Ordinary Family, Extraordinary Legacy

Sixty years ago, California took away their land. By suing and winning, Kajiro and Fred Oyama started a fight for equal rights that is still being waged today in Florida.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Fred Oyama was six years old when he first became a landowner. It was about six acres of Chula Vista, Calif., farmland — a gift of necessity from his Issei father, Kajiro Oyama. Back then racism was written into law, and the only solution was a gift.

Kajiro, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1914 from the Wakayama Prefecture, was an “alien ineligible for citizenship” and therefore prohibited from owning land, so he simply deeded the property to his American-born son.

“I didn’t know why I was there,” said Fred, now an 82-year-old retired junior high math teacher, about the day he and his father filed the paperwork for the land.

But innocence turned into anger when the U.S. government seized the Oyama land anyway during World War II, saying it had been purchased with intent to evade the Alien Land Law.

“I was so angry,” said Fred in between long pauses. “This is my country. I’m a citizen and you take my land away.”

Instead of accepting this fate, Kajiro and Fred with the help of the JACL and the American Civil Liberties Union, took their battle against injustice all the way to the Supreme Court. In the highest court in the land, the Oyamas were vindicated. Their 1948 case, Oyama v. California, has been called a turning point for equal rights for Asian Pacific Americans and the country’s immigrant communities.

But 60 years later, even with a shiny ACLU event commemorating the landmark case, Fred prefers to duck the spotlight.

“We support agriculture ... but faces its next obstacle — a $15 million capital campaign.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

For decades Japanese American leaders in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo have stressed the same point — build a recreational center and the youth will come.
PSW GOTV Says ‘No’ to Proposition 8

By PSW GOTV Committee

On Nov. 4, millions of Americans will go out and vote in a historic election where, for the first time in the history of the United States, we can vote for an African American president or a female vice president from the major political parties. In addition, Californians will have another important decision to make that day — whether or not “only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.”

This proposition would eliminate the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry, which effectively takes away a right that these couples currently have. Proposition 8 is a contentious proposition. Supporters of the proposition argue that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. Those against the proposition argue for equal rights, including the right to marry, for any and all committed and loving couples.

PSW JACL’s Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Committee opposes Proposition 8 because it seeks to restrict the civil rights of thousands of Californians by denying marriage equality. We believe that marriage is a fundamental human right for all Californians, including members of the gay and lesbian community.

Our committee is currently working with API Equality-LA, a coalition of straight, gay and lesbian organizations and individuals in the Asian Pacific Islander (API) community, to help with their efforts to oppose Proposition 8.

The impact of this proposition goes beyond the gay and lesbian community, but affects all communities, including our own. Of the 40,000 API same-sex couples in the nation, 10,000 reside in California. Six percent of all same-sex couples in California are API. It is critical for our community to be aware of this issue and act in the best interest of those who are directly affected by this proposition.

Many argue the “sanctity of marriage” as one of the primary reasons why marriage should be solely between a man and a woman. Civil marriage is a state-sanctioned union of individuals, so there’s really no religious issue to debate here. We feel that, like everyone else who is entitled to obtaining civil marriages at their local city halls, the gay and lesbian community in California should continue to enjoy that right as well.

As the California Supreme Court put it, one’s capacity to establish a committed relationship “does not depend upon the individual’s sexual orientation, and, more generally an individual’s sexual orientation — like a person’s race or gender — does not constitute a legitimate basis upon which to deny or withhold legal rights.”

A number of people claim that they’re fine with equal rights and civil unions for the gay and lesbian community — as long as they don’t actually get married. The statement itself is contradictory since members of the gay and lesbian community would be denied the right to marry and therefore not enjoy equal rights.

Even if we did give almost-equal rights through “marriages” to opposite-sex couples and “civil unions” to same-sex couples, wouldn’t the time be a form of segregation all over again? It’s not just an issue of semantics. Past segregation laws of separate but equal have proven themselves to be unconstitutional. Why then, would it be acceptable to apply this notion to the gay and lesbian community?

Proposition 8 is reminiscent of the anti-segregation laws that formerly applied to communities of color in the United States. Many of these laws, especially in California, were targeted at Asian immigrants to make it difficult for them to marry, establish families, build communities, and integrate into American society. It was not until 1967 that all race-based legal restrictions on marriage were eliminated in the U.S. with the landmark civil rights case Loving v. Virginia.

JACL supported the Lovings in this case for the same reason why it has joined the “No on Prop 8 Equality for All” Campaign because the organization advocates for marriage equality for all committed couples. If the proposition passes, it will be the first time in California’s history that discrimination is actually written into the state constitution.

The GOTV Committee encourages Californians to vote “no” on Proposition 8 because no one should be treated like a second-class citizen, regardless of their race, gender, ethnicity or sexual orientation. All humans and citizens are deserving of the same rights — including the basic civil right of marriage.

The GOTV Committee aids the JACL in addressing the growing issues of political complacency and lack of understanding of minority issues within the JACL community.

Lessons in Health Care

Naomi Lim recently completed her Daniel K. Inouye Fellowship focusing on health programs and policy.

By Naomi Lim

I arrived at the JACL’s Washington, D.C. office on Jan. 22 — the day after Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Auspicious, some might say, considering that the JACL is the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States.

Thinking I would be attending law school in the fall, I was looking for a position to bide my time, while at the same time exploring my interests. The Daniel K. Inouye Fellowship, with its focus on health programs and policy, seemed to be the perfect fit.

I had some background experience in health care and advocacy, and I wanted to explore that avenue further to see if it was something I wanted to pursue career-wise, through further education, or both. What I got out of my JACL experience not only answered that question, but also helped me discover other interests that I hope to continue to pursue.

While Asian Pacific Americans are seen by some as a “model minority,” with this stereotype sometimes making its way into policy areas, such as education and health care, what is often missed by policy makers is the diversity represented within the various APA ethnic groups, as well as the stark contrasts in income, education, and citizenship, among some of these groups.

In health care, such differences can affect the ability of an individual or community to access health services, which in turn may affect the health of said individual or community. However, while health care is a civil rights issue, it is one that often goes inadequately understood and perhaps overlooked.

The Inouye fellowship seeks to address this gap by offering recent college graduates the opportunity to learn about health policy issues and programs affecting APAs. During my time at the JACL, I had the opportunity to research and learn about the issue of health care access and other current health policy issues affecting APAs and engage in conversations with JACL staff and leaders, as well as staff from other APA organizations, such as Hmong National Development, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, and Keiko Senior HealthCare.

Through all of this, I learned about the need for programs and advocacy that address the specific needs of APAs as a whole, as well as individually (by ethnic group). I also worked on a health fair toolkit for use by JACL chapters, which includes information on specific health conditions affecting all Asian Americans, as well as APAs as a whole, in addition to ways in which JACL members can address health needs in their own communities. Some of this knowledge was put to the test, as I assisted with the coordination of health fairs in Los Angeles and Fresno, which provided me with some hands-on practical experience in coordinating programs and community outreach.

Through it all, I gained much more than I had anticipated, especially in terms of insight into health programs and policy advocacy on a national level.

Additionally, on a personal level, I realized that my passion for health care justice is more suited towards program coordination than advocacy, and although I hope to be active as a health care advocate on some level, I was able to make the important decision not to go to law school, but to continue to work in health programs for the time being.

In the fall, I will begin work as a clinical affairs associate in medical administration at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center, which helps meet the health-related and social needs of underserved APAs in New York City through service, advocacy, education and training, and research.

While my time as a JACL fellow is complete, I will continue to be involved in the JACL, especially in ways that can improve the health of the APA community, and I hope you will, too.

Naomi Lim served as the Daniel K. Inouye Fellow in the JACL Washington, D.C. office.
Filipino WWII Veterans Seek Equality from U.S.

A House bill recently passed falls short of what the Senate had approved. The two differing bills will now have to be reconciled. By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

MANILA, Philippines—Something is better than nothing, Filipino veterans said Sept. 24 after hearing they could get lump-sum benefit payments from the U.S. government more than six decades after they fought alongside American forces during World War II.

"Whatever the Americans give, the Filipinos will receive," said retired Col. Francisco San Miguel, secretary general of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines. He added, however, they "will not stop seeking what is rightfully due to Filipinos. We will still seek equal treatment."

Filipino veterans have been clamoring for decades for the same benefits received by their American comrades who fought the Japanese.

The U.S. Senate passed a bill on veterans' affairs in April that provided additional pensions for many of the surviving veterans but has not acted on the House legislation. The senators could either approve the House version or hold a joint committee to work out differences before a final version is signed into law by the U.S. president.

