I love the Pacific Citizen, and I consider it a valuable part of my life's media menu. In these times when news media have become ubiquitous, it's important to appreciate the sources that cover the topics that are important to me. I can find national and international news anywhere and everywhere on the Internet, and I can find news about my town with just a few clicks to every local newspaper and TV station's site. But I can't find a lot of news sources about the issues I really care about — the issues that affect Asian Pacific Americans, and my Japanese American community.

That's where the P.C. comes in. Both with the newsprint edition and its evolving Web site, the P.C. has become an accurate, diverse and reliable conduit for news that is so often ignored by the mainstream media that leaves people like us invisible.

In the articles and issues presented by the P.C., we are not invisible.

The P.C. covers stories that the JACL is involved with, and gives voice to many APA artists and performers that catch our eye but seldom get coverage in the pages of People magazine or the Washington Post.

The P.C. accomplishes this despite being short on staff. But now, with the steady upswing in usage on the Web site, PacificCitizen.org, it's become clear that the staff needs help.

You may not be a big Internet user and surf for news online. But be assured, the Net is the future of news media, especially for young people, those who are so critically important to JACL's future. Having a strong Internet presence isn't just a luxury — it's a requirement.

The P.C. Web site is currently maintained by Brian Tanaka, the office manager — who also handles the computers, advertising and helps with sports coverage. Executive Editor Caroline Aoyagi-Storn and Assistant Editor Lynda Lin have also been trained to upload stories to the Web site.

We're asking for a new position this year, for a reporter who also has the skills to help out with PacificCitizen.org. This will make the P.C. a cutting-edge news organization, one that handles the computers, advertising and helps with sports coverage. Executive Editor Caroline Aoyagi-Storn and Assistant Editor Lynda Lin have also been trained to upload stories to the Web site.

JACL is a righteous, inclusive organization, and the P.C. is likewise inclusive in its coverage.

JACL members can be even more proud of. I've been honored to serve as the chair of the P.C.'s editorial board — a position mandated by the JACL constitution — for four years. I can tell you without hesitation that the P.C. is a very special publication, whether you're reading it in newsprint or on a computer screen.

I have nothing but the greatest professional respect for its staff, who toil at their jobs out of their chapter newsletters to the Web site. And I have more news about JACL. I understand your concern, but would urge you to read the P.C. closely: JACL is everywhere within its pages. Every major event of the organization, from conventions to bi-districts, is covered. Every issue that JACL sends out an alert about finds its way into the P.C. — sometimes before JACL takes a stance on an issue. And, like the national organization, these issues are diverse, covering not just the JA community but APA, and civil rights far beyond "our" people. JACL is a righteous, inclusive organization, and the P.C. is likewise inclusive in its coverage.

If you have comments about the P.C., don't be afraid to share them. Pass along comments and concerns to your chapter presidents, to your district governors, and most important, to your district's P.C. board representative. The P.C. board stays in contact throughout the year via e-mail, and we meet once a year in person, to discuss the P.C. and advise Caroline and her staff.

I believe very strongly that the P.C. is on the right path as a news organization, with its print edition and Web site. It reflects JACL's mission and supports JACL's activities as the leading APA civil rights organization.

I hope the P.C. is as indispensable a part of your media menu as it is mine, and that you'll continue to support its efforts and help it evolve and grow as it helps JACL.

Akenazhite omedetou gozaimasu — Happy New Year! ■

Gil Asakawa is the current chair of the P.C. editorial board.

A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words

In 2007, Ehren Watada's name became a rallying cry, a catalyst for debate and a symbol of diversity within the APA communities. The man in the center of the controversy (pictured left, in brown) continued to draw support and criticism for his decision to refuse deployment to Iraq. In 2007, Watada is still a mesmerizing camera subject.
A Broader Scope for the JACL

When it was organized in 1929, the JACL's founding mission was focused on protecting the civil rights of Japanese Americans. JACL was the first Asian Pacific American organization of its kind. Today, JACL remains the nation's oldest and largest APA civil rights organization.

Today, the JACL is committed to protecting the civil rights of all segments of society. The JACL is the leading advocate for Asian Pacific American issues, which are of concern to the coalitions and the JACL membership. The current NCAPA chair is Lisa Hasegawa, executive director of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development and a member of the JACL Washington, D.C. chapter.

In addition to working on policy issues like redress for Japanese Latin Americans, Filipino veterans benefits, camp preservation, Hawaiian sovereignty, the Nisei veterans commemorative stamp campaign, the JACL is a strong voice in advocating the restoration of habeas corpus, immigration reform, hate crimes prevention and many other national issues.

Unlike the Redress era when our interest was one piece of legislation, the JACL has been working on many general civil rights issues.

One of the major issues that the JACL now faces is declining membership. It is very important that the JACL get more members in order to survive. There is a current push to have more people who could be interested in joining, but we have not heard of the JACL. Years ago, Ruth Hashimoto and I encouraged every member to recruit a new member.

There are also many people out there who could be interested in joining, but do not know about the JACL. There are many people who have not heard of the JACL. Years ago, Ruth Hashimoto and I encouraged every member to recruit a new member. Now, Floyd Mori is the current JACL national director.

Happy New Year! The national board has been busy on your behalf in 2007. I am pleased to report that many accomplishments have been made to further the goals of the organization. During the past 12 months JACL has:

- Hired several new staff members including: Floyd Mori, national director; Debee Yamamoto, D.C. representative/director of public policy; Craig Ishii, PSW regional director; Lotchana Sournivong, membership coordinator; Susan Tamei, executive assistant; and Mei Kuang, bookkeeper.
- Hired a new manager for our investments, Highmark.
- Hired a consultant to redesign the JACL Web site, Tim Benbow.
- Updated the Raiser's Edge membership management software.
- Completed an audit of our finances.
- Appointed a new interning investment policy committee chairperson, Jeffrey Hattori.
- Distributed a new chapter president's handbook.
- Revised the national board member's handbook.
- Instituted a program review procedure.
- Instituted online giving.
- Instituted a redesigned Pacific Citizen Web site.
- Distributed legacy funds.
- Instituted cost of living adjustments for employees; and
- Completed our first gala fundraising dinner.

