JACL Gala Commemorates 20th Anniversary of Redress

The Washington, D.C. event honored individuals and organizations that fought tirelessly for justice.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

It was a dinner of champions. At its second annual national Gala Awards Dinner, the JACL honored community leaders and organizations that fought for justice and helped make Redress a reality 20 years ago. "A Salute to Champions of Redress," which was held Sept. 25 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C., drew over 300 attendees. Among those were elected officials like Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo, D-Guam, and Congressman Mike Honda, D-Calif., who was the event’s master of ceremonies.

The awardees for the night, called "champions" by the JACL for their tireless commitment to Redress, included some of the organization’s own leaders. In 1985 Grayce Uyehara, a charter member of the Philadelphia JACL chapter and the first woman to serve on the national board, became Grayce Uyehara (left), former LEC executive director, said credit for Redress does not belong to just one person.

20th anniversary of the passage of HR 442 or the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided Redress and an official apology to Japanese Americans who were unjustly interned during World War II. The awardees for the night, called "champions" by the JACL for their tireless commitment to Redress, included some of the organization’s own leaders. In 1985 Grayce Uyehara, a charter member of the Philadelphia JACL chapter and the first woman to serve on the national board, became

Filipino Veterans Equity Bill Fails

The bill's failure comes during Filipino American History Month. Akaka and Inouye vow to continue the fight next year.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Aging World War II Filipino veterans need to wait another year for their long-sought benefits.

Time has run out on the Filipino Veterans Equity Bill, which would have given lump-sum benefit payments to WWII Filipino veterans who fought alongside American forces.

Congress has adjourned without approving any form of the bill, disappointing those who believed they were very close to winning benefits for Filipinos veterans.

The measure which would have authorized $198 million to eligible Filipino veterans, failed to receive final Congressional approval because of opposition by Senate Republicans.

See FILIPINO VETS/Page 12

JACL Continues Effort to Defeat Calif. Prop. 8

Grassroots educational campaigns increase as the general election draws close.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

With the Nov. 4 general elections just a few weeks away, the JACL is ramping up efforts to oppose a California ballot initiative that, if passed, would ban same-sex marriage.

The civil rights organization, which joined the "No on Prop 8 Equality for All" campaign in August, has now joined other Asian Pacific American coalitions to oppose the California ballot initiative. JACL recently joined "APAs Against Proposition 8" and the "San Francisco Bar Association’s Unity Coalition Against Prop. 8."

In May, the California Supreme Court ruled the measure unconstitutional, but according to the "Prop. 8" proponents, the US Supreme Court has yet to accept a filing to review the case.

See PROP. 8/Page 11
Letters to the Editor

Wedding Bells = Equal Rights

Thank you for the recent article on the joyful wedding of George Takei and Brad Altman (Pacific Citizen, Sept. 19-Oct. 2). As a longtime “Star Trek” fan and supporter of same-gender marriage, I was delighted to read this article and to see the accompanying photos.

As Japanese Americans, we know the injury that is caused through many generations from being denied our legal rights, and from being singled out and regarded as “other” and “enemy.” I’m happy to see the Pacific Citizen celebrating a time in California when the sound of wedding bells is synonymous with equal rights and freedom to legally marry for same-gender couples.

PATRICIA IKEDA-NASH
Oakland, Calif.

Celebrating National JACL Scholarship Winners

What a delight to read your special scholarship issue (Pacific Citizen, Sept. 19-Oct. 2), and read of the wonderful accomplishments of the students!

My daughter, Eleanor Kikumi Meltzer, was a recipient in 1979. She went on to Stanford, majored in international relations and earned a JD from Georgetown University Law School. She is currently chief of staff of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

A few years ago, she received a gold medal from the Department of Commerce for her work in negotiating the Singapore Trademark Law Treaty.

My son, Abraham Chuchi Meltzer received a national JACL scholarship in 1984 and went to Harvard. He received his law degree from Boalt Hall at the University of California, Berkeley and is an assistant U.S. attorney in Los Angeles.

With the strong academic background and varied area of service to school, church and community, I’m sure many past winners have done well. Let’s hear their stories.

KAY KAKIMOTO WILLIS
Santa Barbara, Calif.

