During sermons, Mizuki would often insert illustrations about the JA experience — war and internment. He would mix in words like *gaman* without having to explain its meaning. Sometimes they would substitute the traditional communion ceremony with a Japanese tea ceremony, complete with *manju*.

In 2001, West Valley member Susie Hirasuna painted a nativity scene with a twist — Mary depicted in a red flowery kimono kneeling on a tatami mat next to baby Jesus, who looks distinctly Asian.

There were always talks of a merger, especially after the 1994 Northridge earthquake when the building sustained heavy damage that needed help from both churches to repair. The Chatsworth members broached the idea first and Mizuki would occasionally bring up the idea to West Valley church council members, who continually said they were not interested.

Many West Valley members felt that their JA church was their niche and their own community space, said Mizuki.

When merger talks became more realistic, West Valley became vocal about wanting to be around people from their own background, so they didn't have to explain themselves and feel self-conscious about their pungent, neon yellow *takuan* during potlucks.

Even the children of JA members who were married outside of their race were generally opposed to the merger.

"What about the cultural values and the cultural ties?" said Sam Uyehara, a longtime West Valley and San Fernando Valley JACL member who was initially on the fence about the merger. He eventually supported the move, but admits that he's still getting used to the change.

"You go to an ethnic church to feel comfortable," said Phil Shigekuni, who has been attending West Valley for about 20 years.

Initially, Shigekuni had mixed feelings.

"I saw it as more as a challenge ... as a way of expanding my Christian outlook. It's more in keeping with what I believe even though I feel more comfortable with Japanese."

But at the same time, Mizuki, a Sansei who grew up in a JA church, understands the importance of ethnic identity.

"I feel for those from both churches who have expressed feelings about how things used to be," said Mizuki.

A Gradual Merge

A few years ago, both churches formed a joint choir and friendships blossomed across the pews.

"We're all the same," said George Seko of Chatsworth.

West Valley was reluctant because they felt some older Chatsworth members held onto World War II beliefs that Japan was the enemy. In August, Mizuki recognized a West Valley member who lost a relative in the WWII atomic bomb attacks, so the question was raised from the Chatsworth church: should Pearl Harbor be remembered too?

"It made some of us reluctant," said Shigekuni.

In 2004, both churches decided to hold services together four Sundays a year. A year later Chatsworth made a formal proposal to merge with West Valley, so both churches tried

what they called a "joint venture" and met regularly on a trial basis starting in July 2006.

It was awkward at first for members of both churches who were used to their own ways. Sunday services are usually followed with refreshments and West Valley members would sit with their own groups without interacting with Chatsworth members.

"We had to encourage them to mingle," said Mizuki.

"We realize we have our differences. Chatsworth is a community church that is interested in local city events. West Valley is active in the JA community.... That's the reality," said Shigekuni. "But we have more in common than we think."

Both churches have been making an effort to recognize each other's history. Every Christmas, Fuyo Arimoto and May Kimura make and sell cards with Japanese motifs. Many of the buyers are from the Chatsworth church.

For Veterans Day, both JA and white veterans told their war stories to the united congregation.

"It's wonderful because we're friends with the other church. I thought it would be a benefit to grow new programs," said Lila Shepler, a Chatsworth church member since 1931.

Back then Chatsworth was home



JA TWIST: Susie Hirasuna's nativity painting is one of the many examples of how West Valley United Methodist members personalized their religion.

to only 500 residents and over the years Shepler, 91, has seen her congregation grow and shrink. She feels encouraged about her new united church.

"We've been able to break bread together and share."

The merger has also created a unique new power scheme.

West Valley's JAs make up two-thirds of the congregation — a clear majority in the united church with a combined membership of about 55. The dynamics have made even the church's name change contentious, especially for the 118-year-old Chatsworth church.

"We're in the position of the shoe being on the other foot. That's an unusual position to be in. We have to

continually check ourselves. Ask, 'is this fair?'" said Shigekuni. "Of course Chatsworth is not used to being in the minority either."

In January, Chatsworth West will also streamline its finances.

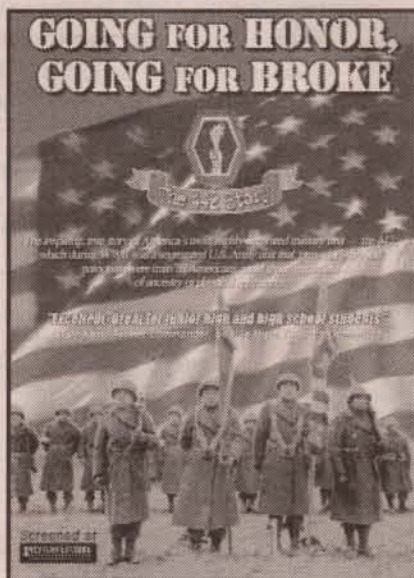
Four months after the official merger, most members see it as a necessary and viable solution.