In the latter part of the biennium, there are some initiatives that we must complete before the convention starts to take up the bulk of our time.

We have been successful in diversifying our funding sources and we owe much of the credit to Floyd Mori. The Pacific Northwest District's strategic planning effort is in its initial stages after appointing a consultant. The national board contributed to the effort in hopes that the results could be broadened to encompass the national organization.

We have also been working to revitalize the U.S.-Japan relations committee to build programs that benefit both our nations. Floyd Shimomura, a former JACL national president, is leading this effort.

As we begin to prepare for convention, there are many topics that need to be addressed. At the last convention, the board was asked to report to the national council on a few issues, the most notable being the annual convention proposal. The national council has discussed this at the last two conventions without coming to a decision.

There are many reasons favoring the change and just as many opposing. The most compelling reason for change is the ability to react to issues that require national council action in a timely manner. An annual convention would also put our corporate funders on a more regular, annual schedule.

Perhaps the most important reason for not changing may be cost for chapters to send their delegates to an annual convention. A coalition of representatives from all the districts is working to develop the recommendation for a national council vote at the convention.

The board will be discussing other bylaw amendments for consideration by national council. Do we need to change our name to the Asian American Citizens League to coincide with our desire to be more inclusive? Or should we consider making the official name of our organization JACL, instead of Japanese American Citizens League? This strategic move has been made by some of our sister organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which is now simply the NAACP.

Vice President for General Operations Sheldon Arakaki will be asking the national constitution and bylaws committee to thoroughly review our constitution for consistency and with an eye to simplify the document. Our constitution has served us for over 75 years but we need to make sure that we don't have outdated practices that are no longer in the best interests of our community. There are many minor language adjustments that need addressing like changing the national director title to "executive director." With 2008 marking the 20th anniversary of Redress, Vice President of Public Affairs Heidi Tanakatsubo-Srivareerat is planning events to acknowledge the effort of the JACL in winning Redress. Other organizations will be celebrating this very important anniversary, but many will not recognize or acknowledge the JACL's significant contributions to the effort.

Without Edison Uno spearheading a resolution to pursue redress at the 1978 national convention in Salt Lake City, without the nationwide network of JACL members and without the leadership of JACL, there would be no redress. JACL is already a solid organization, but together I believe that we can make it stronger. The pace of change in the world is accelerating and keeping pace with change takes effort. The national board is committed to providing that effort.

I look forward to working with the board in 2008 to take advantage of opportunities to keep Mike Masaoka's dream alive — for us to be better Americans in a greater America.
Kick Off Awards Season With Your Critical Picks

MARK KOBAYASHI

It has been my pleasure to serve as your national secretary/treasurer for our JACL over the last three and a half years. Let me also thank you for your participation and for your membership in the organization, which definitely has contributed to our bottom line.

The keys to success for our upcoming years is our ability to continue creating exciting programs and proactively leaderships in our communities toward the goal of attracting membership to our JACL. With close to 45 percent of our revenues for the organization coming from membership dues, your contributions and our ability to attract and retain our membership remains a high priority for the organization especially in light of our ongoing membership decline.

I’m happy to say that we are currently fully staffed to the levels dictated by our 2007-08 budget, but with this we will need to double our efforts to raise the revenues that we projected in our budget as well as work diligently to increase our membership.

It is imperative that we continue to monitor our budget by continuing to monitor cash flow and project completion reviews to verify our quarterly progress. We have successfully completed an audit of our 2006 books, which has resulted in a clean bill of health for the organization. This is largely a result of the dedicated effort of our business manager, Clyde Izumi. Having audited books allows us to be in compliance with Senate Bill 1262, the California legislation that requires organizations our size to have annual financial audits. But even more importantly, it enhances our ability to raise money via foundation grants and fundraising activities. We look forward to being a successful steward of the organization.

The completed 2005 and 2006 audit has brought to light the need for our organization to deal with the major liability that we have of paying for the future medical costs for our staff. Currently, our liability stands at over $350,000 — and it continues to grow every year.

It is my belief that we will need to address this squarely as an organization and it is my sincere hope that we can make a dent in reducing this liability over the remaining biennium as we continue to work at where we stand in regards to our cash flow through this biennium for our budget.

We definitely have many challenges that await us this year, but taking an overall view of things, I believe that the national board has done a better job of informing our membership of the financial state of the organization via the various reports that we have been able to address through your district governors, the national board and coverage in the Pacific Citizen.

As a better informed organization, I sincerely believe that we will be able to address the concerns that come before us with a clear idea of where we are and where we can possibly be in a brighter tomorrow for the JACL.

Thanks again for your support and continued work for the JACL.

Mark Kobayashi is the current national JACL secretary/treasurer.
Come Together as Part of a Whole

As another year ends and a new year begins, I am reminded of a valuable lesson that I learned as a little boy in Sunday school. It has been helpful in many aspects of my life, and now also in the JACL. It is part of the reason that I feel members are so important to the JACL. I’d like to share it with you (slightly condensed and paraphrased):

“For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. So then, the eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ Nor can the head say to the feet, ‘Well, I don’t need you!’ Each part has its place, but all are part of the same body.”

This is how I see JACL— we are one body or one organization made up of many parts, people, chapters and districts. Each person, chapter, and district has strengths or talents and each contributes to the whole body.

We are all different, but we each contribute to the JACL in our own way to accomplish the work of the whole organization. We are each part of the whole body. Because we each have unique abilities, interests and personalities, we can each contribute or participate in our own way. It is the diversity of each contribution that makes this organization great—and it is the strength of each part that builds up the organization.

So each member in JACL can contribute in a way that best fits him or her. You may have someone who is good with numbers—he may be your treasurer. Someone who is a good cook can help with your spaghetti or teriyaki chicken dinner. Someone who likes to take pictures might be your historian. You may have someone who doesn’t want a “job,” but is willing to contribute financially.

We do not ask every member to be the president of his chapter or even an officer. Furthermore, one person cannot be all the parts. But with the diversity of our membership and communities, the possibilities are endless.