Japan invaded the Philippines, then a U.S. colony, in December 1941. When Filipinos were conscripted into the U.S. Army, they were promised full benefits as veterans. But after the war, the U.S. Congress reversed the promise in the Rescissions Acts of 1946.

Veterans who began receiving benefits before the Rescissions Acts continued to receive them.

Benefits for other veterans, many of whom fought in the Philippine jungles in U.S. uniforms and were forced by Japanese captors on the infamous Bataan Death March with their American comrades, were discontinued because they were deemed not to have been on active duty.

San Miguel, 81, said Filipino veterans "are getting older and they are dying one by one."

"What the Americans plan is when you die, too bad for your family. Only the living are going to receive benefits," he said, referring to proposals, cut from the House bill, that would have provided a $4,500 annual pension for a married eligible veteran living in the Philippines and $3,600 annual pension for an unmarried eligible veteran.

"For me, that will do because I'm already old," his daughter, Violy, quoted him as saying:

Civil Rights Groups Demand Tourism Chief Resign Over Racist, Sexist E-mails

Honolulu JACL calls Rex Johnson's e-mails 'deeply hurtful' and in 'conflict' with Hawaii's diversity.

By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

HONOLULU—Several civil rights groups recently called for the resignation of the state's top tourism executive because of racist and sexist e-mails forwarded from his government computer.

"As the head of the HTA (Hawaii Tourism Authority), [Rex] Johnson's mission is to work toward attracting people, from all over the world, of every race and ethnic background, to visit Hawaii," said Karen Nakasone, former president of Honolulu JACL. "These e-mails reflect attitudes which undermine this mission, and call into question the effectiveness of an individual who finds such bigotry humorous."

Alphonso Bragg, president of the Hawaii branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said Johnson has "damaged the mission and integrity of the Hawaii Tourism Authority with his totally inappropriate and unequal behaviors."

Bragg, along with members of the Hawaii NAACP and other civil rights organizations, marched down Waikiki's Kalakaua Avenue on Sept. 27 to protest Johnson's continued employment as the state's top tourism executive.

The protesters were able to gather over 300 signatures calling for Johnson's firing, said Bragg to the Honolulu Star-Bulletin.

Meanwhile, HTA's board will consider Johnson's status as president and chief executive of the state's tourism agency at an Oct. 2 meeting.

Johnson already had been reprimanded and had his pay docked by the board in August for using his state e-mail account to relay pornographic material, including X-rated movie clips, slideshows and photographs, which were discovered by the state auditor during a review of HTA's major contractors.

The latest e-mails containing racist and sexist jokes were disclosed recently by The Honolulu Advertiser, which obtained them in an open-records request.

Johnson did not write the e-mails but relayed them to friends. They included several off-color jokes involving blacks, Hispanics and women.

Sens. Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton were the target of one joke. Obama was referred to as a "coon" and Clinton as "beaver" in a March 22 e-mail forwarded by Johnson.

"Simply put, we have lost all confidence in Mr. Johnson's ability to objectively administer the Hawaii Tourism Authority's mission in an objective manner," Bragg said.

In addition to the NAACP and Honolulu JACL, the African American Association of Hawaii, African American Lawyers Association and the Hawaii Women's Political Caucus also joined in protesting Johnson's actions.

Johnson was traveling on official business to the U.S. House of Representatives on Sept. 23 passed the "Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2008" that would make one-time payments of $15,000 to Filipinos who served in the U.S. military and $9,000 to non-U.S. Filipino veterans.

"Whatever the Americans give, the Filipinos will receive," said retired Col. Francisco San Miguel, secretary general of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines. He added, however, they "will not stop seeking what is rightfully due to Filipinos. We will still seek equal treatment."

Filipino veterans have been clamoring for decades for the same benefits received by their American comrades who fought the Japanese.

The U.S. Senate passed a bill on veterans' affairs in April that provided additional pensions for many of the surviving veterans but has not acted on the House legislation. The senators could either approve the House version or hold a joint committee to work out differences before a final version is signed into law by the U.S. president.

Japan invaded the Philippines, then a U.S. colony, in December 1941. When Filipinos were conscripted into the U.S. Army, they were promised full benefits as veterans. But after the war, the U.S. Congress reversed the promise in the Rescissions Acts of 1946.

Veterans who began receiving benefits before the Rescissions Acts continued to receive them.

Benefits for other veterans, many of whom fought in the Philippine jungles in U.S. uniforms and were forced by Japanese captors on the infamous Bataan Death March with their American comrades, were discontinued because they were deemed not to have been on active duty.

San Miguel, 81, said Filipino veterans "are getting older and they are dying one by one."

"What the Americans plan is when you die, too bad for your family. Only the living are going to receive benefits," he said, referring to proposals, cut from the House bill, that would have provided a $4,500 annual pension for a married eligible veteran living in the Philippines and $3,600 annual pension for an unmarried eligible veteran.

"For me, that will do because I'm already old," his daughter, Violy, quoted him as saying:

"Me and my daughter, we're a place where all people will feel welcome."

However, he has repeatedly apologized for the e-mails, calling it a stupid mistake.

"I'm concerned," Bloom said about the latest e-mails. "I know other board member are concerned, thus the reason for calling a special board meeting as soon as possible to address the matter."

When asked if the situation has tarnished Hawaii's image, Bloom responded: "I don't think it has helped."

Trimble said the 12-member board must act swiftly this time around.

"If they don't have a problem with this, they should submit their letters of resignation, as well," he said.

Many in the tourism industry have supported Johnson, who has held the position since 2002.

"I'm frankly surprised at the characterizations that are being made about him," said Eric Masutomi, vice president of planning for Outrigger Enterprises, Inc. "Rex, as far as I'm concerned, made a foolish, foolish mistake. But it's not representative of the person I know. He's one of the finest individuals I know. He's a real standup guy."

Masutomi credited Johnson for turning HTA around and working well with the Legislature to increase the funding to market Hawaii.

But many are still pushing for Johnson's resignation.

"Those emails were deeply hurtful to the women and minorities who were denigrated within them," said Nakasone. "They conflict with Hawaii's strong tradition of tolerance, and our community's bedrock principle — that diversity is one of our greatest strengths. We call upon Mr. Johnson to resign, or that the HTA board remove him."

Hawaii Tourism Authority CEO Rex Johnson forwarded an e-mail joke that called Hillary Clinton a 'beaver.'

Sen. Daniel Inouye (third from right), who has been pushing for decades to restore benefits, is pictured here in 2004 with Filipino veterans at the JACL national convention.
New Bill Seeks to Honor JA WWII Veterans

Lawmakers want to give the 100th Battalion (above) and the 442nd RCT the Congressional Gold Medal.

Another bill passed by the House would allocate $4 million for a new Go For Broke facility in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Over 60 years after their service in World War II, members of the highly decorated 442nd Regiment Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion may be able to add another medal to their collection — the Congressional Gold Medal.

But it would literally take an act of Congress.

If passed HR 7058 would pay tribute to the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd RCT, commonly known as the Go For Broke regiments, by awarding them the highest civilian honor from Congress.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Pasadena, introduced the bill Sept. 24 to honor the men who waged wars both against racial injustice at home and abroad against U.S. enemies. During WWII, many Young Nisei men fought bravely to protect the country that imprisoned their families behind barbed wire internment camps.

“At a time when they could have easily turned their backs on a country which had seemingly turned its back on them, these men chose the nobler, bolder, and more difficult route,” said Schiff in a statement.

“It would certainly be an honor,” said Toke Yoshihashi, who served over two years with the 100th Battalion A Company during WWII. “We don’t get enough credit for what we did as a unit.”

Among other medals, the 85-year-old San Gabriel, Calif., resident received a Bronze Star for his service.

The Go For Broke regiments earned several awards for their distinctive service in combat, including: seven Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 52 Distinguished Service Crosses, 560 Silver Stars, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 15 Soldier’s Medals, and nearly 10,000 Purple Hearts, among numerous additional distinctions.

“The brave Japanese Americans who fought in the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team have received several awards for their heroic actions during World War II,” said Matsui in a statement to the Pacific Citizen.

“It is time for Congress to award the Congressional Gold Medal to those who fought so bravely for our country’s principles, even as these principles were not being adhered to at home.”

Many say honoring the 100th Battalion and the 442nd RCT with the Congressional Gold Medal recognizes a long legacy of JA war heroes.