"We speak the same language. What's the problem?" said Paul Tsuneishi. ■

Chatsworth West United Methodist Church

Sunday services start at 10 a.m.
10824 Topanga Canyon Blvd.
Chatsworth, CA 91311
818/341-1270

GOING FOR HONOR, GOING FOR BROKE: THE 442 STORY



The short-form educational documentary by George Toshio Johnston (*Rafu Shimpo* columnist and former *Pacific Citizen* editor)

**Winner: Selected Work Award,
2007 Tokyo Video Festival
Screened at 2006 VC Filmfest**

Those who have seen *Going for Honor, Going for Broke* say:
"Excellent. Great for junior high and high school students."

"The DVD is as great as the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Infantry Regiment."

Bonus Material: This DVD contains a version of the "Echoes of Silence" database compiled by the Americans of Japanese Ancestry WWII Memorial Alliance.

Running time: 16 mins.

Please send me "Going for Honor, Going for Broke: The 442 Story" on DVD

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SANTA ANITA

(Continued from page 1)

Center Hospital as his official birthplace and their mailing address as "Ave V, Barrack 27, Unit 6."

It's hardly a normal birthplace, especially since almost every trace of "home" has been dismantled, painted over and pushed out of sight. Last month, racing at Santa Anita started again and somewhere in the procession of thoroughbreds and the crush of people is the Okimoto's family history, which has recently been made more tenuous with the racetrack's revitalization plans.

The "debt elimination plan" announced Sept. 13 by Santa Anita's owner Magna Entertainment Corp. (MEC) calls for possible "partnerships or joint ventures" with other businesses as one solution for the company's estimated \$700 million

debt. Currently, the racetrack is also in the midst of renovations, which may threaten what little is left of the Okimotos at Santa Anita — and over 19,000 other JAs held there during WWII.

Business is business, but in the sport of kings, is there room for JA history?

Marking History

"I was among the thousands rounded and placed at Santa Anita for six months," said Rose Ochi, a former Los Angeles police commissioner and current executive director of the California Forensic Science Institute at Cal State University, Los Angeles. Ochi was about four years old when her family lived at the racetrack.

"They sort of whitewashed the manure," she said about the hastily built housing.

For about seven months in 1942, racing stopped at Santa Anita. Horses were moved out and as many as 19,348 JAs were moved into the largest Wartime Civilian Control Agency assembly center, according to the National Park Service (NPS).

Assembly centers like Santa Anita were like purgatory, a place where internees bided their time until more permanent camps were built. Almost overnight, JAs went from their suburban homes to overcrowded barracks and horse stalls.

"There are still many stories about the temporary assembly centers that still need to be told," said Scott Kurashige, an Asian/Pacific Islanders American Studies assistant professor at the University of Michigan.

Since WWII, many assembly centers have faded away. The former Tanforan Assembly Center in Northern California is now a strip mall. Santa Anita is still a functioning racetrack.

There's a need to recognize the whole history of the internment, said Kurashige. Santa Anita holds historical distinction because it was a place close enough for friends of internees to visit, but not far away enough for local residents who considered JAs wartime enemies.

The temporary nature of the assembly centers have placed them in the shadows of the main 10 War Relocation Authority camps. But assembly center experiences have left indelible marks on many of its former residents.

"I got my lifelong nickname 'Horse' while at the assembly center because I used to run around the track for exercise and people started kidding me with words like, 'You think you're a race horse,'" said George Yoshinaga, who was 18 years old when he arrived at Santa Anita.

Years after living there, Yoshinaga asked Santa Anita officials to recognize its JA history. The racetrack refused for three years.

"Their reason was that 'Santa Anita is a fun place' and they didn't want to display anything that would jeopardize the atmosphere of the facility."

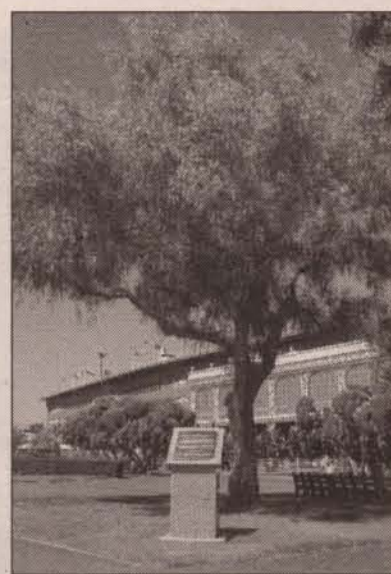
With an ownership change and the help of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mike Antonovich, Yoshinaga's hard work paid off in 2001 when a plaque was placed in Santa Anita's West Paddock Garden.