As we say goodbye to another year, we reflect on and appreciate past contributions of various members who have passed on, but also members who continue to contribute year after year. Let us use these as examples to grow and become a better organization.

My message to you as we begin this new year is a challenge to evaluate where your talents fit into the whole body of the JACL organization.

Also, search your membership and communities. Look for talent that will build your chapter. Look for people who are already members and use their talents. Look for people in your communities who can be a part of your chapter and contribute their special talents, and ask them to join.

As a chapter, discuss ways that you can be a part of the whole body that contributes to your community, to the district and to the national organization. Continue to network at your district meetings and be sure to participate as a chapter at the upcoming national convention in Salt Lake City, Utah this year.

Come together as part of the whole body.

I thank each one of you for being a part of JACL. I wish you and your families health and happiness this coming year. And I wish each chapter many accomplishments and successful events in 2008.

Edwin Endow is the current national JACL vice president of membership.

Looking Forward, Reflecting Back

I am pleased to report that the programs under my direction have operated under budget and have met their goals. Of course, with JACL’s financial challenges such accomplishments are only possible with the extra effort put forth by our wonderful staff and volunteers.

The national JACL scholarship program continues to grow. During this last year, we have added two new scholarships. David Kawamoto continued his significant volunteer efforts for this program, working diligently with several donors in formalizing these new educational grants. We should also express our appreciation to the Central California District Council and the Chicago chapter for continuing on for another year as evaluators of our scholarship applications.

The JACL’s new scholarships are the Grace Andow Memorial Law Scholarship and the Deni and June Uejima Memorial Scholarship. Both of these new scholarships were the result of bequests to the JACL from the estates of these JACLers. Grace Andow was a long-time member of the Cleveland chapter. Deni Uejima was an active member of the San Gabriel Valley chapter, a delegate for the PSW district and a past member of the Pacific Citizen editorial board.

As I look forward to a prosperous 2009, I reflect back on 2007. In particular, I consider how JACL annually selects the recipients of many of our Nisei leaders. Grace Andow and Deni Uejima were among our organization’s losses in 2007. Regrettably, I never had the pleasure of working with Deni. He was very committed to the goals of the JACL and he worked hard towards those goals during his life.

This program is scheduled for Feb. 29-March 4. Any member interested in participating should inquire through their district council.

In January, the JACL education committee will be meeting in San Francisco to review our present education programs—especially our educational resources, Web site, and teacher training workshops. 2008 is the 20th anniversary of Redress and one of our goals will be to develop an “enhanced” Redress module for the teacher training workshops.

This summer I will be completing my second biennial term as your vice president for planning and development, so I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all JACLers for their consistent support. I’m always impressed with the accomplishments of the JACL at all levels of our organization. You, the volunteers are the driving force behind our chapter, district and national programs. Great people working together can make great things happen.

I am, therefore, always so much for the privilege of serving as a national JACL board member and please continue to support all things JACL.

Carol Kawamoto is the current national JACL vice president for planning and development.
When President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act in 1988, I was 11 years old. It was only a few weeks before I started junior high and I was much more interested in what I was going to wear for the first day of school and whether or not I would fit in. The names Sen. Daniel Inouye, Sen. Spark Matsunaga, and Congressman Norman Mineta, among others, were unfamiliar to me, and it would be at least a decade before I understood their significance.

I had no idea what the passage of Redress meant to our community and the efforts and dedication — over the course of a decade — it had taken to achieve this landmark event.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Liberties Act. Redress itself represents the culmination of a small but dedicated community un­dermined by hard work, a true grassroots effort that challenged the laws of the United States and extracted a long-overdue apology for Japanese Americans interned during World War II. JACL's efforts spearheaded the Redress movement in the late 1970s. And, in fact, our national convention in Salt Lake City this year marks the 30th anniversary of when the JACL national council voted to pursue Redress in earnest. Hundreds, maybe thousands, played a part in getting the Civil Liberties Act of 1980 passed. And now, 20 years later, the JACL would like to take the opportunity to commemorate the passage of Redress and acknowledge all those who made it possible.

Through 2008, JACL will commemorate the 20th anniversary of Redress in the following ways:

• Acknowledgement at the 2008 National JACL Convention in Salt Lake City;
• Redress timeline from inception to signing;
• Begin collecting oral histories from Redress campaign participants;
• Enhanced Teacher Training Workshops with a Redress module;
• Recognition at the Gala Dinner on Sept. 25, one week after the 21st anniversary of the U.S. Constitution;
• Media campaign: press releases and Pacific Citizen articles; and
• Various events held in the JACL districts.

As JACL members, I ask you personally for your help in this endeavor. Redress did not happen through the efforts of just one person and we need all the members of our organization and our community to help celebrate the 20th anniversary of our victory against a grave Constitutional wrong. We need your attendance at the convention in Salt Lake City and our other activities along with participation in your chapter and district activities to commemorate this occasion. In preparation for this landmark anniversary, I’ve only scratched the surface of the Redress story.

[HEIDI TANAKATSUBO]

The 20th Anniversary of Redress: Commemorating JACL’s Living Legacy

Late 1800s — The first wave of Japanese came to the United States.

1929 — The JACL was established.

Feb. 19, 1942 — President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 to send Japanese Americans to internment camps.

Feb. 1, 1943 — The 442nd Regimental Combat Team was activated.

Dec. 27, 1969 — The first annual pilgrimage to Manzanar took place.

Sept. 11, 2001 — The U.S. is attacked with four hijacked planes.

May 1-10 — Yamato Macinac Island with Collette Vacations — 15 days visiting Mackinac Island, Door County, Wisconsin, and many destinations. Please call on our experienced travel consultants for a silent auction held at the Sayonara Banquet.