“... [It] is a recognition of the contributions made by 33,000 Japanese Americans who served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II and the some 5,000 Japanese Americans who fought with gallantry in each of the Korean and Vietnam Wars to preserve our democratic system,” said Robert Nakamoto, president of the Japanese American Veterans Association.

“It will honor especially those Japanese Americans who made the ultimate sacrifice, 717 in WWII, 256 in the Korean War, and 115 in the Vietnam War. We salute Rep. Adam Schiff for initiating this action,” added Nakamoto.

On the same day the Congressional Gold Medal bill was introduced, the House also passed another bill that included $4 million requested by Schiff for the construction of a Go For Broke National Education Center in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

HR 2638, or “The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act,” passed the House and Senate, and is now awaiting a signature from President George W. Bush, said Christine Sato-Yamazaki, president and CEO of the Go For Broke National Education Center. It’s something that supporters expect soon, she added.

The new facility, which will be located near the Go For Broke Monument in Little Tokyo, will serve the WWII veterans and their families by documenting their oral histories, providing volunteer veteran docents and conducting teacher training.

“We’re really excited about the funding,” said Sato-Yamazaki, who said it would help continue the organization’s mission of telling the stories of WWII JA soldiers.

Headquarters for The Go For Broke National Education Center is currently located in Torrance, Calif.

A new location in the heart of Little Tokyo would be welcomed by veterans like Yoshihashi, who is also a docent at the monument.

“It would be an attraction for people to come to our Nihonmachi,” he said.

On the Web: www.goforbroke.org
http://schiff.house.gov

National Newsbytes

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

New Pearl Harbor Museum Scheduled for 2010

HONOLULU—A $33 million contract has been awarded for the construction of a new visitors center at the USS Arizona Memorial, which is getting nearly twice as many tourists as its facilities were designed to handle.

Construction on a new museum, shop and a second theater is expected to begin before the end of the year. The new museum, with a total expected cost to reach $54 million, will allow visitors to see items currently not on display, including some of the thousands of donated artifacts now kept in a warehouse.

The memorial is expected to remain open while the new visitors center is being built, with completion expected by the 69th anniversary of the Pearl Harbor attack in December 2010.

Judge Drops Murder Count in Miura Case

TORRANCE, Calif.—A murder count has been dismissed against a Japanese businessman in the 1980s death of his wife, but a conspiracy case can proceed.

On Sept. 26, a Los Angeles County judge ruled on motions concerning Kazuyoshi Miura. He has been detained in the U.S. territory of Saipan. The judge ruled against the murder count on grounds of double jeopardy. Miura was tried in Japan and convicted, but that verdict was ultimately overturned.

Miura and his wife were shot during a visit to Los Angeles in 1981. She was shot in the head and died a year later in Japan. The businessman was wounded in the leg.

Fire Ravages Chinese American Museum

CHICAGO—After a fire destroyed a large part of its facility, officials of the Chinese American Museum of Chicago said they would rebuild.

The building, located at 238 W. 23rd Street, is a total loss after a fire destroyed the third and fourth floors and the roof of 12,000-square-foot museum. Priceless artifacts were also lost in the blaze.

The cause of the fire is still unknown, but fire department officials have ruled out foul play. Dr. Kim K. Tee told the Chicago Sun-Times, the museum's co-founder and president, said the now-shuttered facility would be open again within a year.

California Tuition Break for Undocumented Students Can be Challenged

SACRAMENTO—A state appellate court has ruled that a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of a California law, known as AB540, that grants in-state tuition to undocumented immigrants can move forward.

In 2005, a group of out-of-state students and parents filed a lawsuit in Yolo County Superior Court alleging that they were being charged higher tuition and fees than undocumented immigrants. A lower court dismissed the suit, but the 3rd District Court of Appeal in Sacramento ruled Sept. 15 the case could continue.

The out-of-state students argue that federal law requires states that provide in-state rates to undocumented immigrant students to offer the same benefit to out-of-state students. The defendants maintain that California's law does not violate the federal statute. They say that more U.S. citizens benefit from AB 540, than undocumented immigrants.

To obtain in-state tuition in California, students must have attended three years of high school in California, graduated and gained admission to one of the state's colleges or universities.
APAs in the News

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Inafuku is Named Manzanar’s New Superintendent

Les Inafuku, a 33-year veteran of the National Park Service, is the new superintendent of Manzanar National Historic Site.

Currently serving as the acting superintendent of Manzanar, Inafuku will permanently relocate to Manzanar in January from his post as chief ranger at Kaloko-Honokōhau National Historical Park and Pu‘uhonua o Hōnaunau National Historical Park on the Big Island of Hawai‘i.

He previously served as a park ranger at Yellowstone National Park.

Yamaichi to Receive ‘Spirit of Japantown Award’

For his untiring commitment to the San Jose Japantown community, Jimi Yamaichi will be receiving the “Spirit of Japantown Award” at the Oct. 4 Spirit of Japantown Festival.

Yamaichi served as a founding member of Fuji Towers, Nikkei Matsuri Festival and the Japanese American Museum of San Jose. As a board member or advisor, Yamaichi has supported the JACL, Yu-Ai Kai Senior Service Center and the San Jose Buddhist Church.

The recognition ceremony will take place 1:45 p.m. center stage, on the day of the festival.

AAJC to Host American Courage Awards Reception

An elite group of APA leaders will be honored at this year’s “American Courage Awards,” presented by the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC).

Carrie Ann Inaba of “Dancing with the Stars” will host the event, which recognizes Americans with exemplary community service to the APA and other minority communities.

This year’s honorees include: Eric Yamamoto, a University of Hawaii School of Law professor; Irene Hirano, president and CEO of the Japanese American National Museum; and John C. Yang, a Washington D.C. lawyer.

The Prudential Insurance Company of America will also receive the Bridge Builder Award for its diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui, Former Sec. of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta and the Hon. Amul R. Thapar will serve as presenters for the event.

The American Courage Awards takes place Oct. 8 at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C.

First APA Reaches Pinnacle of Wine Expertise

Jeannie Cho Lee, 40, has become the first APA to obtain the title of “Master of Wine” from the Institute of Masters of Wine.

Only 277 people worldwide have received the honor- able title so far.

Lee, who was born in Korea but moved to the U.S. at the age of seven, received a master’s degree in public administration while she was studying at Oxford. She is currently a wine expert working in Hong Kong.

Esquire Names Most Influential APAs

Esquire Magazine’s recently published list of “The 75 Most Influential People of the 21st Century,” includes eight APA leaders.

Included in the list are: David Chang, a New York chef; Deng Xiaoping, Chinese communist leader; musician M.I.A.; Bobby Jindal, Louisiana Gov.; Bobby Jindal; Lakshmi Mittal, CEO of ArcelorMittal; John Maeda, president of the Rhode Island School of Design; Gao Xiqing, manager of the China Investment Corporation; and Parag Khanna, geopolitical analyst.

Back to School: Kindergartners Urged to Learn Key Foreign Languages

By CAROLE FELDMAN

FAIRFAX, Va.—The first-graders in Grace Yuan’s class are playing “Jeopardy,” eagerly responding to clues about animals and their habitats, diet and movements.

Sound routine for a group of seven-year-olds? Well, look again. These clues are in Chinese.

One girl, a bit uncertain, pondered the Chinese characters and pictures of animals. “Believe in yourself, Rachel,” a classmate yelled. Applause rang out when she gave the correct response.

The class is a result of the National Security Language Initiative, introduced by President Bush in 2006 to teach the youngest students Chinese and other foreign languages considered critical to the nation’s future security.

“We’re going to teach our kids how to speak important languages,” he said. One goal, he added, was "to advance America’s interests around the world, and defeat this notion about our — you know our bullying concept of freedom by letting people see what we’re about."

At Providence Elementary School here in Fairfax, principal Joy Hanbury believes that learning Chinese will be a benefit to today’s children.

“We are looking at how global our world is,” she said.

The federal program is based on the premise that you can engage foreign governments and their citizens more effectively when you speak their language. The emphasis is on "critical needs" languages, including Chinese, Arabic, Russian, Hindi and Farsi.

The Education Department, one of four federal agencies involved in the program, has awarded 88 grants totaling about $26 million to communities around the country to expand instruction in these languages beginning in kindergarten.

Chinese, thus far, has been the most popular.

“People understand in a competitive world, you’ve got to be fluent in the languages where business is booming, and China is one of those places,” said Holly Kuzmich, the Education Department’s deputy chief of staff.