Still, it took Santa Anita nearly 60 years to set its JA history in stone — literally. Now, Santa Anita President Ron Charles said the racetrack is more committed to historical preservation.

But some critics remain dubious.

A Tenuous Future and a Questionable Track Record

Santa Anita cares more about the history of horseracing than its larger social history, said Kurashige, who researched the racetrack for his



SANTA ANITA DURING WORLD WAR II
Built in 1942 the U.S. Government designated the Santa Anita camp as a temporary assembly center for approximately 16,000 Japanese-Americans prior to their displacement to permanent camps in other areas of the country.
President Franklin D. Roosevelt, from March 30, 1942 until October 27, 1942 the facility was used as an assembly and processing center for approximately 16,000 Japanese-Americans prior to their displacement to permanent camps in other areas of the country.
Until 1948, the government utilized the Santa Anita camp as a processing center for approximately 16,000 Japanese-Americans prior to their displacement to permanent camps in other areas of the country.
A plaque is placed at Santa Anita in remembrance of the 16,000 Japanese-Americans who were held there from May 1942 to May 1945.
PHOTOS: BENOIT PHOTO

LONE MEMORIAL: In 2001, Santa Anita officials dedicated a plaque recognizing its JA history in the West Paddock Garden.

forthcoming book, "The Shifting Grounds of Race: Black and Japanese Americans in the Making of Multiethnic Los Angeles."

It's a claim Santa Anita officials refute.

Santa Anita is committed to preserving both its horseracing history and its role in social history, said Charles, adding, "I think they go hand-in-hand."

But Santa Anita's track history tells a different story of the racetrack and its parent company, MEC.

In 1999, MEC owner Frank Stronach was largely criticized for compromising the racetrack's historic art deco architectural design to build elevator towers and restaurants. Those renovation plans were not submitted for appropriate public review, according to the Los Angeles Conservancy.

Santa Anita was eligible in 2006 for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, but has not yet been officially listed. The property owner needs to approve the official listing. It was something Santa Anita backed away from because of pending litigations, said Charles.

In April, the Arcadia City Council approved a plan to develop an 830,000-square-foot commercial, retail and office project on the racetrack's south parking lot. The project set off a war between its developer, Caruso Affiliated, residents and the current mall next door.

"Santa Anita has an opportunity to educate the public. Instead of only taking our bets and money, they should give back," said Tony Osumi, a Southern Calif.-based schoolteacher. "The plaque is a start, but national historic landmark status raises the site's significance and can help educate the broader public."

More changes are set for the horseracing entertainment company mired in debt.

MEC is currently exploring the possibility of partnerships with other businesses as minority shareholders — meaning they are looking to sell up to 40 percent of Santa Anita.

The news has made the JA community and conservationists nervous.

"I don't know what will happen if the ownership changes because usu-

ally in transactions like this, many major changes do take place. The plaque honoring the JAs may become expendable. I hope not, but anything is possible," said Yoshinaga.

"We are mindful of history and working to do a better job," assured Charles.

Plans to renovate the racetrack's backstretch — where many JAs lived in WWII — began this year. Santa Anita is looking into preserving some replicas of the barracks and placing it in a more visible area, added Charles. However, he declined to further comment on the status of this preservation effort.

In September and October NPS representatives will be holding workshops throughout the U.S. to help develop the criteria for a grant program geared towards the preservation and interpretation of WWII JA confinement sites. Santa Anita will be included in the workshop discussions.

The workshops are the result of a 2006 bill President George W. Bush signed into law authorizing up to \$38 million to go towards the preservation of JA confinement sites. Once the grant program is funded, any group can apply for a grant to go towards a preservation project.

But again, the property owner needs to approve the project.

Many argue that Santa Anita needs to move forward with preservation of its JA history.

"This particularly degrading part of the camp experience should not be allowed to fade away because, in many ways, it captures the racism as well as the incredible hardship the internees had to endure," said Bruce Embrey, whose mother, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, was instrumental in making Manzanar a national historic site.