May 10-15 — Yamato Exclusive Japanese Summer Tour — 12 days/10 nights visiting Tokyo, Hakone, Tsuchiura, Kamakura, Kyoto, and Koyasan. Peggy Mikuni

May 10-15 — Yamato Exclusive Japanese Summer Tour — 12 days/10 nights visiting Tokyo, Hakone, Tsuchiura, Kamakura, Kyoto, and Koyasan. Peggy Mikuni

July 4-15 — Yamato Exclusive Japan Summer Tour — 12 days/10 nights visiting Tokyo, Hakone, Tsuchiura, Kamakura, Kyoto, and Koyasan. Peggy Mikuni

July 15-26 — Yamato Tour to Hokkaido — 12 days/7 nights visiting Sapporo, Yonezawa Spa, Katrina, Obihiro, and Hakodate.

Aug. 18-28 — Yamato European Panorama Tour — 9 days visiting Rome, London and Paris for 3 nights each city. Philippe Theriault

Sept. 1-11 — Yamato Colors of Canada & New England, aboard Holland America’s new ms Eurodam — 10 days sailing from Quebec to Saguenay, St. Lawrence River, Charlottetown/Prince Edward Island, Sydney and Halifax/New Scotia, Bar Harbor/Boston, Newport/Kennebunkport and New York. Peggy Mikuni


Sept. 1-11 — Yamato Western Wonders — 15 days visiting Chicago, Denver, Salt Lake City, Grand Canyon, Sedona, Page, Phoenix, and Las Vegas. Peggy Mikuni

Sept. 24-30 — Yamato Southern Charm with Collette Vacations — 7 days visiting Charleston, Hilton Head, Savannah, Walt Disney World, New Orleans, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Miami. Peggy Mikuni


Oct. 5-10 — Yamato Deluxe Autumn Tour to Japan — 15 days visiting Tokyo, Kobe, Kyoto, Sapporo, Fukuoka, Miyazaki, Beppu, and Hiroshima. Philippe Theriault

Oct. 10-17 — Yamato Western Wonders — 15 days visiting Chicago, San Juan, Disney World, Walt Disney World, New Orleans, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Miami. Peggy Mikuni

Oct. 18-Nov. 1 — Yamato Deluxe Autumn Tour to Japan — 15 days visiting Tokyo, Kobe, Kyoto, Sapporo, Fukuoka, Miyazaki, Beppu, and Hiroshima. Philippe Theriault

Nov. 2-9 — Yamato Western Wonders — 15 days visiting Chicago, San Juan, Disney World, Walt Disney World, New Orleans, San Juan, Puerto Rico, and Miami. Peggy Mikuni

Dec. 3-10 — Yamato Miyamoto Mushashi/Samurai Tour — 10 days visiting Nagoya, Tokyo, Kyoto, and Hiroshima. Lily Nomura

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New England, 10 days visiting New York, Boston, and the New England coast. Peggy Mikuni

Southern California, Arizona, Las Vegas, and many destinations. Lily Nomura

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NEW YEAR’S ISSUE
I want to take this time to wish everyone a very happy New Year. Hopefully, you are all having a great start to 2008!

2007 was a very busy year for the JACL youth. The National Youth/Student Council (NY/SC) organized and staffed the 2007 JACL National Youth Conference, which was held at the end of June in Santa Clara, Calif. The conference had an excellent turnout with over 100 young people in attendance and over 150 total conference participants.

Some other accomplishments for the NY/SC were: adopting an advocacy plan, forming committees to address goals and objectives for 2008 and awarding travel grants to help subsidize travel costs to national youth events. The NY/SC hopes to continue its success in the new year.

In 2008, one of the NY/SC's focuses will be event planning for the upcoming national convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. The NY/SC will be conducting an oratorical competition, a luncheon and mixer as well as several other youth oriented workshops at the convention. The Salt Lake City JACL youth will be coordinating activities for youth participants.

I encourage youth members who want to get more involved in JACL — and have a great time doing it — to go to the convention and represent their chapters as voting delegates. If you attend, in addition to participating in all the youth activities, you will also learn the formal processes for conducting JACL business, meet the candidates running for national offices, and most importantly speak up on issues that are important to you. I hope to see all of our JACL youth there!

If you are not a youth but are wondering how you can help out the youth this year below, are a handful of opportunities that you and your chapter can partake in to continue supporting the youth in the new year.

2008 JACL Nat'l Convention

Now is the time to find and sponsor youth in your chapter to attend the 2008 national convention as a chapter delegate. Involving youth in the voting process will help them to make a difference in JACL and allow them to participate firsthand in the national council's decision-making process.

2008 NY/SC Silent Auction

The 2008 NY/SC Silent Auction will be held at the Sayemara Banquet at the national convention in Salt Lake City. This silent auction is the fundraising event of the biennium for JACL youth. The 2006 Silent Auction was a great success due to the many members who donated and bade on items.

Again, the council is asking all of you to please donate items for the silent auction and bid on items at this year's national convention. All proceeds from the silent auction will go towards strengthening JACL's youth programs. The deadline and submission information for donating items is available on the JACL Web site.

2008 JACL Minoru Yasui Oratorical Competition

It's time to find a youth in your district with a voice. The 2008 JACL Minoru Yasui Oratorical Competition is open to all JACL members.

See SAVITT/Page 15

Happy 2008!

The Central California District Council continues to be involved with the building of the "Remembrance Plaza" honoring the site of the Pinedale Assembly Center.

We invite you to be part of the Day of Remembrance Dinner for the Pinedale Assembly Center Memorial Project on Feb. 17. We will be honoring the 20th anniversary of Redress along with presenting Distinguished Awards to former Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta, Justice James A. Arakawa and Professor James A. Hirabayashi.

Additionally, JACL National Director Floyd Mori will be our keynote speaker for the event. We will also be showing the feature film "American Pastime" before the dinner hosted by Kenny Nakagawa, executive director of the Nisei Baseball Research Project. We invite all former Pinedale Assembly Center internees to be our guests at this dinner.

CCDC will also have its annual Memorial Day ceremony honoring our fallen soldiers. This is an event that brings the whole Japanese American community together — and the participation grows larger each year.

Our district council will also come together again to honor our high school students and continuing college students at our annual scholarship luncheon in May.

2008 Chapter News

The Clovis JACL will again host its annual shrimp dinner to raise funds for their scholarships in the Spring.