The All-American Dream

Your last edition was one of joy and putting George and Brad on the front page was a great gesture.

The pictures of the scholarship winners were great. Even in hard economic times our youth and parents are striving to achieve the All-American dream. The ad on the back page brought tears of joy to me. May our gay and lesbian couples enjoy all the rights in our state.

PATRICIA IKEDA-NASH
Oakland, Calif.

NATIONAL DIRECTOR’S REPORT

The Economic Meltdown and My Take on the Issue

By FLOYD MORI

As a former college economics professor, it is not a difficult matter for me to understand how the market ought to operate. The market economy can be simple in its operation if all of the mechanisms are tuned correctly and there is transparency and equal understanding by the players in the market.

The difficulty comes when knowledge is not shared equally and economic power brings imperfections into the market place. The weak become victims, and the powerful become the profiters.

The financial markets have become infested with large and powerful institutions where greed and mismanagement have fed off the labors and dreams of the ordinary working people of our country. In a perfect market, mismanagement results in failure of a single entity. In our imperfect market, mismanagement will affect the livelihood of many thousands who may have direct and indirect relationships with the monopolistic entity in question. So the result of the malfunction on Wall Street among a few of the major players will, in the end, cause hardship with many of us indirectly associated through our banks or other financial institutions.

Faulty mortgages impacted the balance sheet of many major institutions that had invested in mortgage-backed securities. Because of this fall in value, liabilities began to outweigh assets, which is the cause of insolvency and bankruptcy. Cash became a scarce commodity, so credit began to dry up and placed consumers and small businesses that depend on short-term credit in emergency conditions.

Let it be clearly said that the consumer is the victim and not the perpetrator as some have suggested in blaming loaning practices to low-income minorities. The fault lies with the predatory practices of the financial institutions and the lack of oversight in ensuring the public that their financial practices were safe.

Most homeowners today would qualify for conventional loans but with different terms. The consumer simply fell prey to questionable practices that, in the end, proved to be fatal.

The “rescue” plan, which Congress recently passed, provides a stopgap that is a “better than nothing” strategy. With the government basically taking the responsibility of these faulty financial instruments, it takes a major financial liability from the soiled financial institutions, which then can go forward and use the influx of cash to feed the credit markets.

The government hopes that in the future the value of these faulty mortgages will rebound and have the potential of actually making a profit for the investment. You might say that they are buying very low and hoping for the value to reach a reasonable level.

The flaw in the rescue plan is that the homeowner and the small business owner are left at risk.

The flaw in the rescue plan is that the homeowner and the small business owner are left at risk.

Without emergency measures to allow for the modifying of the terms of loans, the bringing back of authority for the courts to modify the terms of a loan as a last resort, and a limited period of time allowing a moratorium on foreclosures while the plan is implemented, many consumers will lose all they have worked a lifetime to acquire.

The rescue plan should minimize the hardship on the consumers as it has done for the big players on Wall Street.
Many of the dead and injured were Laotian. In the APA community, gambling is a hidden addiction.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Almost every two weeks for the last two years, sisters Mai Cha and Ge Vue boarded a charter bus to play the slots at an American Indian casino north of Sacramento. They were headed there again on Oct. 5 when the bus they were riding on crashed, killing eight people and sending dozens to area hospitals.

Many of the passengers were senior citizens and Laotian immigrants like Cha and Vue, who fled to Thailand in the 1970s after the Vietnam War, then moved to the United States.

“We are shocked. It’s terrible,” said Seng Her, the refugee project coordinator at the nonprofit Sacramento Lao Family Community Inc. Two of the group’s employees and a member of its board lost friends in the crash.

Family members and the adult children of some of the immigrants had raised concerns in the past about the charter bus trips to the casino, which they said targeted senior Laotians living in Sacramento. Her said the casinos run by American Indian tribes in Northern California work to attract lonely seniors, many Asian Pacific Americans, on fixed incomes by offering cheap transportation on charter buses.

The casinos also provide free meals and complimentary slot machine play to the thousands of seniors who have helped fuel the industry over the past decade. Some seniors fund the excursions with their Social Security checks and return home worrying about not being able to cover basic living expenses.

