Young APAs Make Their Voices Heard Through Presidential Campaigns

Whether Obama or McCain supporters, APA youth are getting involved in the political process one vote at a time.

By TODD KUSHIGEMACHI
Special to the Pacific Citizen

Shandon Phan, 28, wonders why he was unable to find a pro-McCain group for Asian Americans on the Internet. "He's a great candidate. Why is there no group out there?" he wondered.

The young law student took the situation into his own hands by starting Asian Americans for McCain, an independent group focused on reaching out to those interested in Sen. John McCain. With about 10 active members, the group hopes to make an impact by recruiting voters and branching out into the community.

Young Asian Pacific Americans like Phan have been moved by the 2008 presidential candidates and have taken the initiative to make a difference, campaigning for the candidates of their choices and working to get involved in the political process.

As the son of a former active-duty officer in the South Vietnamese army, Phan sees McCain's service during the Vietnam War as an indication of the candidate's dedication to both America and to APAs. "Senator McCain was there, fighting with us, and in a way he also fought for the freedom of South Vietnam," he said.

APAs show their support for Sen. Barack Obama (left), Shandon Phan (top) canvasses door-to-door for Sen. John McCain.

Controversial Minidoka Feedlot Proposal Still Alive

A district judge reverses the Jerome County Commissioners' decision to deny a permit for a 13,000-heifer feedlot near the Minidoka Historic Site. The three-member board must now revisit the issue.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

For Sansei Tom Ikeda, the annual pilgrimage to the Minidoka National Historic Site in rural Idaho has become a family affair of sorts — 15 of his relatives, including his parents and grandparents, once called this barren landscape home.

A new comic series will feature the heroic soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Can Portland's Former J-Town See a Revival?

The city's ethnic enclave disappeared with the WWII evacuation. Uwajimaya, a JA-owned supermarket, is contemplating a move into the old neighborhood.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

George Katagiri remembers a place in his hometown of Portland, Oregon that no longer exists. At 81, the Nisei still walks the same streets he did as teenager on his way to Japantown for judo class or to visit his friends.

The memories are pristine, but the sights, sounds and ethnic identity of his old neighborhood have changed.

World War II hastened Katagiri's coming-of-age when his family was forced from their home to the Portland Assembly Center and Tule Lake. When they returned after the war, Japantown was gone.

Today, the former J-Town is like a ghost city inside Portland's Old Town/Chinatown District — the only nod to its existence are some of its original buildings and

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Louisiana School Officials Propose Requiring English at Graduations

Two students who spoke some Vietnamese in their commencement speeches spark the debate. APAs protest the English-only proposal.

By TODD KUSHIGEMACHI
Special to the Pacific Citizen

Controversy is stirring around a few sentences spoken in Vietnamese during two Louisiana high school commencement speeches. School officials have now put forth proposals to require commencement speeches to be in English only.

Co-valedictorians Cindy and Hue Vo, cousins, delivered part of their commencement speeches in Vietnamese at an Ellender High School graduation ceremony in May.

Cindy recited a sentence in Vietnamese dedicating to her parents, roughly translated as a command to be your own person, and Hue spoke three sentences in Vietnamese to summarize an English portion of her speech in which she thanked her parents.

"I think it's fortunate that I'm able to speak two languages, that I kept my culture like my mom and dad want me to," she said in an interview with
Jerome County to Revisit Controversial Feedlot Issue

(Continued from page 1)

His uncle Francis Kinoshita answered the patriotic call to duty while incarcerated here, giving up his life while fighting in Italy as a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

"I attended this year's Minidoka pilgrimage in honor of his memory," said Ikeda from his home in Seattle.

But just one week after Ikeda and more than 250 former World War II internees and their families gathered for the annual pilgrimage, an Idaho judge has breathed new life into a controversial proposal to build a 13,000-heifer feedlot just over a mile west of the historic site.

Fifth District Judge G. Richard Bevan ruled June 27 against the Jerome County Commissioners who had voted last October to deny the feedlot permit request by Big Sky Farms Limited Partnership. The judge believes the commission erred in their decision by relying largely on the county's comprehensive plan instead of the county's zoning and confined-animal feeding operations (CAFO) ordinances.

The commissioners will now have to revisit the controversial issue and will likely take it up in August.

It's a situation that has left a lingering sense of unease for those who have ties to the historic Minidoka site.

The feedlot owners are focused on making money and will aggressively pursue actions even if it isn't in the best interests of the overall community," said Ikeda.

An Odorous Proposal

Dr. Frank Kitamoto, 69, was surprised to see the lush greenery of the surrounding farms during the recent Minidoka pilgrimage, a sight in stark contrast to the barren landscape he and his family had endured during WWII.

It's not hard for him to imagine the negative impact a feedlot one-mile downwind would have on the historic site.

"It would definitely affect us," he said.

But Kitamoto, a longtime resident of Bainbridge Island, Wash., has discovered that the local residents will ensure the defeat of the proposed feedlot.

"Most of the people in the area are against the feedlot being there," he said. "I think the people in Idaho are going to take care of it.

When Jerome County Commissioners held two days of hearings on the controversial proposal last October, many local farmers did come out to voice their opposition. Joining them were several former internees of Minidoka.

Karen Yoshitomi, PNW regional director, attended last year's hearings and provided testimony. Without the likely benefit of hearings at the site, she believes the discussions should focus on the CAFO and zoning ordinances rather than the permitting process.

There are also the issues of waste management, odor, and airborne pathogens.

"I've been to a number of rest areas along interstate highways and downwind of large dairies or feeding operations," she said. "In the summertime especially, the combination of the smell, heat, and hordes of flies, would turn even the strongest stomach.

But the issue is still a sensitive one, especial-
New Report Examines Causes of N.Y. Chinatown Troubles

Although Chinatown's economy has improved since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the community has made less progress than New York City as a whole. Research report, "Revitalizing Chinatown Businesses: Challenges and Opportunities," was based on a survey of businesses, analysis of government data and interviews with leaders in the community and economic development.

According to the report, from 2001 to 2004, total employment in Chinatown decreased five percent, and improvements in the average wage for workers barely exceeded the increase in the CPI for the New York area.

The report also attributed the stagnation growth to the area's negative image, including dirty streets, crowded sidewalks, traffic congestion and limited English use.

Proposed solutions to the recent dwindling in manufacturing, restaurant and retailing, include improving business practices to draw more business and changing strategies to better serve a diverse consumer base.

Wellington Chen, executive director of Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation, said changing business operations is necessary.

"We need to improve our store conditions, and we need to give the customers a better experience," Chen said to The New York Sun. "I could bring in all the customers you want, but if they have a bad experience they can walk away and say I'm not returning."

Support from community leaders and government officials was also recommended by the report. Suggestions included resolving issues with parking and transportation and also pursuing a developmental project including a cultural center and a central food market.

"Chinatown business owners have a vital role to play, but they need additional support," said Cao O, executive director of the Federation. "Economic revival requires long-term, cohesive efforts by business, government and community leaders."

The Asian American Federation is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to advancing the voice of Asian Americans by supporting community service organizations and performing research to influence policies.