The Fresno JACL will host its 23rd Annual Shinnen Banquet at the end of April.

The Livingston-Merced JACL will have their community Day of Remembrance Film Festival and Dinner on Feb. 23. The chapter will also host its annual charity golf tournament in May.

The Rededle, Sanger, and Selma JACL will bring their communities together with their annual community picnics.

In July, CCDC is looking forward to attending the biennial JACL National Convention in Salt Lake City. We are also looking forward to renewing old friendships and meeting new friends. See you there!
Looking Forward and Addressing ‘Hot Button’ Issues

Tom Brokaw referred to those who fought for America and supported America during World War II as the “greatest generation.” I prefer to take that distinction a bit further by saying that the Nisei were the “greatest generation.” Within the spirit of this wonderful legacy and those who subsequently followed, it is my honor and pleasure to serve as the 2008-09 Intermountain District Council governor.

The JACL has a storied history dating back to the WWll years. Included in this history are the contributions to help sustain JACL as a strong voice for persons of Japanese ancestry during a time of immense difficulties and hardships. With the temporary relocation of the national JACL headquarters to Salt Lake City, much of JACL’s operational viability was shouldered by the IDC. Fast forward to the present, I see the IDC confronted with a different set of issues not as daunting but nevertheless problematic, challenging and even scintillating.

As the IDC governor, I look forward to serving with my fellow district officers who are: 1st Vice Gov. Jaclyn Hori of Wasatch Front; 2nd Vice Gov. Karl Endo of Pocatello-Blackfoot; Secretary Jodi Tokita of Idaho Falls; Treasurer Marion Hori of Wasatch Front; Ex-Officio Silvana Watanabe of Mt. Olympus; Youth Representative Greg Stillman of Salt Lake City; and Pacific Citizen Representative Jeff Itami of Salt Lake City.

Certainly one of the “hot button” issues among members of the JACL is the reexamination of the scope and purpose of the organization. Activities that will emphasize the sharing and exchange of what works and what doesn’t at the chapter level. This would involve leveraging the synergy generated from facilitated discussions and collaboration among the chapters.

During the last IDC meeting, I and other attendees listened to Janet Komoto of the Snake River JACL describe how they hosted a very successful Nisei recognition event. Basically, she shared a blueprint for the planning and execution of an activity that included high participation and visibility within the community. Watching the intense interest and questions her report generated reaffirmed the value of information and success sharing among the chapters!

In addition to these types of discussions, I believe it is important to try to integrate some type of chapter president training into our district meeting agenda. My sense is that at least occasionally, individuals are thrust into the position of chapter president without the benefit of being mentored or trained for the position. Since the key enabler for healthy chapters starts with its officers, I hope this training of chapter presidents will trickle down to their respective chapter board members.

With the forthcoming July 16-20 national JACL biennial convention in Salt Lake City, I hope to lend assistance where needed to the convention planning committee. This event will certainly bring excitement to our district with the host Utah chapters offering an experientially rich and productive convention. Having managed some conferences on a professional level, I understand the creative and emotional demands required of the planning committee to pull off a great event. Their efforts are greatly appreciated.

Finally, I hope that sometime during future JACL events, I might run into those individuals whom I served with on the national youth council (many years ago) and others who were active in the youth program during that time.

At the last IDC/PNWDC Bi-District Conference, Elaine Akagi showed me a couple of photos taken at the 1966 national JACL convention in San Diego that evoked a host of memories. It would be great to see some former youth members who were such ardent supporters of the junior program involved at the adult level.

Brian Morishita is the current IDC district governor.

On behalf of the Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Council, I would like to wish everyone a happy New Year! It is hard to believe that 2007 is now behind us and 2008 has already arrived.

2007 has proven to be one of the busiest of years for our district. I would like to take this opportunity to recap some of the district highlights of the year.

The first major event of the year was the May 19 tribute dinner in San Francisco for John Tateishi, immediate past JACL national director. The event not only honored our outgoing national director, but also helped raise over $10,000 for the JACL. I would like to thank Milo Yoshino of the Diablo Valley chapter for not only chairing this event but for keeping a strict eye on the financial aspect of the event, which ensured the success of the dinner.

Each year for Memorial Day, our district in conjunction with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) has sponsored a Veteran’s Memorial Day ceremony held annually at the Golden Gate Military Cemetery in Coloma. This year our newest board member, military veteran Gordy Kono, took charge of our involvement in the program. He was one of the main speakers at the ceremony.

In late June, our district—via the San Jose JACL—hosted the biennial national JACL youth conference held on the Santa Clara University campus. I had the opportunity to attend this event and was impressed with the number of youths participating in the conference as well as the conference programming. I would like to congratulate the San Jose chapter and their president Gail Suzuki as well as our district youth representatives Megumi Karinaga and Jason Shimosaki for a job well done in hosting this year’s conference.

In August, the NCNWNP district held the “Salute to Our Veterans” luncheon onboard the USS Hornet docked in the Alameda Naval shipyard. This event was very well attended. I for one was fascinated with the unique venue of the event. I would like to recognize the event chair, Milo Yoshino and district board member Emily Teruya, whose invaluable assistance made this event possible.

To top off the year, our district was the host of the 2007 biennial tri-district conference in Reno, Nev. The tri-district organizing committee lead by Thaya Mune Craig, past governor and board member, worked hard to ensure the success of this year’s conference, which was both a productive and memorable experience for those in attendance.

As you can see, 2007 was indeed a busy one for the NCNWNP district. Our district board will be hard at work planning our district agenda for 2008.

Alan Nishi is the current NCNWNP district governor.
A LOOK BACK AT THIS YEAR'S TRAGEDIES, TRIUMPHS AND HEADLINE GRABBERS IN THE APA COMMUNITY

'It was not our fault. We shouldn't be punished because of one person's actions.'
— Bridgette Kim, then Virginia Tech freshman, told the _PC_ she was nervous about returning to class after a gunman killed 32.

MOURNING: The April 16 massacre at Virginia Tech was voted as the top news story of 2007 by the Associated Press. It's no wonder — the mass shooting was the worst in modern U.S. history.