"You'd think that after an official apology from the president of the United States and the active participation of the NPS in preserving the history of the camps, any institution — public or private — should do no less," Bruce added. ■

Find an NPS workshop near you: www.nps.gov/manz



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- Oct. 29 Japan Classic "Fall Foliage" \$3595** - Tokyo - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Takahashi - Isle of Miyajima - Hiroshima - Inland Sea Cruise - Shodo Island - Kyoto.
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Calendar

National

RENO, Nevada

Nov. 2-4—"Making a Difference in Our Communities" the NCWNP-CC-PSW JACL Tri-District Conference; Circus-Circus Hotel and Casino; registration fee \$100, youth group \$50 (early registration deadline is Sept. 30); hotel rooms are \$89.99/night with a deadline of Oct. 13; events include an award luncheon, workshops, bowling, mixers, etc. Info: Thaya Mune Craig, 916/652-0093 or thaya@vfr.net.

East

NEW HOPE, Pennsylvania

Oct. 20-21—Japanese Zen Scroll Exhibit and Sale; 1-4 p.m.; Nakashima Woodworkers, 1847 Aquetong Rd.

TOWSON, Maryland

Sat., Oct. 20—Performance, The Four Seasons; 8 p.m.; Stephens Hall Theatre; the changing cycle of the seasons is conveyed through traditional dances and enchanting musical scores; \$15/general admission, \$12/seniors and students, \$10/Asian Arts and Culture Center members, \$5/Towson Univ. students; tickets, 410/704-2787 or www.towson.edu/centerforhearts. Info: 410/704-2807 or www.towson.edu/asianarts.

Midwest

CHICAGO

Wed., Oct. 17—Public listening session to discuss and develop a grant program to preserve WWII internment camps as historic sites; 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Japanese American Service Committee, 4427 N. Clark St.; the NPS seeks public dialogue as a means of creating the most comprehensive program and hopes to engage the public in open conversation about the future preservation of internment camps. Info: William Yoshino, 773/728-7170 or midwest@jacl.org.

Pacific Northwest

PORTLAND

Through Jan. 6—Exhibit, "Window on a Community: Nikkei Farmers of the Hood River Area"; Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, 121 NW 2nd Ave.; Tues.-Sat. 11-3 p.m., Sun. noon-3 p.m.; \$3/general admission, free to ONLC members. Info: ONLC, 503/224-1458.

Northern California

BERKELEY

Oct. 17-Nov. 25—Play, "after the quake"; Berkeley Repertory Theatre, 2025 Addison St.; adapted from Haruki Murakami's book of the same name; tickets begin at \$27. Info and tickets: 510/647-2949, 888-4-BRT-TIX or berkeleyrep.org.

LOCKE

Sat., Oct. 13—Locke Community Park Monument Celebration; 1 p.m.; events include performances, Locke reunion, tile fundraising project and art walk. Info: Dean Okimoto, 916/601-1895.

MARYSVILLE

Sat., Oct. 20—Marysville Buddhist Church Centennial Celebration; 9:30 a.m.; Marysville Buddhist Church, 125 B St.; participants for the affirmation



SEASONS CHANGE:

Towson University's Center for the Arts will host an Oct. 20 performance of 'The Four Seasons.'

Dancers will interpret the changing of seasons through traditional dance and musical scores.

service need to fill out an application and submit \$25 affirmation fee; banquet will be held at The Refuge Restaurant, 1501 Butte House Rd., Yuba City. To sign up for the affirmation service or banquet, contact Clark Tokunaga, 530/673-0828.

OAKLAND

Sun., Oct. 21—Otsukimi Moon Viewing Festival; 5:30-7:30 p.m.; Lakeside Park Garden Center, 666 Bellevue Ave.; \$15 for bento dinner, all other events free. Info: 510/530-3945 or www.oakland-fukuoka.org.

SACRAMENTO

Sat., Oct. 20—Asian Legal Services Outreach, Inc.'s annual Beat the Heat Luau; 6-9 p.m.; Sacramento Buddhist Church Social Hall, 2401 Riverside Blvd.; \$20/students and seniors, \$30/adults, \$40 at the door. Info: 916/454-1892.

SAN JOSE

Sat., Oct. 6—Spirit of Japantown Festival; 9-5 p.m.; San Jose Japantown; featuring arts, crafts, demonstrations and more. Info: Jeanne Katsuro, 4408/569-1415, jeannekats@aol.com or Kathy Sakamoto, 408/298-4303, sanjosejapantown@sbcglobal.net.

Sat., Oct. 27—6th Annual San Jose JACL Community Recognition Dinner; Holiday Inn San Jose; \$75/person; dinner will also feature a silent auction and benefit drawing. Info: Jeff Yoshioka, 408/363-8191 or jyoshioka@msn.com.