APA Community Still Upset About Movie '21' as DVD Release Approaches

The controversial film '21' will be released on DVD July 22, and groups like Media Action Network for Asian Americans (MANAA) are still upset because of the casting of white actors in the roles of fast-based characters who were Asian Americans.

The movie, starring Jim Sturgess, Kevin Spacy and Kate Bosworth, was based on the novel "Bringing Down the House" and tells the story of an MIT professor who teaches his students how to make millions in Las Vegas playing blackjack. Based on a true story, the novel features mostly AA characters, including the professor who is played by Kevin Spacy in the film adaptation.

MANAA said they believe the movie could have done just as well at the box office with AA stars because many of the actors in the film were not household names, referencing the flop of "Across the Universe" which also starred Sturgess.

Producer Dana Brunetti responded to the issue of "white-washing" by saying had he known how upset the AA community would be, he would have picked a different story to film.

"Believe me, I would have loved to cast Asians in the lead roles, but the truth is, we didn't have access to any bankable Asian Americans that we wanted," Brunetti wrote after the issue was raised on the "Entertainment Weekly" Web site.

Although many are upset that AAs were not used in the film, the real-life leader of the team of students Jeff Ma told USA Today it could have been worse.

"I would have been a lot more insulted if they had chosen someone who was Japanese or Korean, just to have an Asian playing me," said Ma, a Chinese American.

Guy Aoki, MANAA's founding president, spoke to producer Brunetti about the film in late 2005, and the producer reportedly said she was looking for the best actor for the role rather than worrying about realistic ethnic casting.

"Asian American actors are 40 years behind African Americans in being allowed to play themselves in their own stories," Aoki said. "'21', unfortunately, continues that discriminatory tradition."

Group Says Anti-Affirmative Ban Will Be On Ballots

Opponents have filed a lawsuit accusing petitioners of voter fraud.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb.—Voters in two states may get to decide this year whether public entities can use race and gender when deciding who to recruit and hire.

Supporters of a proposed ban on some kind of affirmative action recently said that they've turned in enough signatures to get the measure on the ballots in Nebraska and Arizona.

But the fight isn't over in either state, with opponents of the measure vowing to challenge the validity of some signatures to the petitions that have ignited controversy across the country.

A coalition of opponents based in Michigan has filed a lawsuit accusing Arizona petitioners of committing voter fraud and violating election law by using deceptive worded pitches to convince people to sign.

And a group opposing the measure in Nebraska plans to go to the secretary of state with video footage that appears to show circulators leaving petitions unattended and filling in information for signers. Both are illegal and could invalidate signatures.

"There's a significant difference between submitted signatures and valid signatures," said David Kramer, head of Nebraskans United, which opposes the measure. "We'll wait to see the outcome of that process before litigation."

In both states, supporters claim to have gathered far more signatures than needed. In Nebraska, they needed 112,000 and turned in 167,000. In Arizona, organizers needed about 230,000 signatures and submitted nearly 335,000.

The proposed constitutional amendment would bar preferential treatment by public entities on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin.

The Nebraska and Arizona groups pushing the measure are affiliated with the American Civil Rights Initiative's Super Tuesday for Equal Rights Fund, founded by California businessman and activist Ward Connerly.

Connerly has prevailed three times in past elections, with voters in California, Michigan and Washington approving proposals banning government-sponsored race and gender preferences in public education, state hiring and public contracts.

Studies have shown that Asian Pacific Americans have been major beneficiaries of California's Proposition 209, which dismantled affirmative action in 1996.

APA admission has increased steadily at University of California campuses in Berkeley, Los Angeles and San Diego, according to a 2008 University of Florida study, which expanded on the 2005 Princeton University study that APA students generally don't benefit from affirmative action at so-called elite colleges.

But affirmative actionponents say that although some APAs are not underrepresented in higher education, those who are of Southeast Asian descent and newer immigrants need affirmative action programs.

In May 1996, the JACL national board adopted a resolution to reaffirm its longstanding commitment to affirmative action as an important tool in fighting for equal opportunity and racial gender inclusiveness.

Arizona Deputy Secretary of State Kevin Tyne said, barring any legal challenges, his office would have a final tabulation of signatures by late August. In Nebraska, the count of acceptable signatures will be known by mid- to late-August, said Neal Erickson, deputy secretary of state for elections.

Max McPhail, executive director of a group pushing the measure in Arizona, scoffed at allegations of wrongdoing. He said Arizona voters will overwhelmingly side with the initiative in November.

"This radical organization believes people should be classified by the government and placed into racial categories and they should be treated differently," McPhail said. "That's the definition of racism."

In Nebraska, the effort was started by a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln who said he saw preferential hiring that infuriated him.

"Nebraskans are speaking loud and clear," Marc Schneiderjans said. "They want the opportunity to end the use of race and gender discrimination and preferences in state employment, contracting and education."

Supporters said they do everything possible to train circulators — both paid and unpaid — to follow the rules.

This year, organizers in Missouri conceded that too few signatures would be gathered by the deadline, and they bowed out in Oklahoma in the face of challenges to the signatures gathered there. A petition drive is still active in Colorado.
Asian Plurality at Top Public School Raises Questions About Admissions Policy

By Pacific Citizen Staff

The incoming freshman class at prestigious public magnet school Thomas Jefferson High School will have more Asian American students than white students for the first time in the school's history. The disproportionate representation of AA students at the Fairfax County school has led some to consider changing the admissions policy.

AA students make up a significant portion of the student body at the high school, only about 16 percent of the Fairfax population is of Asian descent, according to census data. Although AA students make up a significant portion of the student body at the high school, only about 16 percent of the Fairfax population is of Asian descent, according to census data.

Seiyong Jung, one of the incoming members of the freshman class, moved from Seoul to Atlanta with her family when she was 11. Her father went back to Korea later, but Jung stayed with her mother so she could pursue an education in the U.S. Her family then moved to Northern Virginia partly so she could apply to TJ High School.

"I heard TJ was famous for education courses and high opportunities," said Mejung Kim, her mother, to the Washington Post.

Other elite math and science magnet schools are also seeing this increase in the percentage of AA students. Only about 10 percent of the New York population is of Asian descent, but Stuyvesant High School, Bronx High School of Science and Brooklyn Technical High School have majorities of AA students.

Some attribute the success of the AA students to the commitment of immigrant communities to education. Many students are privately tutored and also take preparation classes for the TJ. High School entrance exam.

Many of the public magnet schools are utilizing merit-based admission systems instead of the race-based policies that have recently been overturned by courts. The San Francisco Unified School District in the 1990s was sued by a Chinese American student who was rejected from Lowell High, leading the school to change its quota-based system.

The Fairfax School Board changed the TJ. admissions policy and stopped using affirmative action in the 1990s. After only nine black or Hispanic students were admitted in 2001, however, the school board in 2004 said race and ethnicity could be used as plus factor but not a determining factor.

The 2004 admissions policy has yet to make a significant impact in increasing the enrollment of Hispanic and black students. The incoming freshman class will have 10 Hispanic and nine black students.