In the aftermath, the ethnicity of gunman Seung-Hui Cho (right) became a focal point in media reports and spurred cases of racial profiling on campuses across the nation.

"He is a forthright, intelligent, sound person of integrity."
— JACL National Director Floyd Mori (below, right) about 1st Lt. Ehran Watada, who he met for the first time in '07.

SUPPORT: While the Watada debate continued to be a contentious issue in '07, the JACL national board members (above) voted in August to increase support for the first lieutenant.

In November, Watada proponents (left) saw victory with a federal judge issuing a temporary injunction on Watada's second court-martial. The Army said its intentions are to prevent the injunction from becoming permanent.
APAs successfully opposed a proposed 13,000-heifer feedlot to be situated less than two miles from the Minidoka national monument, where former internees still gather for camp reunions. In October, the Jerome County Commissioners voted 2-1 to reject the feedlot.

"Minidoka offers a unique and important opportunity to educate thousands."
— Karen Yoshitomi (below), PNW regional director, who testified in Jerome County.

TOXIC TOYS: An endless series of lead paint related recalls (such as Thomas the Train above with Austin Tanaka), including toy giant Mattel, evoked fear in American consumers and widespread distrust of all products made in China. Ugly rhetoric reminiscent of the 1980s anti-Japanese era began to make a comeback.

DEMANDING JUSTICE: Former WWII Korean sex slaves (above) won a symbolic victory in July. The U.S. House of Representatives — lead by Rep. Mike Honda (left) — adopted a non-binding resolution demanding Japan's formal apology for the so-called comfort women. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe called the resolution "regrettable."

FAMILIES FIRST: With Congress locked in debate about a comprehensive immigration reform bill, APA groups took to the streets (right) to support reform. Amidst the national debate, Japan native Akiko Campbell (below, center) waged a personal battle to keep her U.S. born children and husband together. The bill failed in the Senate.

NISEI STAMP: The idea of a Nisei veterans stamp has been in the works for years, but a grassroots campaign (volunteers, left) picked up steam in 2007 with the support of lawmakers and the JACL. The Postal Service's Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee is reviewing the proposal. The stamp could be issued in 2010.
BIL HOSOKAWA, 92
He was a renowned journalist, author and diplomat who captured the JA experience from camp to redress to the present day.

DON HO, 76
The legendary 'Tiny Bubbles' Hawaiian crooner who entertained tourists for decades died of heart failure.

VIOLET KAZUE DE CRISTOFORO, 90

HARRY LEE, 75
Louisiana's 'Chinese Cowboy,' who was sheriff of Jefferson Parish since 1980, died of leukemia.

TOM KITAYAMA, 83
He was Union City, Calif.'s first mayor, and the first Japanese American to hold office in the state.

ROSE TANI, 90
The mother of astronaut Daniel Tani was killed when a train struck her car. Rose's husband, Henry, headed the San Francisco JACL in 1942.

In May, JACL thanked former national director John Tateishi for his dedication to the organization with a tribute dinner.


Hugh Burleson (center) accepts his award from Elaine Akagi (left) and Larry Oda at the Bi-District Conference.

Young JACLers moved to the beat of their own cultural drums at the summer JACL Youth Conference.

ROB SCHNEIDER (below) brought back yellowface in 'I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry.'

Rob Schneider (below) brought back yellowface in 'I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry.'

It was a big year for Kenneth Eng. He enraged almost every ethnic community with his racist column, embarrassed AsianWeek and threatened a neighbor with a hammer.

SHAMED IN '07

Shock jocks Jeff Vandergrift (above, left) and Dan Lay of New York's 92.3 Free FM prank called a Chinese restaurant. They weren't laughing when they were fired. Their fans are still miffed — they still leave colorful comments on the PC's YouTube page: www.youtube.com/pacificcitizen.
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Defining a Community Not by Race but a Shared Sense of Community

As a half Japanese, half Croatian American who has long been interested in her Japanese heritage, I am frequently challenged by various people’s ideas of what makes a person part of the Japanese American community.

From my earliest childhood memories at school, I recall being defined by how I was different with the “what are you?” question, which is both an expression of genuine interest and recognition of difference. And the same is true in the Asian American community where I continue to be defined by how I am different. In unfamiliar crowds, there is always that awkward introductory period as people try to figure me out. I am usually the not really Asian-looking Nikkei in the crowd where small talk almost inevitably includes the question: Are you a quarter? Here again — despite the asker’s best intentions — it feels like a denial of my heritage, especially when that question is followed by incredulity that I am half.

“You don’t look it.”

I never know how to respond to that, but it does feel like the asker is questioning my belonging and challenging my ethnicity. Why do we do that?

Which leads me to ponder the question that JACL and other like organizations face: who is the JA community? Of course in the early days, many Nikkei joined the JACL for a sense of community and shared cultural values. JACL gatherings were the place to make mochi and eat tanreiushi at picnics and celebrate Obon. Racial identity equaled cultural heritage; they were one in the same.

Now, it’s difficult to find a Nikkei family in America without a hybrid branch or two or more. Many of our JACL leaders are not only biracial, but many have no Japanese blood at all, especially at the district and chapter levels. So are they part of the JA community? Of course they are. Although the internment experience, which was intended on race, defined the JA community in the United States 60 years ago, those who went through it and remember it are fewer and fewer. So is our community’s legacy defined by internment? How can it be when most Nikkei now were not alive then? What about the Shin Nisei and those from Hawai’i?

Internment is important to remember and learn from and honor. No doubt. But it is also important to move past it as the watershed experience of our community. We need to evolve our definition of community. Unlike 60 years ago, where the community was defined primarily by race, I believe that the JA community today is defined by a shared sense of values and cultural interests.

I hope that as the Nikkei community evolves, we will not continue to use racial identity as a threshold issue for inclusion and legitimacy, but instead focus on a sense of affiliation and self-identification.

Many Nikkei are not active in the JA community (accepting the premise that organizations such as JACL and others are a measure of involvement), and many non-Nikkei are. I am hopeful that we will not continue to define our community by how people are different — what percentage they are not Nikkei — but by what we share: a sense of values and cultural interests.