Central California

FRESNO

Sat., Oct. 13—Fresno Gumyo Taiko's 20th Anniversary Concert; 7 p.m.; Fresno High Auditorium; featuring a special performance by Las Vegas Kaminari Taiko; \$10. Tickets can be purchased from any Fresno Gumyo Taiko member, Fresno Buddhist Church, Kubo Orthodontic Group of Sophie Nagao at 559/896-6283.

HANFORD

Sun., Oct. 14—Performance, "Yaji Kita"; 3 p.m.; Fox Theater, 326 N. Irwin St.; puppetry will be performed by Nishikawa Koryu V, headmaster of the Hachioji Kuruma Ningyo puppetry troupe and narrated by Tsuruga Wakasanojo XI; tickets: \$12/Clark Center members, \$18/non-members and can be purchased through the

Clark Center at 559/582-4915 or tickets.com.

Southern California

ANAHEIM

Sat., Nov. 10—Go For Broke National Education Center's Evening of Aloha Gala Dinner; 4 p.m. registration and silent auction, 6 p.m. dinner and program; Anaheim Hilton Hotel, 777 Convention Way; \$150/person. Info: Stephanie Nagami, 310/222-5706 or eveningofaloha@goforbroke.org.

CAMARILLO

Sun., Oct. 14—17th Annual Japanese Culture Day hosted by Ventura County JACL; 1-4 p.m.; Camarillo Community Center, 1605 E. Burnley St.; featuring demonstrations craft booths, food and more; \$7/adults, \$5/kids 5-17 years, seniors 62 and older and students with I.D., \$15/family (2 adults and 2 kids). Info: 805/677-4517, vcjacl@hotmail.com or www.vcjacl.org.

LOS ANGELES

Oct. 18-20—Bunraku: The National Puppet Theatre of Japan; Aratani/Japan America Theatre, 244 S. San Pedro St.; performance includes the classics Tsubosaka Kannon Reigenki and Date Musume Koi no Higanoko; tickets, 213/680-3700. Info: Jessica Kikuchi, 213/628-2725, jkikuchi@jacc.org or www.jacc.org.

VENICE

Oct. 6-28—Play, "Innocent When You Dream," a play by Ken Narasaki; Electric Lodge, 1416 Electric Ave.; about a JA war veteran who finds himself returning to a lost memory while his third generation children struggle to interpret his wishes and unravel his past.; \$20/tickets and can be purchased at www.brownpapertickets.com or 800/838-3006. Info: Sharon Omi, 310/592-1160 or www.myspace.com/innocentatelectric.

Hawaii

HONOLULU

Sat., Oct. 13—Genealogy Workshop: Finding Your Roots; 7:30-3 p.m.; Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, 2454 S. Beretania St.; \$50/members, \$60/non-members, includes a manual, lunch and refreshments; registration recommended by Oct. 1. Info: www.jcch.com, info@jcch.com or 808/945-7633. ■

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- **Hakone & Shizuoka:** Tsumago, Waki-Honjin Okaya, Cruise on Lake Ashi, Owakudani Valley
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BRANSON/MEMPHIS/NASHVILLE HOLIDAY TOUR	MAR 26-APR 3
St. Louis, Branson, Little Rock/Tunica, Memphis, Nashville. Shoji Tabuchi Show, Elvis Presley's Graceland, Clinton Presidential Library/Museum, Grand Ole Opry Show.	
JAPAN SPRING HOLIDAY TOUR	MAR 26-APR 7
Fukuoka, Hag, Iwakuni Kintaihashi, Miyajima, Hiroshima, Matsuyama, Kochi, Takamatsu, Shodo Island, Okayama, Himeji Castle, Kyoto. Cherry Blossom season.	
NEW YORK/LAKE COUNTRY HOLIDAY TOUR	MAY 10-17
New York City, Corning, Finger Lake, Cooperstown, Lake George, Kingston, Hudson Valley, West Point Military Academy, FDR National Historic Site.	
AUSTRIA-SWITZERLAND SPRING HOLIDAY TOUR	MAY 15-27
Vienna, Salzburg, Munich, Black Forest, Innsbruck, Zermatt, Matterhorn, Lucerne.	
SOUTH AMERICA HOLIDAY TOUR	JUNE 12-23
Attend Centennial Celebration Program of Japanese Immigration to Brazil in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Iguassu Falls, Buenos Aires. OPTION: Peru-Lima, Machu Picchu.	
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Tokyo, Lake Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Miyajima, Kyoto, Nara.	
ALASKA HOLIDAY CRUISE	JULY 20-27
Seattle, Glacier Bay, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Victoria City. HOLLAND AMERICA Westerdam Ship.	
CANADIAN ROCKIES HOLIDAY TOUR	AUG 7-14
Calgary, Banff, Lake Louise, Kamloops, Vancouver, Victoria City, Rocky Mountaineer Train.	
WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN HOLIDAY CRUISE	SEPT 11-24
Rome, Florence/Pisa, Monte Carlo, Barcelona, Palma de Majorca, Tunisia, Palermo, Naples. HOLLAND AMERICA Noordam Ship.	
HOKKAIDO-TOHOKU HOLIDAY TOUR	OCT 5-17
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CARIBBEAN HOLIDAY CRUISE	OCT 13-24
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In Memoriam - 2007