John Johnson, a member of the board's Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee, told the Washington Post in the same article that changes in admissions policy are not going to help much "if you have been behind the eight ball since kindergarten."
Patriot Act Worries Japanese Americans
Gathered at National Conference

By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

DENVER—Many of the Japanese Americans who gathered July 5 to remember the internment of 120,000 family members during World War II expressed concern about what they see as an erosion of civil liberties since the Sept. 11 attacks.

During a town hall discussion on the Patriot Act at a weekend conference organized by the Japanese American National Museum, San Francisco lawyer Dale Minami told the audience they shouldn’t think denying people access to lawyers or a right to a trial is something that can’t hurt regular law-abiding people.

“It did happen to you. It did happen to you in 1942,” said Minami, who worked on the landmark case that led to the exoneration of Fred Korematsu who refused to report to an internment camp.

Korematsu’s conviction for violating the internment order in 1942, along with the overall internment policy, had been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1944.

Many in the audience of approximately 100 people nodded at points made by Minami and fellow panelist Noel Saleh, a civil liberties and immigration lawyer. Some people in the audience and the meeting’s moderator, retired California State University, Long Beach professor Lloyd Inui, wore the names of the camps where they lived on ribbons below their nametags.

They also laughed when a white librarian in the crowd told them how her institution has been displaying a sign saying that the CIA hasn’t requested any records as a way to get people asking questions about the Patriot Act.

The 2001 legislation strengthened the authority of law enforcers to investigate suspected acts of terrorism and expanded their access to private telephone, e-mail, financial and other records.

The leaders of Los Angeles’ Japanese American National Museum have spoken up in support of protecting the rights of Muslims Americans following Sept. 11. However, Inui said he didn’t think any mass incarceration of people was likely again, partly because of the enactment of the Patriot Act.

Saleh, the former president of the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, said the “climate of fear” of terrorism following Sept. 11 is not unlike the fear the nation experienced following Pearl Harbor. However, he said the eventual conviction of Jose Padilla shows that the U.S. doesn’t have to give up the principles of its legal system in order to be secure.

Padilla, an American once accused of plotting with al-Qaeda to blow up a radioactive dirty bomb, was sentenced earlier this year to 17 years in prison on unrelated terror support charges. The charges were filed against him in 2005 just as his legal challenges to continued detention without criminal charge were reaching the Supreme Court.

Saleh, a Barack Obama supporter like many in the crowd, acknowledged he was disappointed that the Democratic presidential candidate has endorsed a congressional compromise on legal protections for telecommunications companies that aided the Bush administration’s wiretapping.

U.S. Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif., cautioned those upset with Obama’s position to remain involved. Honda, who was interned at Camp Amache on Colorado’s southeastern plains, said if Obama isn’t elected, he won’t be able to make changes that could help make government less secretive.

“When it’s open and transparent, at least you can see if the government less secretive,” said Honda, who voted against reauthorizing the Patriot Act in 2006.

Over 500 people, including 50 teachers from 12 states, attended the conference at a downtown hotel focusing on the history of JAs in the interior West. Attendees also participated in discussions on oral histories and tracing Japanese roots along with road trips to Camp Amache.

Other speakers invited to talk on a range of topics included Sen. Daniel Inouye, the husband of the museum’s director, Irene Hirano, “Star Trek” actor George Takei and former transportation secretaries Norman Mineta, a former internee, and Federico Pena, the former Denver mayor.
Mesa School's Popularity Reflects Growing Chinese Population

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

MESA, Ariz.—On a warm Saturday afternoon, classrooms at Mesa Community College were buzzing — with Chinese. The Hope Chinese School was hosting a Chinese speaking competition, where children could recite poems, songs and tongue twisters to showcase their knowledge of the language.

In other classrooms, students sang Chinese songs as part of the school's junior choir, or practiced martial arts.

"Chinese School was hosting a competition where children could recite poems, songs and tongue twisters to showcase their knowledge of the language," Eugene Xu, an engineer and chairman of the school's board, said.

"Chinese was my first language," he said. "But I've lost it some because I go to an American school where I speak English every day. So I go to Saturday classes."

Mary Shuai, the school's principal, said nearly all the students at the school take some type of Chinese language class.

"Parents maybe know that China's economy is growing fast, that's important for the parents," she said. "But I think for the kids, they just like the Chinese characters, the language, the Chinese culture."

The school also offers SAT Chinese prep and Advanced Placement Chinese prep classes.

Sixth-grader started at the school when she was four years old to hone her language skills.

"Chinese was my first language, and when I was younger I was more fluent," she said. "But I've lost it some because I go to an American school where I speak English every day. So I go to Saturday classes."

THE SCHOOL NOW ENROLLS MORE THAN 400 CHILDREN.

About 10 percent the school says are American children whose parents want to give them a head start on learning about China.

The school also offers essay writing, test prep and calculus, and some parents practiced test prep and calculus, including advanced placement.

"I felt compelled to write and draw a story as accurate as possible," Tucci said.

On March 4, Tucci attended a ceremony at the Hope Chinese School in Mesa, Arizona.

"Chinese was my first language," he said. "But I've lost it some because I go to an American school where I speak English every day. So I go to Saturday classes."

A "J.A. MONKEIFU" is specially designed & individually hand-cast to eternally commemorate & record the historical significance of its design to your surname.

JACL Condemns Hate Crimes Against Sikh Americans

The JACL said they are disturbed by the recent hate crimes committed against the Sikh American community and have called for stricter enforcement of punishment against those who commit such acts.

There have been at least three incidents in Queens in the past few months where Sikh students were targeted. Hair cutting violates Sikh religious beliefs, and a 12-year-old girl had her hair cut off by a fellow student June 9.

Another Sikh was punched in the face by a student June 3 at Richmond Hill High School after attempts to remove his haircut, and a student at another school had his turban removed and his hair cut off in May.

About 40 percent of Sikh Americans living in New York City have experienced harassment because of their religion, and 60 percent of all Sikh American students have been either verbally or physically harassed because of their religious headwear, according to a report issued by the Sikh Coalition.

The JACL said citizens should demand stricter enforcement of punishing those who commit the hate crimes, emphasizing the importance of treating everyone with respect regardless of religious background.

"Chinese was my first language, and when I was younger I was more fluent," she said. "But I've lost it some because I go to an American school where I speak English every day. So I go to Saturday classes."

38th Annual Nisei Week

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Schedule Announced for the 68th Annual Nisei Week Festival

Get your Ondo on at Aug. 16-24 event.

A long-time community supporter, a U.S. Senator and a news anchor are headlining this year’s Nisei Week Japanese Festival in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo.

The Aug. 16-24 event is the nation’s longest-running ethnic festival. And this year, Sen. Daniel Inouye will join Fred Hoshiyama and a U.S. Senator and a news anchor.

And this year, Sen. Daniel Inouye will join Fred Hoshiyama and a U.S. Senator and a news anchor. Every summer Nisei Week offers free Japanese cultural activities, good food and fun games for everyone.

Events include cultural exhibits, martial arts and sumo demonstrations, and a street fair at the Japanese American Community and Cultural Center (JACCC).