Our community is who we accept as part of it, regardless of racial identity.

I am sure that anyone reading this thinks they would never reject someone as part of the JA community because they do not have 100 percent Japanese blood. But I ask you to take a moment to really examine your own cultural biases.

Would you vote for a president of JACL whose face is not Asian? How about a person whose last name is not Japanese? Could that person represent and be the face of the JA community?

I think you know my answer.

Kristine Minami is the current EDC governor. She was also the former JACL Washington, D.C. director for public affairs from 1999-2005.

Advancing the JACL Mission

Greetings from the Midwest!
The Midwest District Council looks forward to many opportunities in 2008 to advance the mission of JACL. 2008 will include the 20th anniversary of Redress, and many of our chapters will participate on or about Feb. 19 in commemorating the Day of Remembrance. This provides unique opportunities to describe the parallels between the Japanese American internment and the loss of civil liberties in the aftermath of the Sept. 11th terrorist attacks.

This year also marks the beginning of several new initiatives that promise to increase the engagement of JACL youth.

Asian Americans throughout Ohio, for example, have developed an Asian American Health Coalition, similar to ones that exist in Chicago, Minneapolis, and elsewhere. They received a $600,000 “capacity building” grant from the Kellogg Foundation, so members of regional JACL chapters will have opportunities to participate in advocacy toward improving the health and well-being of their Asian communities.

This will also provide service and fellowship opportunities for high school and college age youth as they learn about health disparities, conduct needs assessment surveys and participate in educational programs. Through these activities, they will engage in service learning, gain knowledge about their local Asian communities, enhance their leadership skills and further develop their own identities.

...the MDC will support these workshops that permit JACL to become a pacemaker in youth leadership training.

Bill Yoshino, the Midwest district regional director, has recently extended the “Diversity and Tolerance” (anti-hate and bigotry) program to include campus leadership workshops for students and staff. With its contacts in organizations such as the Midwest Asian American Students Union and local colleges and universities, the MDC will support these workshops that permit JACL to become a pacemaker in youth leadership training. Along these lines, we also look forward to JACL’s new 2008 Washington, D.C. college age leadership conference.

The Asian Pacific American (APA) Curriculum Guide has also been completed, and the MDC will be participating in national and regional teachers’ conferences to ensure its distribution and use in a manner that augments the JA curriculum guide.

The MDC also looks forward to the completion and training use of a packet of educational materials so that more JACL members will become empowered in sharing JA history and aspects of their personal experiences with school teachers and students. Finally, the MDC is poised to launch a program that enables the archiving of new interviews and research associated with the internment. Our purpose is to document the experiences of many of our JACL members and friends whose stories have yet to be preserved.

We look forward to seeing our friends, meeting new members, and renewing acquaintances at the upcoming convention in Salt Lake City.

Have a wonderful Year of the Nezumi (rat)!

Ron Katsuyama is the current MDC governor.

[ KRISTINE MINAMI ]

[ RON KATSUYAMA ]
Happy New Year! The Pacific Southwest District is starting the year with wind in our sails and we are all packed and ready for an adventure!

Regional Director Craig Ishii has been working very hard these last six months to help the district. His presence in the office is already evident in our community work and corporate relationships. With Craig now filling this staff position, JACL is back on the map in our district. Our journey has just begun!

PSW celebrated many successful events in 2007 like the Day of Remembrance in February that we co-hosted with the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress (NCRR). We also hosted our third annual PSW Golf Tournament in May. In 2007, we changed the format of our annual awards dinner and were treated to a performance by the Grateful Crane Ensemble titled, "Nihonmachi: The Place to Be."

The district also hosted new events. In May, JACL participated in the first annual Nikkei Community Day, hosted by TIes with Craig now filling this staff position, JACL is back on the map in our district. Our journey has just begun!

The PSW Civil Rights Caucus is continuing the revitalization of the civil rights efforts from within PSW. They meet monthly and have already set their goals for 2008. They are looking for people to join their cause.

The rejuvenation did not stop there. Last September, the Las Vegas, Arizona and San Diego chapters worked together to develop "How to Grow a Chapter President," a workshop that helps chapters groom their up-and-coming leaders. The event was so successful that PSW is forming a committee to continue with training and assistance.

We could not have accomplished any of these tasks without the help of the PSW executive board. I want to thank my board members - especially Kerry Kaneichi, our vice governor - for their tireless efforts throughout the year.

We are also very fortunate to have district staff members - Craig Ishii, Michelle Hirose (summer intern), Sen Sugano (intern) and Carol Saito who all cannot be thanked enough for their support of JACL.

As this adventure continues in 2008, I am already looking forward to the items that we are currently planning. We have started an inside-out approach to help strengthen our district. The executive board has been working to restructure our committee and board system to be more effective. We are trying to distribute our volunteer resources as efficiently as possible. At the same time, we are focusing on areas that need attention, including: chapter support, coalition building, leadership development and fundraising.

With the help of Sen and Craig, PSW has worked on a series of leadership development programs that target college-age youth. There is one final program in the Spring that will culminate the series. We hope this program will continue to grow in 2008 with a more broad scope and range within the district.

This year, we are looking forward to celebrating the 20th anniversary of Redress as JACL begins to outline a series of events that will commemorate the events leading up to and including redress. We continue to support same-sex marriage legislation. And many of our members are gathering support for the establishment of a Nisei World War II veterans' stamp.

Our 2008 calendar is getting packed with important events including: Day of Remembrance on Feb. 16 and Nikkei Community Day. Our golf tournament and awards dinner committees have started meeting as well to plan the annual event. It's never too late to join any of our committees. If you are interested in volunteering, we'd love to have your help.

I'm at the end of my article and haven't written about what I plan on doing for 2008. But, that's the easy part. I am very fortunate. I am inspired by the PSW executive board, district council and priceless staff. One of my major goals for 2008 is to simply provide the support and organization that my district needs to fulfill the goals we've set out so far. What an adventure!