Studies have shown that young children are much quicker than adults to pick up foreign languages. Other research suggests that elementary school students performed better in other subjects if they also took a foreign language.

“We do have pretty compelling data that show there are really good reasons to put in good programs at the elementary level,” said Marty Abbott of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.

Fairfax County, Va., now offers Chinese, Arabic, Japanese, Latin and Italian, in addition to the more traditional Spanish and French. Arabic and Chinese were selected by parents, primarily to give their kids a future economic edge, said Paula Patrick, foreign language coordinator for the county schools.

The county is using the nearly $622,000 grant it received through the National Security Language Initiative in part to train teachers in those two languages.

Grace Belyea, 7, is a first-grader at Providence Elementary and a student of Chinese. “I like counting and I like doing activities on the smart board,” she said.

Yuan demonstrates on a computer the individual strokes needed to write Chinese characters. She creates computer games, like the animal “Jeopardy” that the children were playing this recent day.

“Games are a good teaching tool,” she said. “It lets them feel Chinese is not like a boring language.

Yuan, a Taiwan native, interviewer language instruction with lessons about Chinese culture. And she works with the classroom teacher to support regular lessons: When the children learned about the food pyramid in regular class, for example, they also studied fruits in Chinese.

The Providence first-graders have two 30-minute Chinese classes each week. Language instruction will continue through sixth grade. At that point, they can choose to continue Chinese or pursue another language.

The county school board aims to have each student competent in at least two languages by the time they graduate from high school.

The Education Department believes there’s room for foreign language instruction even as schools work to meet the math and reading requirements in the No Child Left Behind law.

“There are ways to integrate subjects into each other,” Kuzmich said.

The six-year-old education law also requires that teachers be highly qualified — generally that they have at least a bachelor’s degree in the subject they teach or pass a subject-matter test. But many people fluent in critical languages don’t meet the requirements.

Under the Bush initiative, grants are provided to help people with those language skills get training and certification. The goal is to add 1,000 new foreign language teachers by the end of the decade.
FEEDLOT
(Continued from page 1)
and take steps to protect the North Side Canal before it begins operating any facility on the land.
Commissioner Diana Obenauer is the lone member of Jerome County's Commission that has consistently voted against the Minidoka feedlot.
Obenauer said she did not vote in favor of the feedlot again because of previous reports that the area is prone to sinkholes.
"There were two opponents who testified at the first public hearing that they had personally seen sinkholes on the proposed site but their testimonies were disputed by the applicant's agricultural consultant," said Obenauer in an e-mail to the Pacific Citizen.
Dick Helsley, who lives just a quarter-mile from the site, told the Times-News that sinkholes have opened up in his property within the last year and that the land should have been inspected more closely.
Opponents of the proposed feedlot continue to voice their disapproval at the meeting. They said the county is using out-of-date regulations and public health ordinances when they approved the project.
At the meeting, representatives from the National Park Service, the Idaho Concerned Area Residents for the Environment and the National Trust for Historic Preservation urged commissioners to reopen the record to address a number of issues, including water quality.
The trust placed the Minidoka site close to a historic site. As part of her presentation on the site, Wendy Janssen, of the NPS, said as many as 80,000 people are expected to visit the improved Hunt Camp each year, providing $5 million to the local economy, according to the Times-News.
But far more important is the history of the Minidoka site. Once upon a time Minidoka was the largest of the 10 internment camps and home to about 13,000 Japanese Americans.
Friends of Minidoka — a national organization working to preserve Minidoka's legacy — will continue to work with preservation groups and local residents to determine what their next legal step will be.
"We are actively investigating our legal options," said Momohara, who added that the organization is still pushing forward with an environmental impact report to study the effects of contaminants on Minidoka.
In August, the Jerome County Commissioners reversed an earlier decision and voted to 2 to 1 to approve the controversial feedlot. The Aug. 11 vote was prompted by a district judge's ruling in June that ordered the commission to revisit the issue, this time focusing on existing county zoning and feedlot ordinances instead of the county's comprehensive plan.
"I haven't heard the fat lady sing," said Obenauer about the Sept. 22 commission decision. "But I hope there is a higher authority that can bring about a more satisfactory conclusion to this proposal..."
Various community groups, including the JACL, are now looking at what they can do in the wake of the Jerome County Commission's decision.
At its Sept. 27 meeting in Washington D.C., the JACL national board passed a resolution in support of working with coalition members to oppose the feedlot.
"It is shameful that politics were more important than community welfare in the Jerome County decision to approve the feedlot," said JACL National Director Floyd Mori.
"It is clear that the commissioners turned a deaf ear to the Minidoka community. While on one hand they have given lip service to the historical and tourist importance of Minidoka, they are allowing a contamination of the actual site itself as well as the spirit of the basic purpose of this national monument.
"The Minidoka site's only proponent on the Jerome County Commission agrees.
Minidoka "deserves a place in our history," said Obenauer.
The chimney from Minidoka's waiting room entrance still stands today.

JACL Seeks Applicants for Popular D.C. Leadership Conference

Successful applicants will get an up close look at the inner workings of the nation's capital. The conference is scheduled for March 6 to 10, 2009.

National JACL is currently seeking candidates for the popular JACL/JA OCA Washington, D.C. Leadership Conference scheduled for March 6 to 10, 2009, in the nation's capital.
The annual leadership conference is an outstanding opportunity for members of JACL to experience the Washington scene and to learn valuable leadership skills.
The deadline for districts to have their applicants submitted to the JACL Washington, D.C. office is Jan. 15, 2009.
State Farm Insurance is once again a sponsor of the D.C. Leadership Conference. The various districts pick up some of the cost for tuition; most chapters pay the airfare for the JACL participants unless the district has other arrangements.
Each of the seven JACL districts is guaranteed two slots. Each chapter may submit applications to the district governors, who will be in charge of the selection process for their districts. Districts are encouraged to submit alternates if they have more than two candidates as districts do not always fill their two slots, and alternates may be chosen as participants. The selection of alternates is determined by the Washington, D.C. JACL office.
Young adults are encouraged to apply for the Leadership Conference. Much of what participants learn can be used to benefit the various chapters and their communities. Participants are also encouraged to consider a run for public office in the future.
For further details and the application form, visit: www.jacl.org.
JACL Responds to Chaffetz’s Proposal for ‘Prison Camps’ for Undocumented Immigrants

The JACL recently released a statement strongly disagreeing with Jason Chaffetz who proposed the construction of “prison camps” surrounded by barbed wire to confine undocumented immigrants. The JACL noted that they have advocated for a policy of comprehensive immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for the approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants living and working in the U.S. so that they can emerge from the shadows and legalize their status.

At the same time JACL stated they do not condone violations of law but also understand the plight of undocumented immigrants who come to the U.S. to avoid economic and political hardships. "Mr. Chaffetz has fumbled the ball on the important issue of immigration and turned it into an engine of fear towards immigrants," said Floyd Mori, JACL national director, who was born to immigrant parents and raised in Utah. "The spirit of immigrants was the key to the growth and development of the state of Utah and the nation. Mormon and Asian immigrant pioneers tilled the soil and laid the infrastructure for this great state. The notion that modern day immigrants are less important raises the specter of exclusionism and economic and historical ignorance."

Chaffetz, a Republican currently running for Congress, has taken issue with criticism of his proposal by stating that his plan has nothing to do with targeting ethnicity notwithstanding studies suggesting the great preponderance of undocumented immigrants are identifiable minorities.

The JACL renewed their concern to avoid the specter of camps similar to the Topaz concentration camp near the town of Delta, Utah, where approximately 8,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned during World War II.

The JACL also cautioned against inflating the emotional rhetoric surrounding the issue of immigration. They stressed that meaningful and comprehensive reform is needed in any immigration policy without extreme proposals reminiscent of a dark episode in our past. ■

Reuniting Families Act Would Protect Families Going Through Immigration Process

Rep. Mike Honda introduces the bill in the House. The legislation is endorsed by national JACL.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Legislation was recently introduced in both the House and Senate to help protect family reunification during the often difficult immigration process.

Rep. Mike Honda, D-Calif., and U.S. Sen. Robert Menendez, D-New Jersey, introduced the Reuniting Families Act to ensure the immigration system emphasizes family reunification in its distribution of entry visas.

“We have an immigration system right now that penalizes families,” said Honda, chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus. “Family values start with family unity and we need to put these values back into our immigration policy. This bill ensures that children and their parents, husbands and wives, get a chance to live the American dream together.”