On Aug. 16, the new Nisei Week Queen will be crowned at the annual coronation dinner and show. The same day, the Nisei Week Car Show will be held at 100 South Alameda Street.

But save your appetite for the Aug. 23 Gyoza Eating Contest — the popular event is only in its second year.

Dancers will take to the streets Aug. 24 to close the festival with traditional ondo dancing on First Street. The public is encouraged to join in this Japanese street dancing ritual.

Nisei Week activities will be held in various locations throughout Little Tokyo, including the JACCC at 244 South San Pedro Street.

For more information: www.nisei-week.org or 213/687-7193.

Senate Considers Tule Lake Preservation Bill

The U.S. Senate will soon vote on a bill that will authorize a study to determine the feasibility of establishing the Tule Lake Segregation Center as a part of the National Park System.

Section 273 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2008 authorizes the National Park Service to conduct a Special Resources Study, a step towards enabling the development of a visitor center that will preserve the stories of the JAs incarcerated at Tule Lake during World War II.

The Senate bill is on the floor and will be presented to the House of Representatives for approval if it passes.

Located in Northern California, Tule Lake is where the War Relation Authority and Army chose to segregate the 12,000 JAs who protested their incarceration. The segregation center was designated as a National Historical Landmark in 2006.

The Tule Lake Preservation Committee, a nonprofit corporation, is requesting people to contact their Senators and urge them to vote for the bill. The committee has planned and conducted biennial pilgrimages to the Tule Lake site.

For more information: www.TuleLake.org.

NJAMF to Host Two Events to Honor 20th Anniversary of Redress

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) will host two events to honor the 20th anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

A reception for senators and members of Congress will be held July 31 at the Capitol, and a public ceremony will take place Aug. 3 at the Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II.

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 offered a national apology and reparations to JAs interred during WWII. More than 120,000 people of Japanese descent were relocated from their homes and businesses during the war.

Former U.S. Sec. of Transportation Norman Mineta, a leader in the redress movement, and former Sen. Alan Simpson, co-sponsor of the Civil Liberties Act, will be at both events. Craig Uchida, chairman of the board of the NJAMF, will also be present at the two ceremonies.

Miyu Hillesland and Caitlin Tanaka make crafts at the annual Children’s Day event.

San Jose JACL hosts the popular event.

Mae Ishimaru brought her granddaughters to the recent San Jose Children’s Day event but it was also a homecoming of sorts for her too.

This was the first time in 75 years Mae was returning to the place she was born and where her parents—Michiko and Ruiichiro Takimoto—decided to move after growing chrysanthemums in the peninsula area.

“This was the first time I had been back to the building,” said Mae of the historic Issel Memorial Building where the Children’s Day festivities were being held. “Isn’t it amazing.”

The Day’s event were also a chance to introduce the younger members of the Japanese American community to the history of the local San Jose community.

Barbara Tanaka attended the event with her daughter, daughter-in-laws and four of her grandchildren. The kids took part in a variety of events including basketball, horseshoes and a bean bag toss. The children also learned paper doll decorating and origami.

The event brought out more than 130 children to the Issel Memorial Building which will be celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2010.

Melody Sweeney, eight years old, helped pick the winners of the Stay at Home Fundraiser: Frank and Marjorie Kagawa. They took home a prize of $500.

Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii and Congressman Mike Honda of California will also be present at the July 31 reception. Inouye is a WWII veteran, and Mineta and Honda were both relocated and interned as children.

The NJAMF is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising public awareness about the JA experience during the war.

The two upcoming events are in part meant to serve as reminders to never allow an injustice like internment to happen again.

Information:

Reception for Senators and Members of Congress

Date: July 31, 6 to 8 pm

Place: U.S. Capitol, Room Hispanic-C

Public Ceremony

Date: Aug. 3, 2 to 3:30 pm

Place: Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II, intersection of Louisiana and New Jersey Avenues and D Street, NW
The Shigeki Shake Down

Theory of Relativity

Recently, my cousin (and roommate) and I were having a debate about opposites. The debate hinged on the premise of relative versus absolute. He posited the theory that when you pull open a door, is it not the same as your fingers pushing the handle in the opposite direction, making the difference between pull/push a matter of relative position.

As the contrarian, I challenged him to push open a door with a rope. Until he could accomplish such a feat, I would refuse to give further attention to dees at JANM’s project that took three years of preparation.

"Outsider." Is it better to be an insider or an outsider? And are these terms relative or absolute? Literally translated as outside (-s)-person (-s).

When I was living in Japan, I experienced this mysterious thing called gaijin-power, where gaijin are given preferential treatment. It was hard to admit that it did not exist when we received more generous welcomes into people’s homes or better service at stores and restaurants.

Sometimes our Japanese peers would want us to exploit our gaijin-power to get the hook-up for our whole group. It was tempting and we succumbed—often. Retrospectively, it still seems so perplexing that an entire culture could be wired to treat outsiders so well.

Think about how the concept of gaijin-power would work in America. It would not. It could not. Where would you even begin to design who was inside and who was outside? It would be near impossible to divvy all the various groups. What does this say about American culture in relation to Japanese culture? Do Japanese people put more value on outsiders or simply provide better treatment? Do we as Americans put more value on the inside or do we even have insiders?

Again, is it relative or absolute?

Naturally, it is difficult to ascribe any given characteristics to a group and expect it to apply to each individual in the group, but it is my opinion that we Americans are obsessed with being insiders.

Tabloid magazines like In Touch or People thrive on our collective fixation with knowing the insider lowdown. On Facebook and MySpace, it’s a badge of honor to have 500-plus friends or be in 20-plus groups.

Add to that the advent of the GPS-enabled iPhone 3G and other web-enabled cell phones, and other people can be so “inside” that they can know precisely where you are at any given moment.

With college students and young professionals killing hours of time on the Internet, at home, at work and now on their phones, any of their friends can instantly know their status: “out to lunch,” “cramming for biology” or “too busy to chat with you.”

We are compulsively competing to be more and more inside. Ironically, broadcasting our insider information to everyone.

Nonetheless, sometimes it’s cool to be an outsider too. We take pride in sticking out, having our own distinct individuality.

The complicating factor arrives when our position on the outside conflicts with the greater good on the inside. This can be minute, like when you are the only one with closed-eyes in a family portrait. Or it can be much grander, like when Iran recently rejected an economic incentive package presented by the European Union.

Ironically, when outsider status creates waves that affect the inside, it inherently forces the outsider in, creating an insider out of an outsider. This brings us back to the original question, is inside/outside status simply relative or definitively absolute?

I think these questions are very applicable to the current state of the JACL. As we address the challenges of membership decline, we are forced to consider the many dormant members who may feel as if they are outsiders to our organization. They may think their actions have no effect on our organization, or they may just wish to sit on the sidelines. Whatever the case may be, it is our responsibility to fuse the best of our joint Japanese and American heritage to reach out.

We can effectively extend ourselves to these so-called gaijin/outside of our organization, while simultaneously capitalizing on their inherent tendency to be on the inside. We need these outsiders on the inside.