All the towns are in California except as noted.

Aiso, Daniel, 87, July 25; WWII veteran; survived by daughters, Janice (Richard) Edesa and Yoko (Satoshi) Okada; and sisters-in-law, Chiyo and Shieko Aiso.

Akamatsu, Toshi Endo, 89, Madison, Wis., Sept. 1; survived by husband, Robert; sons, Don and Bob; sister, Kieko Goto; and sisters-in-law, Sumi Endo and Elly Nomura.

Araki, Toshimitsu, Huntington Beach, Aug. 6; survived by wife, Doreen; father, Rev. Kazuyuki; sister, Sachiko (Michiaki) Oinuma; brother, Yuji (Keiko); father-in-law, Dr. James Chen; mother-in-law, Dr. Marjor Liu; brothers-in-law, Dennis and Kenny; and sister-in-law, Kathleen.

Chikami, Wayne Shigeko, 58, Aug. 7; survived by mother, Marie; and brother, Gary.

Horii, George Fusao, 86, Torrance, Aug. 5; WWII veteran; survived by wife, Nancy; son, Ronald (Lorraine); daughters, Karen, Marilyn (Mike) Tsuge and Patricia (Paul) Tartaglia; 5 gc.; sisters, Helen Okano, Louise Kawamoto and Mary (Kazuo) Kajiyama; and brothers, Howard (Paula), Jim (Jeannette), Harry (Chita) and Bob (Mary).

Iwai, Katsuya, 64, Rosemead, Aug. 27; survived by wife, Ranko; son, Morris; and daughter, Laura.

Iwashika, Tak Takara, 82, Aug. 3; survived by son, Kenneth (Deborah); daughter, Sheila Lefor; 3 gc.; 1 ggc.; and sisters, Yaeko Pennell, Michi Kamon and Yoshiko Araki.

Kamiya, Yoshio, 80, Gardena, July 28; survived by wife, Yemi; sons, Ronald (Kathryn) and Randell (Christine); daughter, Luanne; 4 gc.; and sister, Mary Kamiya.

Kataoka, John Takashi "Tak," 72, Los Altos Hills, Aug. 21; survived by wife, Alice; daughters, Sheryl (Rich) Endo and Stacy (Charles) Bove; 3 gc.; and brothers, Kinji (Teruko) and Beebe (Yuki).

Mano, Masaru, 64, Chula Vista, July 23; survived by wife, Kimino; brothers, Tsuyoshi (Toshiko) and Akira (Jenny); and sister, Yoshiko Izumi.

Matsuda, Bessie Misao, 84, Portland, Ore., Sept. 3; survived by brother, William.

Matsumoto, Kimiye, 89, Los Angeles, Aug. 25; survived by sons, Terry (Linda) and Howard (Mimi); 4 gc.; 9 ggc.; sisters, Mary Kinoshita and Hideko Takata; and brother-in-law, Mas Matsumoto.

Matsuoka, Mildred Sueko, 69, Torrance, July 26; survived by husband, Toki; daughters, Tammy

This compilation appears on a space-available basis at no cost. Printed obituaries from your newspaper are welcome. "Death Notices," which appear in a timely manner at request of the family or funeral director, are published at the rate of \$20 per column inch. Text is reworded as necessary.

Honda and Patrice (Wayne) Watanabe; 6 gc.; and brothers, Walter and Masami Murakami.

Mayeda, Shizue, 87, Rolling Hills Estates, July 27; survived by brother, Hajime (Helen) Miyagishima.

Moriguchi, Shizuko "Pearl," 94, San Francisco, Sept. 12; survived by sons, Robert (Akiko) and Richard (Chieko); 6 gc.; 4 ggc.; 3 sisters; and 3 brothers.

Murakami, Shigemi, Los Angeles, July 26; survived by wife, Sumiye; sons, John (Jane) and Henry (Charlene); and 2 gc.