Currently four million potential immigrants are stuck in an entry backlog, many of whom are family members of U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents. The Reuniting Families Act would direct thousands of unused visas from previous years to family members of U.S. citizens and legal residents, reclassify spouses and children of legal residents as immediate family and would raise the per-country cap for visas from seven percent to 10 percent.

“We need to focus on the families. After all, family reunification is the bedrock of our immigration system — it upholds American values and reinforces American legal and cultural ties. Families are at the core of the American community.”

The Reuniting Families Act seeks to support the reunification of American families by also:

• Increasing per country limits from 7 percent to 10 percent so that nations with a higher demand for workers can better equip the American economy with talent;
• Allowing families to reunite despite the death of a petitioner;
• Recognizing the sacrifices of the military by exempting children of World War II Filipino veterans from numerical caps; and
• Allowing family members to reunite despite bars to reentry.

In addition to national JACL, other APA organizations supporting the legislation include: Asian Law Alliance, Asian Pacific American Legal Center and the Korean Resource Center. ■

Fox Company Gathers for Annual Las Vegas Reunion

Members of the Fox Company of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team gathered once again for their annual reunion in Las Vegas where they had a chance to talk about the ‘good times.’ In addition to a ‘21 balloon’ salute, a list of Fox Company veterans who had passed away during the past year were read. Pictured here are Fox Company veterans (l-r): Frank Fukuzawa, Ocean Miyake, Ike Ikeda, Stan Matsumura and Wataru Kohashi. The next reunion will take place April 2009 in Las Vegas. For more information, e-mail Ron Oba at ronoba@hawaii.rr.com.

REVERSE MORTGAGE

Call for a free information package

If you are 62 or older and own your house, a Reverse Mortgage may benefit you!

• Turn Home Equity into Tax Free Cash
• You keep title to your home
• No Monthly Mortgage Payments
• Safe FHA Program Designed for Seniors
• Increasing per country limits from 7 percent to 10 percent so that nations with a higher demand for workers can better equip the American economy with talent;
• Allowing families to reunite despite the death of a petitioner;
• Recognizing the sacrifices of the military by exempting children of World War II Filipino veterans from numerical caps; and
• Allowing family members to reunite despite bars to reentry.

Earlier this year there was an Internet blog post reporting that the Bush Administration had given a single-bid contract to Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) to build secret detention centers around the country under the aegis of the Department of Homeland Security under the codename "Endgame." Because I tend to be skeptical about some of the "breaking news" stories that pop up on blogs (either from the left or the right), I viewed this report with guarded skepticism until I made inquiries and learned a few months later that there were congressional hearings on this program.

The report also claimed that rail cars had been ordered for transporting large numbers of individuals, some even fitted with shackles. The purpose of all of this preparation, it seems, is for purely speculative reasons, the administration's purpose being to prepare in case it should become necessary to transport and detain large numbers of troublesome or suspicious aliens (i.e., immigrants) or to detain unruly protesters.

In the 1960s the government attempted to do something similar when protests against America's war in Vietnam turned violent. An incident in the nation's capital became a test case when a few thousand protesters, mostly students, marched against the war and ended up scuffling with the police and were detained at RFK Stadium. The court found that the detention was unconstitutional and ordered the detainees set free.

If it was found unconstitutional then, why would the government spend over a billion dollars in preparation for something that would be struck down by the courts? Or is this some nefarious, cloak-and-dagger operation uncovered by some bloggers? Actually, neither. Congressman Henry Waxman has held hearings not, it seems, to get at the more troublesome question of why these preparations are being made, but to ask why these no-bid contracts are being given to Halliburton, which has ripped off the American tax-payer of untold millions of dollars already through America's war against Iraq.

And why would Waxman, the Democrats' governmental watchdog, ignore the more significant issue of these detention centers? The question should be why, what's the intent? In digging around for answers to what I find troubling about all of this, I learned that the questions apparently weren't asked because the president has legal authority to implement these plans under the Patriot Act. And because Congress doesn't seem to be terribly bothered by no-bid contracts to Halliburton, as evidenced by the millions already granted to the company and by something as troubling as these types of detention centers being allowed.

However much I try to understand the reasoning for this program and to see it in some understandable context, I'm unable to do so and always come back to what can only be a dark and ominous side to all of this.

It wasn't enough that on our last day of class, my high school girls surprised me with a goodie bag of gifts containing a hair band, a necklace, and a new nose-piercing stud to replace the one that I had been wearing the whole year.

The very next day, they presented me with a framed photograph of me standing with the entire class, taken the day before, and an envelope containing personal, handwritten letters from each and every one of them.

This was my last week as a conversational English teacher in Japan, and throughout the week, I was surprised with gifts from my students. A beautiful ceramic dish from my oldest, a 64-year-old lady. Original crayon drawings from my five-year-old and his little brother. An incense kit from my working mother of two. The funniest one—a pair of silky underwear from my adult female student who refuses, to this day, to tell me her real age.

At the end of every class, I made sure someone took a picture of me with my students. After this week, I was most likely never going to see these people again. And yet, in spite of the gifts and the tearful farewell hugs, I had a hard time believing that it was all going to be over.

The last day came too quickly. I put away my books, cleaned the whiteboard and wiped down my table like it was any other day. Instead of being weighed down by the ceremonial burden of having finished my first real job after college, I left the building with an almost buoyant sense of nonchalance.

Two days later, I was suddenly depressed. Perhaps it was the sudden gap in my day-to-day schedule. That, or the sudden chill in the autumn air was giving me sensory déjà vu and transporting me back to the autumn of last year when I had just arrived in Japan. Twenty-two, just out of college, knowing absolutely nothing.

However many Facebook messages I had written to my girlfriends back home, waxing poetic about how much I had grown up and how much this job had taught me about myself and life, something about the sudden end of the my job dissipated all the precious life epiphanies I had gathered in the last 12 months and instead, replaced them with the old doubts and anxieties of the scared 22-year-old girl that I was a year ago.

I have one more gift to savor before I leave, and this is from life itself. It is the gift of time wisely spent with family and loved ones. This time, I am hoping I will really pay attention and learn.

Yumi Sakugawa is currently wrapping up her life in Japan, where she taught English.

Have I really grown? Have I really learned anything? If anyone should have been giving gifts last week, it should have been me. I should have been showering my students with gifts.

I should have switched the tables and been their students for a year. To my five-year-olds, I would ask them to teach me the ability to play and laugh more earnestly and worry less. To my 11-year-olds, I would ask them to teach me the magical life perspective that only 11-year-olds are capable of having. To my high school girls, I would ask them to teach me how they manage to be 17 and already have the confidence and poise of responsible adults. To my adult students, I would ask them how they pull the magic act of raising children, having a successful career, being a wonderfully positive person, and still finding the time and dedication to learn a second language.

A year has already gone by. Already tomorrow, my mother is arriving in Japan and staying with the family for three weeks. In three weeks, my mother and I will be gone from Japan and back in California. In three weeks, my students will have already gotten used to the new teacher and forgotten that I was a part of their lives for a year. I have one more gift to savor before I leave, and this is from life itself. It is the gift of time wisely spent with family and loved ones. This time, I am hoping I will really pay attention and learn.

Yumi Sakugawa is currently wrapping up her life in Japan, where she taught English.

For the Record

However much I try to understand the reasoning for this program and to see it in some understandable context, I'm unable to do so and always come back to what can only be a dark and ominous side to all of this.
Like Bruce Lee, My Friend

Los Angeles' East West Players presents 'Be Like Water,' a play as fluid and dynamic as the martial arts legend who inspired it.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Thirteen-year-old Tracy Fong’s fondness for twirling nunchucks over dancing with nice Japanese American boys at the local Nisei community center has her parents worried.

The teenager loves Bruce Lee.

Amidst fluorescent polyester jump-suits and disco era fever, Tracy (Saya Tomioka) wears her heart on her sleeve — literally. Bruce Lee T-shirts, Bruce Lee posters, sheets and even a bobblehead doll reveal her devotion. But it isn’t just a teenage crush on a martial arts icon with ripped muscles and a cocky smile.

Tracy wants to be Bruce Lee.

But then again, haven’t we all at one time or another been guilty of wanting the same thing? With one blood-curdling scream, Lee has inspired generations of Asian Pacific Americans to flex in the mirror and throw punches, even if only behind closed doors.