Peter Shigeki Frandsen is currently a student at Columbia University, College of Dental Medicine. He is also a Mt. Olympus JACL member.
The documentary features four former internees who lay their souls bare to talk about their WWII experiences.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

In "Passing Poston," filmmakers Joe Fox and James Nubile plumb the souls of former World War II internees and release a torrent of dark emotions and well-guarded secrets.

For many Japanese Americans, memories of waking up to a world filled with gun-toting soldiers and miles of barren wasteland are like hidden wounds that never fully healed. But the reflection of a camera lens often offers the license for unbridled honesty.

So the tears come, anger explodes and shame surfaces. "We allowed them a moment of reflection," said Fox from his office in New York. "I've seen a lot of internment films and this one takes it one step psychologically deeper."

The feature length documentary, which recently premiered in theaters in Los Angeles and goes to DVD in September, follows four former Poston internees — Ruth Okimoto, Leon Uyeda, Mary Higashi and Kiyo Sato — in their reflections of past events that continue to shape their lives.

In one scene Uyeda stands on the bank of a pond andcompares himself to a white duck splashing in the water with a flock of black ducks. Maybe he doesn't know he's white. "It's tragic in a way," said Fox, "how they see their lives through this whole prism of racism."

Jewish American Parallels

"I had no idea," said Fox, 48, about the internment. "All I knew was that it happened."

The second generation Jewish American filmmaker whose father was a rabbi, grew up attending services at a synagogue filled with Holocaust survivors. He heard personal stories about the atrocities that happened across the ocean during WWII, but not about his own government's "Nuremberg-type laws" against JAs.

"It was really eye-opening," he said about the Alien Land Laws and exclusion orders.

His own ethnic heritage connected him to JA internment history. Although the Holocaust and the internment are not interchangeable, there are parallels, he said — even in the historic War Relocation Authority photos of thousands of JAs forced from their homes and taken to train stations to await their fate. Often, trains pulled away with countless innocent faces peering out the windows.

"They weren't exterminated, but there was a certain level of degradation of human life going on."

As former journalists, Fox and Nubile developed the skills to find great stories. Fox wrote regularly for USA Today until he met Nubile, a photographer, in Rwanda. They shared a passion for filmmaking, so they formed Fly on the Wall Productions.

A few years ago, they decided to make a film on historical preservation. "It always fascinated me," Fox said about the people who dedicated themselves to saving old buildings. "You know those people who throw themselves in front of wrecking balls? Why would something so old be so important to somebody?"

So they reached out to historical societies across the nation and asked for personal stories about historical preservation. They were deluged, but one story stood out.

"The Arizona Historical Society said we have a great story for you — a group of Native Americans and former Japanese American internees working together to save the remnants of a former internment camp located on a Native American reservation."

"What more could they ask for?"

They Used Us

Poston was built on the Colorado River Indian Reservation. During WWII, the Bureau of Indian Affairs saw an opportunity to develop the area's agricultural land using the War Department's budget. Much of the existing infrastructure is credited to former internees.

"They used us," said Okimoto in the film, her voice cracking.

Fox and Nubile interviewed about 60 former internees, but many couldn't be prod­ded to talk past a certain point. The featured four internees, on the other hand, laid their souls bare.

In the film, Higashi's face alternately hardens with anger and softens with nostal­gia while she talks about the hardship of camp life and meeting her husband. On their wedding day, she carried a bouquet of paper flowers down the aisle and invited their entire block to the reception.

"Passing Poston" took three years to make with a self-funded budget. It also includes rare video of the internment camp being built. The footage was recently discovered in a vault at Del Webb, the construction company in charge of building Poston.

Research took the New Yorkers to Arizona and California where they attended an all-camp reunion. There, a former internee earnestly asked Fox, "So what camp were you from?"

At first, it was strange for Fox that the reunions were held in honor of something as painful as the internment, but that was where many lifelong friendships were formed. And he kept hearing, "for the sake of the children."

"Many people turned the negative around. And for many children it was like an adventure in the desert."

Fox was moved by stories of former internees, who in the last chapter of their lives should have peace, not ask questions about their place in the world.

"I think they are really grateful that the film has been made," he said about the former internees. "They're hearing themselves in the film and hearing a voice they haven't really heard before."

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SEE IT

'Passing Poston'
New York, NY
Pioneer Theatre
Aug. 8-14

The documentary will be available on DVD through Docurama Films on Sept. 23.

On the Web
www.passingposton.com
U.S. Decathlete Clay Hopes for Gold Redemption

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Bryan Clay’s sixth grade teacher said the boy he struggled with in physical education class some 15 years ago in Hawaii was stubborn and mentally strong.

The characteristics he showed even back then played a significant role in his success in the decathlon, a grueling two-day, physically, spiritually draining on a daily basis, “he said. “People go out and play basketball for fun, play golf for fun, jog a few miles for fun, but not a whole lot of people go out and do a decathlon for fun.”

Clay, silver medalist in 2004, sealed his second Olympics by winning the U.S. trials with the best decathlon score by an American in 16 years, and the best in the world in four years. Clay’s total of 8,820 points at the 2004 Athens Games was the fourth highest total in Olympic history (it was his personal best until the 8,832 points he scored at the trials in Eugene, Ore.). But Czech great Roman Sebrle set an Olympic record with 8,893 points.

“Everything leading up to the silver medal was the dream, the kind of out-of-body experience,” said Clay. “To be in the stadium with 75,000 people cheering and seeing the U.S. flags raised throughout the stadium; I actually start crying when I got to the long jump because I was so overwhelmed by where I was and what was going on around me.”

The following year, Clay won the world championships. Hampered by injury last year, this spring he won the heptathlon at the world indoor championships.

Clay uses determination to make up for his stature — at 5-feet-11 and 185 pounds, he is undersized for the sport. “I guess you could say I’m the smallest decathlete; everybody’s taller than me,” he said. “There are some things that they get a certain advantage with the height, but I think it all equals out.”

The first decathlon event, the 100 meters, is among his strongest, and the last, the 1,500 meters, perhaps his weakest. So he might have to build a substantial lead heading into the decathlon finale if he is to win Olympic gold.

FENCING

Emily Cross, 21
Event: Women’s Foil
Hometown: New York, NY
Inside Scoop: Cross currently attends Harvard University, where she is fencing and majoring in biology. She’s also an avid saxophone player.

James Williams, 22
Event: Men’s Saber — Replacement Athlete
Hometown: Sacramento, CA
Current Residence: Long Island City, NY
Inside Scoop: Williams was a two-time NCAA All-American in fencing. If he sees action during the Games, he may burst out in Russian — the Columbia University graduate student is fluent.

FIELD HOCKEY

Kayla Bashore, 25
Position: Midfielder
Hometown: Shoemakersville, PA
Current Residence: Bloomington, IN
Inside Scoop: Bashore, who was adopted from South Korea, plans to travel to her birth country with her sisters after the Games. “It will be very special because it is the first time back to Korea since we were adopted at a very young age,” said Bashore, an Indiana University graduate with a degree in biology and chemistry.