The bus fare for a day trip to the Colusa Casino Resort was cheap, around $10 at the most, and the casino gave passengers free slot play, according to family members and friends of the passengers.

“My dad was telling my mom, ‘If we don’t play, you’re already lost $200 on the first of the month.’ My mom said, ‘It’s my money.’”

Gambling opponents and social workers say that while casinos draw all types of players with dreams of striking it rich, California’s network of bus servic­es and ride-sharing has that is especially effective in luring seniors to the state’s 56 Indian casinos.

In the APA community the pull of casinos is especially dangerous. There are 1 million Californians who have a serious gambling problem, a state-sponsored study estimated two years ago.

While the average percentage of problem and pathological gamblers in the U.S. is less than 5 percent, the average is about 20 percent for APAs, according to Tina Sham, a social worker at San Francisco’s Donaldina Cameron House.

Dr. Timothy Fong, co-director of UCLA’s Gambling Studies Program, said gambling is a “real hidden addiction,” especially among APA communities.

In Philadelphia’s Chinatown, APA community members are trying to prevent Foxxwoods Casino from moving into their neighborhood. They fear APAs can’t resist the lure of gambling.

At an Oct. 8 meeting with casino executives, 400 Chinatown residents protested plans for a new casino.

According to Philucm, Chinatown resident Lai-Har Cheung said her relatives were gambling addicts and that a casino would “take more people down.”

Despite the protest, City Councilman Frank DeCiccio said he would introduce a bill to create a special entitlement district for the project — a first step in zoning for a casino.

For Asian immigrants, it is often difficult to find a place where they fit in, but casinos and card clubs can provide the sense of community they need, said Michael Liao, director of programs at the NICOS Chinese Health Coalition, a group of health and social organizations that serve the APA community.

Theresa Saechao, a social worker who has been helping bus crash victims and their families, said casinos have profited by targeting poor Southeast Asian communities, particularly seniors who can’t drive and face language barriers to finding jobs.

Many on the bus spoke little English.

“We have no idea what they get all the information because we often tell them ‘Don’t go to the casino. If you guys go we’ll take you there,’” said Phang.

The California Highway Patrol arrested the 52-year-old bus driver on suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The investigation continues.

Don Kennedy, the casino’s market­ings manager, said he was not scheduled to bring guests to the facility, but the casino accepts unscheduled visits from charter buses.

The casino, built on former rangeland between Lincoln and Roseville northeast of Sacramento, is so lucrative that it is now adding a 24-story hotel that will jut above nearby suburban communities in Placer County.

The Future of Chinese Muslim Detainees is Still Unclear

The men have been cleared of their ‘enemy combatant’ status after 7 years at Guantanamo Bay.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Despite a federal judge’s recent decision in favor of their release from Guantanamo Bay, a small group of Chinese Muslims who have been held at the island prison for seven years may not see freedom.

The Bush administration has filed a 19-page emergency request in fed­eral appeals court arguing that, in essence, a couple more weeks in jail would only cause “minimal harm.”

Lawyers for 17 Chinese Muslims are urging a federal appeals court not to interfere in their release.

On Oct. 7, U.S. District Judge Ricardo M. Urbina ordered the Bush administration to immediately free the 17 detainees — known as Uighurs (pronounced WEE-gur’z) — from Guantanamo into the U.S., since they are no longer considered enemy combatants. The men have been in custody for almost seven years.

It was the first court-ordered release of Guantanamo detainees since the prison camp opened in 2002 — a dramatic ruling that could set the course for releasing dozens of other prisoners from the U.S. naval facility in Cuba.

“Because the Constitution pro­hibits indefinite detentions without cause, the continued detention is unlawful,” Urbina said, prompting cheers and applause from local Uighur residents and human rights activists packed into the U.S. District courtroom.

Urbina also ordered a hearing to decide where the Uighurs should be settled permanently. Until then, members of the Uighur community in the Washington area agreed to sponsor and help care for them.

“I think the moment has arrived for the court to shine the light of consti­tutionality on the reasons for the detention,” he said.

But at issue is whether a federal judge has the authority to order the release of Guantanamo prisoners who were unlawfully detained by the U.S.

The Bush administration has refused to turn the Uighurs over to China because they might face tor­ture. The administration says it has found no other country willing to accept them.