Friend or critic, no one can deny the power of Lee’s cultural influence. Years after his untimely death in 1973 at 32, Lee’s presence still lingers in the deepest recesses of many people’s minds as both an ethnic stereotype and beacon of APA empowerment.

Dan Kwong’s play “Be Like Water,” which had its world premiere in Los Angeles’ East West Players, resurrects Lee’s ghost and examines the community’s relationship with the martial arts icon through the eyes of a young girl searching for her own self-image.

Onstage, Lee’s ghost comes to Tracy in water — a play on Lee’s famous quote about the power of being fluid — whether in a cup or in a fish bowl. He appears suddenly and always in different fashion phases, complete with the famous yellow jumpsuit and always with a wise saying and a lesson. He’s like the dream version of Mr. Miyagi.

Lee has been the focus of many documentaries and fiction films, but “Be Like Water” shines a light on the martial arts icon’s soft spot — his heart. And it doesn’t hurt that the entire play is scored with disco music so funky it’ll get you grooving “Saturday Night Fever” style.

A Boy Named Bruce Lee

Channeling Bruce Lee can be tricky — one too many kicks and yells and the play could easily steer into kitsch. “Be Like Water,” which is written by Kwong and directed by Chris Tashima, travels the path proudly and uses larger than life elements in laugh out loud moments.

Actor Cesar Cipriano is spot-on as the philosophizing martial arts icon, who loves to cha-cha as much as kick some bad guy butt.

The play, which is set in 1978 Chicago, also stars a boy whose character name is Bruce Lee — that’s like the modern day equivalent of naming a child Jackie Chan or Jet Li. Except, the young bowl-cut Bruce (Shawn Huang) is nothing like his legendary namesake. He prefers boogying down with his walkman over practicing kung fu. And with bell-bottom legs shuffling, the young Bruce provides some of the best light moments of the play as the most un-Bruce Lee guy in the world.

Of course the irony isn’t lost on the school bully either. The requisite racist white kid (Jonathan Decker) tortures young Bruce until Tracy swings in with fists in the air.

For a long time before Lee, there was a drought of APA icons. Kids mostly grew up without one to look up to until movies like “Fist of Fury” and “Enter the Dragon” inspired strength. Playwright Kwong, who is of Japanese and Chinese descent, watched his first Lee movie as a young adult in a Chicago movie theater and cried when the audience started cheering for the butt-kicking APA.

He weaves the same storyline into the play with Frank Fong (a very likable Michael Sun Lee), the APA father in the play.

“If you were an Asian guy,” said Frank to his wife Kimiko, “There was nothing out there to look up to until Bruce Lee. It was like growing up in a dry, empty desert. Then one day you walk over a hill — and there’s the Pacific Ocean. That was Bruce. He was the ocean.”

The Heart of the Dragon

The heart of “Be Like Water” is family — not just the Fongs, who struggle with cultural and communication barriers just like any other American family, but the group of unlikely friends that somehow finds some common ground. The airhead pageant queen, the bully and a demanding mom (Pam Hayashida) cause ripples in Tracy’s otherwise stable life.

She navigates through these obstacles with Lee in the background waxing philosophical.

But slowly, the pressure begins to create splinters in the Fong family. Kimiko, who was virtually denied a normal childhood because of her lingering effects of her family’s World War II internment experiences, begins to live vicariously through her tomboy daughter. Frank struggles to find a place in his wife’s mostly JA world, and Tracy is stuck in the middle trying to please everyone.

It’s the kind of family drama that occurs in every American household — doors slam shut and a teenage girl crumples in a sea of tears.

Mother and daughter argue fiercely, but when one reaches her breaking point the other is at the door with a look of panic that can only come from the depths of the most exquisite type of love. The beauty of “Be Like Water” is that it’s about families like yours that struggle with identity, racism and insurmountable family expectations. It’s about your heartbeat and strength.

Kwong and Tashima craft a story that at a little under two and a half hours is almost epic, but personal and intimate at the same time.

And at the center, at least in this family story, is Lee, who is more than a martial arts icon. He’s the ghost in the background and the glue that connects fragmented families. And once his mission is complete, like in his movies, he fades into black. ■

ON STAGE

"Be Like Water"
East West Players
120 Judge John Aiso St. In LA’s Little Tokyo
Closes Oct. 12
For tickets and information, call the East West Players at 213/625-7000 or buy tickets online at www.eastwestplayers.org
For the next few months, Kashima will work to polish his hockey skills in hopes of landing a spot on a Division I hockey team. He believes he must become a more physical player for that to happen, especially because of his size.

But there's little doubt in Fatis' mind that Kashima can play at the next level. "I think the thing that sticks out about Ice-K, aside from his speed, is his work ethic," Fatis said. "He's got some natural talent, but most of what he's done is through sheer determination and hard work.

When asked about that hard work and resolve, Kashima's face lit up. "My dad, he's always been there for me, and he's shown me how to work hard," Kashima said. "My mom and dad have done a lot for me, and I couldn't be more thankful."
**ALIEN LAND LAW**

(Continued from page 1)

Kajiro worked hard, especially later in life to support his wife Kohide and children: Lillian, Alice, Fred, Paul and Gloria.

“He was also a good businessman,” said Alice Yano about her dad. In 1934, Kajiro purchased the Chula Vista property located on J Street for $4,000 to grow celery, tomatoes and peppers. The land was deeded to Fred, an American citizen by birth.

For a few years, the Oyama kids enjoyed a normal childhood mixed with the nomadic existence of farming life. But with the outbreak of WWII and the president’s evacuation order of all Japanese Americans from coastal areas, the Oyamas were forced to leave their land in 1942 for Utah.

A seed salesman Kajiro had once worked with offered to lease the Oyama’s farmland near Cedar City, Utah, so they could avoid the internment camps.

“I knew our rights were being violated. But not knowing the nuances of the legal system, what could we do?” said Fred.

In the summer of 1944 when Fred was 16 years old, a deputy marshal notified the Oyamas that California was filing an “escheat” suit under the Alien Land Act to take away their Chula Vista property.

**Oyama v. California**

The Alien Land Law, which passed in California in 1913 and 1920, were primarily targeted at JAs who were perceived as threats to local farmers. The escheat suits were like salt on an open wound.

But it took a visit from civil rights leaders to convince the Oyamas to fight. The ACLU and JACL’s Mike Masaoka arrived on the Oyama’s doorstep one day to encourage Kajiro to let them take his case to court, said Alice. They said Kajiro’s conscientiousness in putting the property in Fred’s name gave their case the best chance of winning.

At first, the Issei farmer was reluctant, but he eventually agreed.

“I think it was because he had the backing of the JACL,” said Alice. “He was doing it for all Nisei.”

Oyama’s case lost in the lower courts, but ACLU attorney A.L. Wirin took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, where Dean Acheson, the secretary of state under President Harry Truman, presented the case for the Oyamas.

There, the justices agreed by a vote of 8 to 1 that Fred had been deprived of federal and state equal protection guarantees.

The Oyama decision set a crucial precedent for later Alien Land Law cases and the 1952 lifting of racial restrictions in California.

But growing up in the Oyama household, the Supreme Court case was simply called “the land case with the ACLU,” said Phyllis Oyama, Fred’s daughter. It wasn’t brought up much and almost never in the context of its historical significance.

“It was never talked about in that way in our family,” said Phyllis. It was simply ordinary people doing the right thing.

The ACLU of San Diego and Imperial Counties recently commemorated the landmark court decision. At the dinner, Sept. 24 was official declared “Kajiro Oyama Day” in San Diego.

San Diego JACL Chapter President Miyo Reff, who attended the dinner with other JACLers, said the event gave the "JACL and the ACLU a chance to celebrate a shared historic event and renew our ties."

"Alien Land Laws were efforts to limit our participation in society and were found to violate the 14th Amendment guaranteeing equal protection, and JACL was there at a time when we needed an advocate," said JACL National President Larry Oda.

Phyllis thinks Kajiro, who passed away in 1998 at the age of 99, would have been thrilled that his land case made an impact on equal rights.

“That’s what our country is built upon,” she said. "We need to protect everything we can."

It’s especially important now because Kajiro’s fight for justice is still being waged today in another part of the country where the Alien Land Law is still on the books.

**Racism’s Last Stand**

Florida is the last state in the nation to still have the Alien Land Law in its constitution. And for the last six years, Sen. Steven Geller, D-Cooper City, has been the law’s biggest opponent.