Amy Tran, 27
Position: Goalkeeper
Hometown: Granville, PA
Inside Scoop: “I think that we are in a very fortunate position with the pool assignments. Our two biggest challenges will be Argentina and Germany,” said Tran, who started playing field hockey because it was the
only fall sport offered at her high school. In 2002, she graduated from the University of North Carolina with a degree in Communications Studies and Speech and Hearing Sciences.

GYMNASTICS

Kevin Tan, 26
Program: Men's Artistic
Level: Senior
Hometown: Fremont, CA
Inside Scoop: Tan's parents enrolled him in gymnastics class as an outlet for his "hyperactive" nature. He's come a long way — Tan was captain of the men's team for the 2006 World Championships. His favorite event is the rings, and he managed to squeeze in a finance degree from Penn State.

The U.S. Women's Gymnastics Team was not finalized before deadline.

JUDO

Taylor Takata, 26
Weight Category: 66-kg
Hometown: Wahiawa, HI
Current Residence: Colorado Springs, CO
Inside Scoop: The Hawaii native has represented the U.S. at the 60-kg division level at Junior and Senior World Championships. He's won at the Pan American and U.S. Open Titles before moving up to the 66-kg division in 2004. When he's not throwing his opponents to the mat, he likes to fish.

Sayaka Matsumoto, 25
Weight Category: 48-kg
Hometown: Richmond, Calif.
Current Residence: El Cerrito, Calif.
Judo Rank: Sandan (3rd-degree black belt)
Inside Scoop: After missing out on two other Olympic Games, this year Matsumoto's dream may come true. Her father David Matsumoto has been coaching her Japan-born daughter since she was five years old. One of her favorite techniques is the Uchimata, an inner thigh throw.

SHOOTING

Sandra Fong, 18
Events: Air Rifle, Three-Position Rifle
Hometown: New York, NY
Inside Scoop: Shooting is a family activity for Fong — her dad taught her how to shoot. Her sisters Abby and Danielle are both shooters too. Fong also competes in track and field and swimming. She will be attending Princeton University in the fall, where she will major in theater and history of jazz.

SOCER

Natasha Kai, 25
Position: Forward
Hometown: Kahuku, HI
Inside Scoop: The team has Kai to thank for her two goals against Costa Rica in a victory that qualified the U.S. for the '08 Olympics. She is the first-ever player from Hawaii to play for the full Women's National Team (WNT) and to make a Women's World Cup Team. But her best record may be her tattoos — 19, by far the most ever for a WNT player.

The U.S. Men's Soccer Team was not finalized before deadline.

SOFTBALL

Lovanne Jung, 28
Position: Second Base
Hometown: Fountain Valley, CA
Inside Scoop: Sometimes it's hard for a returning Gold Medal winner. "I think everyone is definitely out to get us this time," said Jung, who was a part of the U.S. team's 2004 win.

"We have seen a couple teams this year and everyone looks much better than they were in 2004." But the University of Arizona graduate is looking forward to the opening ceremonies — they missed out last time because they had a game the next day.

Olympic veteran Jun Gao started playing table tennis when she was five. Her first lesson was to learn how to bounce the ball against the wall without letting the ball drop. Now, she is hoping for glory alongside her all APA teammates: Crystal Huang, Chen Wang and David Zhuang.

Also look out for these other potential APA Olympians: Ivana Hong (gymnastics), Lee Nguyen (soccer), Logan Tom (volleyball) and Lindsey Berg.

Check www.roadtobeijing.org or the U.S. team's Web site for a more complete listing of APA Olympians.
Personal and Political
Obama, like McCain, has gained support from young APAs because of his character, policies and personal background.
Ramey Ko, the 28-year-old founder of Asian Americans for Obama, said the senator from Illinois is comfortable being around APAs because of his upbringing in Hawaii and his family, particularly his half-sister Maya Soetoro-Ng.
"As Asian Americans, we are so unused to seeing Asian faces close to high levels of leadership," he said. "When we do see Asian faces, it provides a reassurance that a person with personal experience with the issues we grapple with has an influence."
Ko also believes Obama is strong on issues important to the APA community, including small business and health care. His parents run a small business and have difficulty providing quality affordable health insurance.
"My parents always try very hard to get the best plans for their employees, but the employees are still left with pretty high deductibles and premiums," said Ko, an Austin, Texas resident.
One policy area in which Trinh Le, an 18-year-old supporter of McCain, does not agree with Obama is abortion. She said she wants young Obama supporters to see the inconsistency of supporting both human rights and abortion.
"As young voters, we don't look at the wide spectrum," she said. "When it comes down to it, I wish people would see the full picture and see how well-rounded McCain is."
Le, whose father is a veteran and was a prisoner of war like McCain, said she is also drawn to the heroism McCain showed by serving his country. She believes McCain would be a great president because of "his experience, his courage and his desire to do right."

Online Campaign Efforts
The group Asian Americans for Obama was founded by Ko to organize the AA community to elect Obama as president. The group’s Web site is a resource center for organizers who need tools to campaign in their communities.
"Our job is not to tell people what to do," Ko said. "The idea is that every person in their community knows what to do in that community."
One of the resources is the "Supporter Toolkit," full of downloadable documents to help mobilize AAs. Included in this section of the Web site are flyers for Obama in English, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese and both traditional and simplified Chinese.
Angelica Jongco, a 30-year-old civil rights lawyer in San Francisco, has helped the Web site by working on outreach to ethnic media, particularly the Filipino press. She has helped to ensure ethnic media outlets receive media releases from the campaign.
McCain supporter Phan acknowledges the Obama campaign's effectiveness in mobilizing the younger generation and minority groups. The group Asian Americans for McCain is limited in its resources, he said:
"The Obama campaign is more tech savvy. They have been very effective in reaching out to the younger generation."
Asian Americans for McCain, according to Phan, is attempting to bridge the generational gap and attract young APAs who are more inclined to support Obama in part because of his multiracial background, age and coverage in mainstream media.
"Young people do not care much about politics," Phan said. "When they look at the presidential election, Obama has more exposure in the media."

Small Victories
The efforts of young members of the APA community in presidential campaigns are making a difference one community at a time.
Matthew Chea, 28, along with other APAs set up an all-volunteer office in the Philadelphia Chinatown to reach out to the AA community in the months leading up to the Pennsylvania Primary. The office was diverse with volunteers from New York, New Jersey and Virginia.
Although the office was disappointed about Obama's loss in Pennsylvania, they were still happy with what they accomplished, said Chea.
"To be honest, we won Philadelphia, especially in the Chinatown ward. It wasn't a loss for us. We got people excited to vote."

Outreach and involvement in the community along these lines is important for giving a voice to the APA community, according to Ko.
"It's precisely things like that that will bring members of the Asian American community into contact with people who might not have had contact with Asian Americans," he said. "That's important for a good democracy."

YOUNG APAS
(Continued from page 1)
Phan, but it is only a plus, not the main reason for his support. What he really admires about McCain is his compassion and his leadership.
"He had almost every bone in his body broken, and he forgave those who tortured him. He has the compassion and wisdom to be a great leader."
bronze plaques detailing the area’s history. But its presence from the turn of the century to 1941 has left imprints in its former residents and revelers.