Alayne Yonemoto is the current PSW district governor.
Greetings from the rainy, but green Pacific Northwest. In the last month of 2007, the weather has been in the news with much flooding and devastation. However, it seems the year ended on a sunnier note. That is good news for many in the flood zone.

2007 put into play the Pacific Northwest District Council’s Strategic Plan. In this project, we hope to find the needs of today’s Nikkei and how JACL can fulfill those needs. Through 2006, the district planned and raised funds to carry out the project. This year, a consultant was hired to develop a questionnaire and tabulate the returns. Although the project is now close to the end, the results won’t be known until later this year. What will we do with the results? A business plan will be developed and we hope to give the chapters in our district a direction for the future.

National JACL will be looking closely at the outcomes of the PNW project. The PNW is a small micromon of the national organization. Here in the PNW, we have large metropolitan areas, rural areas, elder Nikkei, Sansei, Yonsei, out-marriages, and Hapa children. As the one cultural Asian group with the largest amount of out-marriage, the Nikkei have changed greatly since the organization was created.

Our membership is dropping and the question is: how do we meet the needs of our constituents? This has been the concern of the leaders of this organization for the past decade. The demographics of our membership, and potential members, have changed more than for any other ethnic group.

Almost 50 years ago when I first became involved with the JACL, the membership was strong and the youth movement was going great. When I was a member of the Junior JACL, the membership consisted of mostly Sansei, with few mixed race members.

Today, as I meet members of the National Youth Student Council, the faces are different. This is the result of our changing demographics. Unfortunately, I seldom see the faces from my Junior JACL days. Had those Junior JACLers stayed active, our membership would not be facing the difficulties we currently do. Yes, some members from that group are still active at the local level. I find familiar names and faces in Pacific Citizen articles.

Membership peaked in the 1970s and 1980s, when the prime focus of JACL was Redress. Now members are asking: what’s next?

Now 20 years later, the focus of JACL is protecting the civil rights of all people. Is this what our non-members want? Obviously, we’re not meeting the wants of the Nikkei who haven’t joined. This is one of the reasons the PNW is working on the Strategic Plan.

Years ago, the mantra among JACLers was to pass the reins of the organization onto the next generation. If JACL remains on the same path as it has for the past 75 years, then there may not be a JACL for the next generation. Granted, the organization has changed over the years, but it has not kept up with the times.

Youth of today are not anything like the youth of the past. Their world is constantly changing, so much so that it is expected that by the time a college freshman enters college and takes his first class, technology will have changed so much that what he/she has learned will be outdated. This puts JACL in a position that it must accept changes to appeal to future JACL members.

The PNW Strategic Plan hopes that this will be the first big step for the future of the entire organization.

Savitt (Continued from page 7)

Minoru Yasui Oratorical Contest will be held during the 2008 national convention. Let’s work together to make sure each district is represented at the national convention competition and that all the district competitions are contested. The youth council is asking you to seek out youth to compete in this national event. The 2008 topic and guidelines should be available and distributed to chapter presidents in mid January. There is no better way to show youth that they really matter than encouraging them to participate in the above activities. I thank everyone who supported the youth in 2007.

As 2008 unfolds, I challenge you to keep up the momentum of giving back to our youth and helping to ensure a future for our organization.

Happy New Year!

Elaine Akagi is the current PNW governor.

Leilani Savitt is the current JACL national youth representative.

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In Memoriam - 2007

The following obituaries are about people who lived in California.

**HAYATO KIHARA**
Hayato Kihara, a research biochemist retired from the Lanterman Development Center in Pomona, died in Ventura on Dec. 26. He was 85.

Born in 1922 of Japanese immigrant parents in San Leandro, Dr. Kihara was raised in West Oakland and educated in the Oakland public schools. In the spring of 1942, his very promising studies at UC Berkeley were interrupted abruptly when the family was interned at a relocation camp in Topaz, Utah—a decision that he later blamed on his father’s “egoistic” desire to win citizenship rights for Japanese aliens.

In 1944 Dr. Kihara joined a small team of scientists working to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

**IRA SHIMASAKI**
Born Isao Shimassaki on Nov. 13, 1916, in Lindsay, Calif., Ira passed away Dec. 10, 2007 at the age of 97 in Torrance, Calif.

On Dec. 7, 1941, 25-year-old Ira was flying through the skies of California Command when his plane was shot down by a Japanese pilot’s plane. After Pearl Harbor, he was able to finish his training.

In the spring of 1942, Ira and his family were forced to leave their home under Executive Order 9066. They were sent to the Folsom Assembly Center and then relocated to the internment camp in Jerome, Ark.

In April 1943, Ira left the camp finding work at a munitions factory in Monroe, Mich. As he wrote his granddaughter Duna, “It was cold and hard work digging pips all day. The other side, that is where I met your grandpa’s friends whom I consider one of the nicest persons on this Earth. When I married her it was the best thing that ever happened to me.” Ira and Gladys married in March of 1944.

In September 1944, Ira was drafted into the Army. He did his basic training in Tyler, Tex. and was sent to Ft. Meade in Maryland before he was sent overseas to Germany in the winter of 1945 as an MP.

Upon returning from the U.S. in 1946, Ira lived and worked in Bethesda, Maryland, as a member of an automobile body shop specializing in Pontiacs and Rolls Royces. This is where he and Gladys raised their children—Don, Sandy and Susan.

For 30 years, from 1948 until he relocated to Southern California in 1979, Ira was the Permanent Chairman of the American Japanese Citizens League and the Director of the American Japanese Citizens League and the New York JACL.

Ira and Gladys moved to North Hollywood, Calif. where they owned and operated a gift store in Burbank for five years. They then moved to Torrance, where they owned and operated a children’s clothing store for six years.

Ira is survived by six of his brothers and sisters, Assao Kusuda, Fred, Sam, Rinko Enozaki, Walt and Joe; his children Don, Sandi (Bill) Kitzes, and Susan (Don) Liebson; and grandchildren Justin, Dana, Kevin, Brian and Jason. Ira’s beloved wife Gladys (Onoye) passed away seven years ago and his brother Tom passed away in 1989.
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