Ever since Geller read about the Alien Land Laws in a national legislative magazine, he’s been fighting to rid Florida of the discriminatory law. For the upcoming Nov. 4 General Elections, he successfully got such a measure on the ballot. Which means Florida voters will have the chance to get rid of this last vestige of racism by voting for Amendment 1. But Geller is afraid.

“Right now, I think it’s going to fail.”

Florida’s existing Alien Land Law is obsolete and unenforceable. If the measure passes, it would just be symbolic.

“But it discriminates against Asians. It’s comparable to a state law...”
I. How those fears led the U.S. government to act. At its Sept. Connections lesson for high acts most students which coincides with the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, a law that provided an official government apology for the severe injuries committed against JA citizens and legal residents during WWII.

"This new curriculum teaches important lessons about the dangers of prejudice and racial profiling, saying African Americans can be slaves even though the U.S. Constitution bars it," said Geller. Opponents have also said striking the law would help "terrorists and illegal aliens." "They can't distinguish the nuanced difference between illegal aliens and aliens ineligible for citizenship," said Geller, who is ending his career in the legislature this year because term limits.

The measure needs a 60 percent vote to pass. But if voters go to the polls and misconstrue the measure as a benefit for undocumented immigrants and terrorists, they will vote against it, said Geller.

"Nobody but me has been advocating this," he said. "This is a one-time shot." The loudest silence has come from the local APA community. No one showed up to testify when Geller was trying to get the measure on the ballot. He's received some nuanced difference between illegal aliens and aliens ineligible for citizenship, said Geller, who is ending his career in the legislature this year because term limits.

The measure needs a 60 percent vote to pass. But if voters go to the polls and misconstrue the measure as a benefit for undocumented immigrants and terrorists, they will vote against it, said Geller.

"Nobody but me has been advocating this," he said. "This is a one-time shot." The loudest silence has come from the local APA community. No one showed up to testify when Geller was trying to get the measure on the ballot. He's received some nuanced difference between illegal aliens and aliens ineligible for citizenship, said Geller, who is ending his career in the legislature this year because term limits.

"This new curriculum teaches important lessons about the dangers of prejudice and racial profiling, saying African Americans can be slaves even though the U.S. Constitution bars it," said Geller. Opponents have also said striking the law would help "terrorists and illegal aliens." "They can't distinguish the nuanced difference between illegal aliens and aliens ineligible for citizenship," said Geller, who is ending his career in the legislature this year because term limits.

The measure needs a 60 percent vote to pass. But if voters go to the polls and misconstrue the measure as a benefit for undocumented immigrants and terrorists, they will vote against it, said Geller.

"Nobody but me has been advocating this," he said. "This is a one-time shot." The loudest silence has come from the local APA community. No one showed up to testify when Geller was trying to get the measure on the ballot. He's received some nuanced difference between illegal aliens and aliens ineligible for citizenship, said Geller, who is ending his career in the legislature this year because term limits.

The measure needs a 60 percent vote to pass. But if voters go to the polls and misconstrue the measure as a benefit for undocumented immigrants and terrorists, they will vote against it, said Geller.

"Nobody but me has been advocating this," he said. "This is a one-time shot." The loudest silence has come from the local APA community. No one showed up to testify when Geller was trying to get the measure on the ballot. He's received some nuanced difference between illegal aliens and aliens ineligible for citizenship, said Geller, who is ending his career in the legislature this year because term limits.

The measure needs a 60 percent vote to pass. But if voters go to the polls and misconstrue the measure as a benefit for undocumented immigrants and terrorists, they will vote against it, said Geller.
RECENT CENTER
(Continued from page 1)

Pacific Americans back to Little Tokyo. And after nearly 15 years of working on a campaign for a recreational center, Watanabe finally heard three words that were like music to his ears: memorandum of understanding.

The L.A. City Council unanimously voted Sept. 23 to grant LTSC an MOU to build their long awaited multi-use facility for sports and community activities. The center will sit on a 36,000-square-foot city-owned lot on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The MOU, a formal document between the city of Los Angeles and the LTSC, provides the overall structure for an agreement to build on city property.

"To us it's the green light that we can go ahead with this," said Watanabe to the Pacific Citizen moments after the city council's approval. "We can go ahead and say we have a site and we can proceed. It's pretty exciting and kind of surreal after all this time. Is it really happening?"

A Longtime Dream

The idea for a gym or recreational center in Little Tokyo is not new. Over 35 years ago, the original plans to build a basketball court around the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center were nixed in favor of a plaza designed by famed sculptor Isamu Noguchi. But the support for a recreational facility never waned.

In 1998, a task force was formed dedicated to getting a gym built. Since then, community leaders have continually advocated for a centrally located recreational facility to host popular JA basketball league tournaments, martial arts events and programs for Little Tokyo's many senior citizens.

But there were many false starts along the way, said Watanabe.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.

The city purchased an entire block of land to build facilities for the new center. The property, which is currently under construction, will be home to city-owned lots on the west side of Los Angeles Street between Second and Third Streets.

The city council's approval of the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument.

In 2000, the community struggled with another location for the gym on First Street near the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke Monument. Opponents wanted a park instead.

So about five years ago Councilwoman Jan Perry, whose district includes Little Tokyo, and then Chief Legislative Analyst Ron Deaton proposed the current location near the historic St. Vibiana's Cathedral and the Little Tokyo Library to Watanabe.
Midwest
GRINNELL, Iowa
MANTOVI SPRINGS, Colo.

Pacific Northwest
BELLEVUE, Wash.
Tue., Oct. 7—Lecture, “The Consequences of Nuclear Use and the Role of Hope: A Personal Testimony” by Hideko Tamura Snider; 6:30 reception, 7 p.m. lecture; Bellevue Community College, 3000 Landerholm Cir. S.E. Info: Nora Lance, 425/564-6150 or nlance@bellevuecollege.edu.
KENT, Wash.
PORTLAND

Northern California
BERKELEY
Sun., Oct. 12—Play reading and book signing; 11 a.m.; Berkeley Buddhist Temple, 2121 Channing Way; Hiroshi Kawasaki, author of “Shoe Box Plays” will conduct a play reading and book signing; the reading will be from Kawasaki’s play “The Betrayed.”
SAN FRANCISCO
Oct. 8-11—An Intimate Evening with Hiroshimina; The Razz Room at Hotel Nikko, 222 Mason; tickets start at $40. Info and tickets: www.thenerrazzroom.com.
Sat., Oct. 11—Book signing and lecture, “Mine Okubo - Following Her Own Road”; 1 p.m.; JACL Headquarters, 1765 Sutter St.; Greg Robinson will speak on the book he edited; copies of the book will be available for purchase. Info: sfjac@comcast.net.

Southern California
ALHAMBRA
Thu., Oct. 22—Film screening, “The Rebel”; 7:30 p.m.; Edwards Alhambra Renaissance 14, 1 East Main St.; director Charlie Nguyen and lead actor Dustin Nguyen are slated to appear and participate in a Q&A session following the screening. $10 general, $8 students, seniors and Friends of Visa Communications members with ID.

Arizona
PHOENIX

Hawaii
HONOLULU
Oct. 24-25—Rhythm Summit 2008; 8 p.m.; Cupola Theatre, Honolulu Design Center, 1250 Kapilani Blvd.; featuring Kenny Endo and Noel Okimoto with special guest, Dean Taba; $22 in advance or $25 at the door. Info and tickets: www.taiikoartscenter.org.

Nebraska
LAS VEGAS

“BE LIKE WATER”
BY DAN KWONG
DIRECTED BY CHRIS TASHIMA
WORLD PREMIERE NOW—OCTOBER 12, 2008
EastWest Players
www.EastWestPlayers.org (213) 625-7000
David Henry Hwang Theatre at the Union Center for the Arts
120 Judge John Aliso Street in the Little Tokyo district, downtown L.A.

A ROUNDHOUSE KICK TO THE EMOTION”
~F. Kathleen Foley, LA Times
“Powerful & Emotive…Top Notch”
~ Jordan Ikeda, The Rafu Shimpo

MUST CLOSE OCTOBER 12!

A humorous family drama with Bruce Lee spirit.

EWP

Arimoto, Takeshi, 80, Montebello, Aug. 31; survived by wife, Hisako; son, Tommy (Tracie); daughter, Margaret (Akira) Takemoto; 4 gc.; sister, Tamayo (Ichiro) Kurose and Ikuo (Nobuki) Tsujii.

Asawa, Robert Sakai, Sept. 3; survived by wife, Sue; and brother, George (Masako).