“The echoes of prewar Japantown will always be there for me anyhow,” said Katagiri, his words warm with nostalgia.

Disappearance is a common theme in most of today’s J-Towns — the last three in California continue to fend off shrinking borders and loss of ownership. But in Portland what is gone may soon return with the possible arrival of Uwajimaya, an Asian food and gift market.

“It would be the first JA business in the area since the 1950s,” said June Schumann, executive director of the Oregon Nikkei Center. “It’s significant because it would reestablish the commercial history of the neighborhood.”

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The Seattle-based Uwajimaya has been a source for Japanese food and goods in the Pacific Northwest since 1928 when Fujimatsu Moriguchi started hawking homemade fishcakes from the back of his truck. From this humble beginning, the business has grown into a large supermarket chain with three locations in Seattle, Bellevue and Beaverton.

Now Uwajimaya and developers are eyeing a parking lot — free of any historic building or current tenants — at Northwest Couch Street between Fourth and Fifth Avenues in Portland’s former J-Town as the site for a possible new supermarket space complete with fixed-income housing and underground parking.

Uwajimaya is in the very early stages of this endeavor, said CEO Tomio Moriguchi, who has been meeting with city officials, developers and community members to determine the feasibility and even desirability of the project. A quick analysis of the area revealed that it might not be a fit with Uwajimaya’s core clientele.

“We have other opportunities,” said Moriguchi, adding that the supermarket’s presence in Old Town/Chinatown would depend on the city’s commitment to redevelop the area.

For many years the neighborhood, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988, has been on a decline.

“The only grocery stores were the corner stores that sold chips, cookies and cheap wine,” said Schumann.

If the Uwajimaya project moves forward, it would mark another city-backed effort to revitalize Old Town/Chinatown, said Peter Englander of the Portland Development Commission (PDC).

The PDC’s budget currently earmarks $10 million in tax increment funding for the next five years from the downtown waterfront urban renewal area to help finance the Uwajimaya project. City officials say once details of the project are set, approval is needed from the PDC board and the Portland City Council.

“It’s important to keep the history and culture of Chinatown. We want Chinatown to keep its identity,” he said. But a big name like Uwajimaya could revitalize Chinatown and usher in an Old Asian identity with a nod to history.

After all it began as Japantown, said Ying.

Old Nihonmachi

It was a neighborhood where many immigrant groups got their start.

Before WWII when it was Japantown, Issei men who worked in the sawmills and railroad construction sites during the week would come to J-Town on the weekends to take baths, get clean clothes from the local laundries and visit the barbers, said Schumann.

The small Nihonmachi, which consisted of just five to six blocks near the waterfront, was also an urban hub for JAs to find staples like soy, miso and rice.

But when the bombing of Pearl Harbor thrust the U.S. into war, Portland city leaders quickly rescinded business licenses for JA-owned businesses and shut down J-Town even before President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued his removal orders for all JAs on the West Coast, said Schumann.

Prominent JA businesses like Teikoku, a retail store established in 1905 by the Matsushima family, were eventually forced to sell all its goods and close its doors. Growing up in pre-war J-Town, young Hiroshi Matsushima helped his parents run the shop by packing unebushi into jars.

“That was my job,” said the Nisei, who was taken to the Minidoka Internment Camp with his mother and siblings. His father had been picked up earlier by the FBI and taken to a separate camp. By the time the Matsushima family was reunited over a year later in Crystal City, Texas, young Hiroshi barely recognized his own father.

Thousands of Portland’s JA residents experienced the same forced dislocation, and most never returned after the war — leaving the old J-Town to fade away. It was by chance in 1950 that Katagiri, an MIS veteran who earned his teaching credentials at the University of Minnesota, returned to his hometown. He was hired to teach at Portland’s Abernethy, the same elementary school he attended growing up.

When Katagiri returned, J-Town had already become Chinatown.

“It was nostalgic but there was nothing to draw me back there,” he said.

The Matsushima family also returned to the Portland area after the war to sell up shop again with $500 borrowed from friends. The government barred the name Teikoku calling it “imperial,” so they settled on Anzen or “safe.”

In 1968, the family moved across the river to its current location at 736 NE ML King Boulevard. The 100-year-old business is now being run by Hiroshi, who is wary of Uwajimaya’s possible move across the river. Anzen was once the only place to get Japanese food and goods, but Uwajimaya’s move to

PHOTO COURTESY OF OREGON NIKKEI LEGACY CENTER

'it was nostalgic but there was nothing to draw me back there,' said George Katagiri, about his old Japantown after WWII.

Echoes of the Past: The Tsuchino Sumida family stands in front of the Hotel Taylor in Portland's former Japantown.

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SANTA BARBARA
Sun., Sept. 14 -Annual Santa Barbara JACL Community BBQ; featuring games, raffle, prizes, food and stuff for the kids; $10/adults, $6/kids under 11 years old. Info: Wade Nomura, wnomura@verizon.net or 805/445-5912

VENTURA COUNTY
Sun., Oct. 12 -11th Culture Day. Info: Jeff Kamioka, 805/493-1824 or Mariko Chikum, 805/231-1392

Hawaii
HONOLULU

Nevada
LAS VEGAS
Oct. 14-16 -Manzanar High School Reunion; California Hotel; reunion is open to anyone who was in Junior High or High School in Manzanar between 1942 and 1945, relatives and friends are invited to attend; events include a mixer, slot tournament, photos and memory books; Manzanar residents will participate with displays and presentations. Info: Cherry Ueda, 818/591-3629, Grace Deguchi, 310/968-1666, Michi Osaki, 232-3465-5143, Venice area: Kats Matsumoto, 310/386-3565, Gardena: Jun Okimoto, 310/372-1313, Marykno: Seigo Yoshinaga, 626/756-1196, and San Fernando Valley: Victor Murakoa, 818/588-4113

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*Participants must be members of JACL, JACLU, or 1/18 Asian and spouse.
In Memoriam - 2008

All the towns are in California except as noted.

Fujimoto, Riyo, 83, Arcadia, June 28; survived by husband, Yoshito; sons, Kenneth (Lana), Michael (Michelle) and Tim (Cindy); daughter, Margaret (Christian) Fujimoto; and 8 gc.

Hataoka, Ben T., 84, Redondo Beach, June 10; survived by wife, Miss; daughters, Lisa (Michael) Lo and Karen Herberts; and 1 gc.

Ishihara, Keith Kenji, 27, Los Angeles, June 30; survived by parents, Ray and Kiyoko; sisters, Kristina, Kimberly and Kellie (Jeff) Kaptain; brother, Kent (Abigail); Charles Kato.

Iwanaga, Dorothy Natsulm, 92, Arroyo Grande, July 2; survived Koichi; son, Daryl; daughter, Susan Nakahara; 2 gc.; and brothers, James and Yemiko Rosenow.

Kato, Robert Kazuo, 72, Torrance, June 19; Army veteran; survived by wife, Amy; daughters, Kini (Chris) Kaz Gee, Michele (Darin) Kato and Gail (Mike) Yano; 3 gc.; and sisters, a, Tetsuo, 88, Honolulu, and Kateri, 86, Gardena; brother, James Kato.