Nakayama, Katashi, Chino Hills, July 20; survived by daughter, Edith Matsui; son, Michael; 2 gc.; 3 ggc.; and brother, Frank Nakayama.

Nishida, Mariko Ozaki, 83, July 22; survived by son, Tommy; daughter, Linda; 4 gc.; 2 ggc.; and siblings, Joe (Mary) Ozaki, Tadao (Momoyo) Ishii, Michinori Ishii and Katsuko Watanabe.

Nishimura, Bernadette Fumi, 93, July 27; survived by daughter, Janet Alvarez; son, Thomas (Hiromi); and 2 gc.

Nishiyama, Tommy, 84, East Los Angeles, Aug. 8; survived by son, Thomas (Percillia); and 5 gc.

Ogawa, Ann Mariko, 88, Monterey Park, July 27; survived by husband, Howard; daughter, Susan (Charles Taylor); and sisters-in-law, Mary Chono and Chiyoko Nagamatsu.

Ogawa, Yukiko Dorothy, 80, San Gabriel, July 27; survived by husband, Iwaho; daughter, Eriko (Ed) Antos; 2 gc.; sister, Akiko Fujii; brother-in-law, Tatsuo Ogawa; and sisters-in-law, Margie Mukumoto and Chiyo Shigezani.

Shirasawa, Keith Katsumi, 53, Redwood City, Aug. 4; survived by friend, Linda Walker; and sister, Ayako Masada.

Soejoto, Ruby Kiyoka Yamamoto, 70, July 10; survived by husband, Joe; sons, Tom (Trisna), Lt. Col. Ron (Vickie) and Kenny (Ramona); daughter, Ratna (Lincoln) Ramirez; 21 gc.; 6 ggc.; brother, Yoshiaki Yamamoto; and sister, Marion Shimazu.

Takatsuka, August Augie M., 86, June 21; WWII veteran, 442nd; survived by soulmate, Marie Davis; and sister, Kimiko Sakai.

Tanaka, Helen Fumiko, 98, Torrance, Aug. 12; survived by son,

Donald (Amy); daughters, Nancy Amundsen and Marlene (Tom) Tapp; 7 gc.; and 9 ggc.

Tatsui, Masako, 84, Glendale, July 23; survived by son, Ronald; daughter, Kiyoko Tatsui; son-in-law, Paul Harris; 1 gc.; sister, Marian Gebur; brother, Albert Saiki; and sister-in-law, Peggy Saiki.

Toguchi, Masaru, 92, Montebello, July 22, survived by wife, Beatrice; sons, Kenneth, Ronald, Leslie (Ethel) and Gordon; daughter, Sharon (Bert) Fujimori; and 4 gc.

Watanabe, Isamu, 72, Northridge, July 24; survived by wife, Masako; son, Robert (Akiko); daughter, Terri (Kent) Sayama; 3 gc.; brothers, Takashi (Toshiko) and Yutaka (Noriko); and sisters, Motoko Ueda, Meiko (Hideo) Mitsumune and Fumiyo (Yasuo) Imada.

Yada, Edward K., 84, Newport, Ore., Aug. 7; WWII veteran, MIS; survived by daughters, Karen and Kimberly; son, Kenneth; 5 gc.; sisters, Kimi Yada and Emi Somekawa Beckwith; and brother, Joe Yada.

Yamamoto, Yaeko, 80, Aug. 8; survived by daughters, Chisato (Gary) Kanagi and Michiko (John Okita); 1 gc.; 1 ggc.; and sisters-in-law, Ayako Yamamoto and Mildred Kado.

Yamasaki, George, 86, Long Beach, Aug. 29; survived by wife, Mutsuko; and sisters, Emiko Yamasaki, Yoshito Hashimoto.

Yoshikai, Tom T., 82, Salem, Ore., Aug. 7; WWII veteran, 442nd RCT; survived by wife, Georgette; daughter, Victoria (Sean) Moon; 1 gc.; sister, Yoshie Maydea; and brother, Henry Yoshikai.

Yokoyama, Kiku, 80, Los Angeles, Aug. 1; survived by husband, Henry; and sons, Kelly and Marvin.

Yukihiro, Bill Shigeki, 84, Norwalk, July 28; survived by sons, Roger (Linda Nakahara) and Glenn (Lourdes); 2 gc.; brother, George; sister, Yukino Eto and Sumi Inamasu; and sister-in-law, Toshiko Yukihiro. ■

DEATH NOTICE**MIKKO FUKUI DYO**

Mikko Fukui Dyo, 84, has gone to join her husband, Ken, and recently deceased son, Michael, to sit together at Jesus' feet. She is survived by her sons, Danny (Dana) of San Jose and Tommy (Melissa); daughter, Naomi (Ken) Wagner; daughter-in-law, Gladys Dyo; grandchildren, Jennifer (Kevin) Majdi of San Jose, Darlene (Mark) Hiltibidal of Illinois, Noah and Mika Dyo and Sam and Tim Wagner; great-grandson, Jesiah Hiltibidal and sister, Tomoko (John) Tamura.