Fujimoto, Kathryn Ann, 52, Santa Clarita, Sept. 4; survived by husband, Derek; parents, Charles and Anne Goehringer; brother, Michael; sisters-in-law, Debbie, Corrine and Nancy; and brothers-in-law, Donald, Rick, Eddie and Lowell.

Hayashi, Joseph Ichiro, Ellensburg, Wash., Aug. 26; Vietnam veteran; survived by wife, Doris; son, Joseph (Jenny); daughter, Jennifer (Rob); 3 gc.; mother, Kimiyi; brother, Michael (Sylvia); and sisters, Kiku Hayashi, Elizabeth (Doug) Frisch and Katherine (Gary) Kyogoku.

Kiyonaga, Calvin (Virginia), Ellensburg, Wash., Aug. 26; WWII veteran; survived by wife, Sue; and brother, Merle Mitsuyoshi.

Kadomatsu, Masao, 93, Anaheim, Sept. 2; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, June (Charles) Honma; sons, Calvin (Virginia), Rodney (Barbara) and Lloyd (Silvina Rubenstein); 10 gc.; sister, brother, Isami (Mary) Kurasaki; and sisters, Elsie Ohkita, Betty (Richard) Omori, Evelyn (Richard) Hanki and Marian Kubota.

Komatsu, Toshiye, 83, Gardena, Sept. 6; survived by husband, Aike; daughter, Karen (Darren) Shirona; brother, Masami Sakamoto; and sisters, Harumi (Jack) Miura and Nancy Sakamoto.

Hirahara, Misako, 77, Montebello, Sept. 16; survived by sons, Kelvin and Jeffrey (Carolyn); and 4 gc.

Inagaki, Christopher, 55, Sept. 13; survived by sister, Patti Ueda; niece, Joanna Castillo; and nephew, Scott Ueda.

Ito, Bill Shoichi, 87, Pacific Grove, Sept. 14; U.S. Army veteran; survived by wife, Grace; sons, Ronald (Gail) and Gary (Sylvia); daughters, Beverly (Chris) Takaoka and Donna (Dennis) Hallett; 6 gc.; and sisters, Grace Nakamura and Kim Matsutomo.

Iwama, Kenneth Yukio, 53, Sept. 11; survived by father, Tuyoshi; stepmother, Noriko; and brothers, Dan and Rob.

Iwama, Aki, 88, Torrance, Aug. 27, WWII veteran, 442nd; survived by wife, Tayeko; son, Carl; daughter, Colleen (Ed) Kobayashi; 1 gc.; 2 gcs.; and brother, Ross.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.

Kajiwara, Kinuko, 94, Los Angeles, Sept. 6; survived by daughter, Patrice (Ryan) Mito; sons, Steven (Susan) and Gary (Marylin) Kadomatsu; 5 gc.; and 2 gc.
Yonsei English Teachers Find Opportunities to Explore Their Identities

(Continued from page 1)

"In my one month of experience, I feel that a JA can learn much about their heritage while being in Japan." Lisa Tanaka, a 21-year-old Yonsei from Hacienda Heights, Calif., was studying abroad at Meiji Gakuin University in Yokohama when she decided to apply for the JET program, one of the largest work abroad programs of its kind.

Now she's teaching in the small town of Motoyama on the island of Shikoku. In between her hectic class schedule she often finds herself looking outside her window in appreciation of the nearby rolling mountains and flowing river.

"Living in Japan has given me the opportunity to be constantly surrounded by Japanese speakers and it has helped me learn more of the language. It is important for me to learn about my culture because these are my roots," said Lisa. "I think learning about any culture is an advantage because it opens one's eyes to the bigger world outside of America."

Different Pathways to Japan

Yumi Sakugawa, 23, of Anaheim Hills, Calif., has spent the last year teaching English in her ancestral home of Kiritusu. She admits the novel experience of living with her relatives and taking on a new job wasn't easy at first.

"I'm not going to lie. It's been a really, really difficult year," she said. "I think having just graduated from college, I was pretty clueless, insecure and arrogant in all the wrong ways.

"I had a lot of growing up to do, and I had a hard time adjusting to not living in a metropolitan city and not having my own private space in a house full of relatives I haven't seen in over eight years."

She admits her frustration with life in Japan led her to be a less than ideal English teacher at first.

"Anyone who had my class with that window of time deserves a refund," she joked.

But her frustrations soon led her to appreciate the country and its people and she says she would "do it all again in a heartbeat!" Along the way she also discovered some important lessons about her own identity as a Shin-Nisei.

"Teaching English in Japan is a great way for younger generations of JAs to learn about their heritage. After all, when you are immersed in the actual country for a year or longer, you pick up on a lot of cultural knowledge that you otherwise wouldn't have ever known back home.

"There are a lot of cultural experiences in Japan that are simply not accessible in America, no matter how much you think you are in touch with your Japanese roots."

For Yumi, visits to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, the Yasukuni Shrine, going to a summer festival and actually riding a train during rush hour in Tokyo were the most memorable.

Like Yumi, 24-year-old Reed Nakamura of Honolulu had a difficult time adjusting to life in Japan at first as a JET instructor. Having very little grasp of the Japanese language in a world where no else spoke English, life here was less than ideal.

But soon he began to make friends and started seeing his students grasp some of the English concepts he was introducing. It all made him fall in love with the small town of Itsuki in Kumamoto and he recently renewed his teaching contract.

"The majority of the positive experiences are made through the simple connections I've made with the students," he said. "When you can't fluently communicate, you begin to cherish what would be considered trivial to most. A smile here, a question clarified there, everything makes a difference."

Although Reed doesn't think teaching English in Japan is a great way to learn about your heritage - rarely are you placed in the actual hometown of your ancestors - he believes the experience is a great way to explore your identity.

"The answer I've come up with is that since I've come to Japan, I've embraced the positive parts of all of the distinct backgrounds I have come from," he said. "I think there are many valuable lessons I've learned from all of my Japanese American experiences in Hawaii, Los Angeles and Japan."

Taichi Hanzawa, JET program liaison, recently attended the Japanese American National Museum's conference in Denver to promote the program and saw a lot of interest among younger JAs, especially recent college graduates.

He believes programs like JET are an ideal way for younger JAs to learn about their own heritage.

"To find out about their own roots, it is a great program."

JA vs. Japanese Culture

Many of the Sansei and Yonsei teaching English in Japan have quickly discovered that the JA culture they grew up in has little resemblance to the culture of their ancestors.

Most of them agree the Japanese food is a lot better in the motherland and the onsen are quite nice. The people here also seem to stress politeness in every situation, even in crowded rush hour trains.

"Easily, my favorite thing about the culture and country is the various people I have met. There are so many nice and interesting people in Japan," said Yumi. "There are runners, though. Such as food, the amazing service, the insane plethora of vending machines, and decent and affordable public transportation."

Living in Japan has also provided a different perspective of historical events. For many of these younger JAs, stories of WWII always dealt with the internment. Now for the first time they are seeing how the Japanese experienced this painful period.

"As I learn so much of the internment experience, but they rarely learn about their great-great-uncles and aunts that suffered through the retaliation," said Geoff, who recently visited the Edos-Tokyo Museum. "This was my first time seeing the other side. I stood right next to a bombshell that was almost as big as me, and I couldn't even imagine thousands upon thousands of those being dropped on Tokyo."

For many of these Yonsei, living in Japan has been a personal journey. For Reed, the recent passing of his grandmother made learning about Japan and its traditions that much more important.

"There was one thing I always wanted to do and that's to learn about the ways and customs of the past," he said. "I am of the belief that knowing the past is important to understanding the future."

All of them agree that encouraging younger JAs today to learn about their own culture and history is important.

"Living in Japan and teaching English was the best way for me because I am completely immersed in Japanese culture," said Yonsei Shanna Imanaka, 23, of Honolulu who is currently teaching in Fujisoka.

"It is one thing to read it and say it, but to live it is completely different."

On the Web

www.jetprogramme.org
www.reedinitsuki.blogspot.com

Think it's expensive and tough to get a home loan?

Think again!

We have mortgage loans with zero fees*

Don't believe everything you read! In fact, now is a fantastic time to buy or refinance. Interest rates are low and there are hundreds of homes for sale at reduced prices, making your negotiating power stronger than ever. Plus, pay no origination fee! Getting a home loan is easier than you think and we're here to help. Hurry, this is a limited-time offer!

800-544-8828 • www.jaclcu.com

*Origination fee, tax search fee, pre-closing fee, based on approved credit. Pitgamy and membership required.