Matsumura, Roy Masao, 90, Gardena, June 15; survived by wife, Shizuka; sons, Victor, Eugene and Mitchell; step-children, Kay Shishima, Albert, Craig and Tex Yamada; and sisters, Bunny Oigamachi, Susan Sunada and Yasue Ishihara.

Mori, Ted Tetazoo, 90, survived by daughters, Linda Chung and Patti Sako Bright; 3 gc.; and many great-grandchildren.

Morihisa, Maxine Machiye, 82, June 16; survived by husband, Shoji; sons, John and Don; daughters, Wendy McColough and Bonnie Morihisa-Small; 4 gc.; sister, Yoshi Noji; and brothers, James and George Nakamura.

Moriwaki, Shoji “Charley,” 81, Honolulu, June 10; Army veteran; survived by wife, Amy; children, Nao (Patsy) Oyabashi and 2 gc.

Oka, Terumasa, 80, Portland, June 19; Korean War veteran; survived by wife, Christine; sons, Daniel, Dennis and Andrew; 5 gc.; and brother, Shigoro.

Onaga, Tetsuo, 88, Honolulu, June 9; survived by daughter, Patricia Nichols; 1 gc.; brother, Leonard; and sister, Ruth Shimabukuro.

Ono, Hisako, 77, Monterey Park, June 27; survived by husband, Koichi; son, Daryl; daughter, Catherine (Gary) Tani; 2 gc.; and sister, Yumiko Rosenow.

Ritchie, Rudolph Maria, 85, Los Angeles, June 10; survived by wife, Yaecki; sons, Richard (Joanne) and David (Susan Muka); daughters, Anne (Joseph Schlitt) and Kathryn Ritchie; 3 gc.; and sisters, Betty (Norman) Barrow and Katherine (James) Gay.

Shimidaboku, Ralph Zensho, 81, Honolulu, May 30; Air Force veteran; survived by wife, Loreetta; daughter, Susan Nakabara; 4 gc.; brothers, Edwin and Stanley; and sisters, Kathleen Fukumoto, Maryann Nakata and June Sato.

Shimamoto, George Shigeo, 87, Montebello, June 23; survived by son, Alan (Ellen); daughter, Leslie (Peter) Hentzen; 3 gc.; and sister, Mary (Shu) Magota.

Sugino, Seichi S., 87, Gardena, June 16; WWII veteran, MIS; survived by wife, Nobuko; sons, Jeffrey (Catherine) Stein and Lester (Lynn); daughters, Nancy (Joey) Omatu, Lynne (Cyril) Yonemura, Ilene (Joe Johnson) Sugino and Joyce; 7 gc.; and sisters, Chiyoiko Dote and Yaeko Ishii.

Tanabe, Charles Hideyuki, 84, Honolulu, June 13; WWII veteran; survived by son, Elton; daughter, Janice Aestisiter; 5 gc.; and brothers, David and Benjamin.

Tankida, Joe Hironori, 85, Alameda, June 6; survived by wife, Akiko; daughters, Karen (Ichiro) Yamamoto, Janice (David) Shibata and Sachiko Tskuda; 3 gc.; and sister, Shizuko Uyemura.

Umemoto, Mas Bob, 77, Los Angeles, June 12; survived by wife, Ruth; son, Ron; daughter, Sandy (Murray) Jansen; 4 gc.; sister, Sunnie Umemoto; and brother, Harry (Kiyoko).

Yano, Hironyuki, 82, Aiea, Haw.; U.S. Air Force (ret.); survived by wife, Joyce; son, Jesse; daughter, Elaine Okada; 4 gc.; and brother, Yoshitaka.

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the Pacific Citizen.

The speeches were approved prior to the graduation ceremony by Beth Bajon, an English teacher at Ellender who looked over the speeches for grammar and content.

School board member Rickie Pitre had issues with the commencement speeches, and another board member made a motion that charged David Bourg, the secondary education supervisor with the Terrebonne Parish School District, with forming a committee to critique the high school graduations. The committee has not been formed because schools are still in summer session.

Bourg said he meets with the principals in the district regularly, and graduation comes up as a topic about three or four times a year. What makes this situation different is that board members had particular issues, but he stressed that his role as a chairperson of the committee was the result of a board directive.

"This did not originate with me," Bourg said. "It was a board member who had issues, not me, not anybody from the staff."

Board member Pitre said he did not like the students addressing in a foreign language and said the board or administration needed to address the inconsistencies. Pitre did not respond before press time for further comment.

Hue said she first heard about the proposals from a local reporter and was never directly notified by school officials. She was shocked by the news, particularly because past valedictorian speeches had utilized foreign languages without complaint.

"I was very shocked and surprised because in the process of writing our speeches everyone knew there was going to be a Vietnamese part of it," said Hue.

Different groups like the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO) have spoken out against the proposals. Minh Nguyen, executive director of VAYLA-NO, has been helping both Cindy and Hue.

The group has built up a support group and a youth letter writing campaign for young people to express how they feel about the issue. Because of all of the support they are receiving, Nguyen said the requirements are not likely to take effect.

"I don't think we are going to let that happen," he said. "We have a lot of people to support us in this."

The JACL has also spoken out against the proposals, urging the Terrebonne Parish to strike down the policy.

"It is deeply concerning that a school would think to censor students for their bilingual abilities," said Floyd Mori, JACL national director. "Their multicultural roots should be celebrated, not punished."

associated Press contributed to this story.

PORTLAND (Continued from page 13)

Beaverton 10 years ago cut into Anzen’s business.

"It hurt quite a bit," said Hiroshi.

Besides shopping, Anzen’s loyal customers often come in to ask Hiroshi for referrals for credible dentists or skilled mechanics. "They tell me don’t close up," he said between sighs. "We’ll see."

Multicultural District

Today, a dozen or more buildings with JA roots stand next to buildings steeped in Chinese American history, said Schumann. "Some of us still think of this area as a multicultural historical district."

The Nikkei Legacy Center is currently located inside the old Merchant Hotel, a J-Town mainstay, that’s located near the proposed site of the Uwajimaya project.

Katagiri, a Portland JACL member, and other community members welcome the pan-Asian supermarket, calling it a good fit for the multicultural historical district.

Moriguchi said the possibility of bringing back a JA-owned business to the old Nihommachi would be an opportunity to give his newly born grandson a slice of history.

"As we learn more about the history of Portland’s Old Town/Chinatown/Japantown, we are struck by the similarities with Seattle’s International District," said Alan Kurimura, Uwajimaya vice president. "It is unique to the Pacific Northwest to have Chinatowns, Japantowns and Manilatowns side by side. We hope an Uwajimaya in Portland will bring together all Asians and non-Asians."

Katagiri does not have to go far to remember a place that used to bring JAs together. The Japanese American Historical Plaza at Tom McCall Waterfront Park commemorates the city’s history with a series of stones etched with poems in English and Japanese.

"It hurt quite a bit," said Hiroshi. "Every time I read that, all I have to do is look over my shoulder," said Katagiri. "I still hear the sounds and think once upon a time there was a Japantown."

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