Visitation is Sat., Oct. 6 from 10-10:30 a.m. with a memorial service to follow at Union Church of Los Angeles, 401 E. 3rd St., Los Angeles. www.fukuimortuary.com

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Japanese American
Citizen's League

Habeas Corpus Restoration Measure Fails Despite Support

Civil rights groups, including JACL, say they will continue to work to restore habeas corpus.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

WASHINGTON—The Senate narrowly rejected legislation Sept. 19 that would have given military detainees the right to protest their detention in federal court.

The 56-43 vote fell four shy of the 60 votes needed to cut off debate on the bill, co-sponsored by Sens. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., and Arlen Specter, R-Pa. It was a blow for human rights groups that say a current ban on habeas corpus petitions could lead to the indefinite detention of individuals wrongfully suspected of terrorism.

President Bush and conservative Republicans counter that the ban, enacted last year, was necessary to stem the tide of legal protests flooding civilian courts.

The JACL, although disappointed with the measure's failure, pledged to work to restore habeas corpus and raise awareness of the injustice done when one is held indefinitely without access to the courts.

"We're sliding back into 1942," said Larry Oda, JACL's national president. "Our rights are being



DAY OF ACTION: Protestors gathered on the steps of Capital Hill to demand the restoration of habeas corpus. This rally took place during the ACLU's Day of Action on June 26.

eroded."

"While we are saddened by the vote ... the JACL was happy to note the majority of the Senate voted for cloture," said National Director Floyd Mori. "This indicates there is bi-partisan support to restore the Great Writ of habeas corpus and with it, restoration of a basic tenet in the Constitution."

In 2006, Congress passed and Bush signed into law the Military Commissions Act, which established a military-run tribunal system for prosecuting enemy combatants. The provision barring habeas corpus petitions means that only detainees

selected for trial are able to confront charges against them, leaving most military detainees in custody without a chance to plead their case.

"While the amendment ultimately was not filibuster proof, a majority of senators have made it clear that they want to restore the right of habeas corpus," said Caroline Fredrickson, director of the ACLU Washington Legislative Office. "The ACLU has worked diligently, leading a coalition of support for the restoration of habeas corpus. That tireless work is beginning to pay off and will be vindicated once habeas is signed back into law." ■

HIV PROJECT

(Continued from page 11)

"Being HIV-positive can feel isolating. This project validates our existence, that we're not alone," said Henry.

The HIV Youth Project is also starting to attract some much-needed volunteers. Albert Huang, 24, learned about the site from the popular Angry Asian Man blog and now the recent UCLA grad is helping with editing and posting.

"I really feel like young people have different concerns; the APA community has a different cultural background. Young APAs want to socialize with people with similar life experiences. But there's no way to find each other right now," said Albert.

"We ultimately hope to build some sense of community."

Telling Our Stories

One of the first contributions Henry made to the HIV Youth Project was to post his personal story of living with HIV. He found it cathartic, especially since he still hasn't disclosed his status to his family.

"This helps me, my own coming to terms. It's been a real catalyst for me," he said, acknowledging that this article may be the final push he needs to tell his family.

It was a little over two years ago that Henry and a group of his closest friends decided to get tested for HIV;

Henry was the only one who tested positive.

He took the news surprisingly well.

"My reaction was pretty calm. I felt very disconnected," said Henry.

Although he hasn't come around to telling his parents about his HIV-positive status, all of his closest friends know. He's also started his own blog to deal with the plethora of emotions that often surround this disease.

Henry and William are largely asymptomatic right now. They are living the typical lives of college students. Although William has cut down the number of classes he is taking at Berkeley, he hopes to eventually raise a family and attend law school. William plans to further his education, eventually entering the public health field.

Both have now introduced their stories through the HIV Youth Project, a very public coming out ceremony about their HIV-positive status. They hope that by telling their own stories others will feel a sense of comfort and security about discussing their own status.

"We hope to create a community and open up a dialogue. That you don't have to feel shameful. It's an acknowledgment that there are others like you," said Henry.

"This site is as much for me as it is for APA youth," said William. "It's a site run for youth by youth." ■

For more information:
www.hivouthproject.org

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