The JACL has been an outspoken critic of unlawful detention because Japanese Americans were once the victims, said JACL National President Larry Oda.

“We had the company of Japanese Latin Americans in the camps with us. The situation in Guantanamo Bay for the Chinese Uighurs has a lot of similarity to the plight of the JAs, where a group of immigrants were targeted and allowed by the government of their residence to be abducted and shipped off to an unknown place,” said Oda.

“They have no place to go and the country from where they were abducted will not allow them to return,” he added.

Uighurs are from Xinjiang, an iso­lated region that borders Afghanistan, Pakistan and six Central Asian nations, and say they have been repressed by the Chinese government.

China has long said insurgents are leading an Islamic sep­arationist movement in Xinjiang. The Uighur detainees were captured in Pakistan and Afghanistan in 2001.

A federal judge is set to hold hear­ings this month on other Guantanamo prisoners challenging their detentions as so-called enemy combatants.

Roughly 20 percent of about 250 detainees who remain at the military prison fear torture or persecution should they return to their home countries, according to the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights. Their concerns raise similar questions as to where they should go if other countries refuse to take them. The U.S. has long maintained they should stay at Guantanamo.

The question is not if these men should be released, but why were they imprisoned in the first place, said Oda. “Obviously, since they are no longer considered enemy combatants, were they ever? Or were they victims, as we were of hysteria, racial prejudice, and ignorance?”

The Bush administration has argued that a federal judge cannot order the release of a foreign-born detainee into the U.S., saying that would undercut immigration laws that dictate how foreigners are brought into the country.

Sabin Willett, an attorney for the Uighurs, countered: “I’ve never heard anyone argue our relations with other nations are a basis for holding someone.”

“It’s important for every American to support the end of the unlawful detainment and torture, and especial­ly Asian Americans because we have historically been on the receiving end,” said Oda.

“It is in our best interests to maintain our hard fought position in the United States and our duty to protest the unlawful acts perpetuated on others by our country.”

he added.
San Franciscans May Help Determine the Future of a High School Military Program

If passed, a proposition on the Nov. 4 ballot would show support for the APA-dominat-ed JROTC program.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

San Francisco Asian Pacific American students are hoping voters will help save a public high school military program that they say teaches valuable leadership skills.

The college-bound APAs, who make up the majority of cadets in the Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (JROTC), initiated an advisory measure, Proposition V, on the November ballot that, although not binding, would allow San Franciscans to show their support for the military program.

They hope the measure will persuade the school board, which voted two years ago to phase out JROTC, to keep the program.

“It’s helped me stand up for myself, have more confidence, and to fight for what I want,” said Trina Mao, 16.

JROTC participants in the program, called cadets, wear uniforms, study military history, practice marching and drilling and win awards for things like marksmanship. Armed forces retirees serve as instructors, and cadets can get academic credit in fields such as physical education.

Supporters view the elective course as valuable self-improvement — teaching them discipline, responsibility and leadership skills they say they do not get in other classes. JROTC instructors are not allowed to recruit participants.

Proposition V campaign co-chair, Michael Bermick, told the Bay Area Reporter that the measure has the support of over 300 parents, teachers and students who have been campaigning door-to-door.

San Francisco Unified School District board members who decided to kick JROTC out of San Francisco schools see it as an arm of the U.S. military that reaches into schools and recruits teenagers for an unpopular war.

“It’s a broader issue about the Bush administration and military recruiting through JROTC,” said board member Eric Mar to the Associated Press. Some board members also objected to the U.S. military’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” mandate that excludes openly gay men and women from the military, although the JROTC program is open to everyone.

“Get’s clear with the military, if you’re gay and out, you don’t get the same opportunities,” he added.

Mar was among board members who voted two years ago to phase out JROTC and replace it with programs not linked to the military. The deadline was set for 2008, but the board later extended JROTC until next June because an alternative was not developed in time.

If the military’s aim is to eventually get some of these students to join the military, JROTC in San Francisco is a failure. Only two of the 1,465 cadets there signed up for the armed forces after graduation in 2006-2007, the most recent year for which numbers are available.

Supporters also say the arguments about the war in Iraq and the U.S. Defense Department’s policy toward gays miss the point. The program in San Francisco is inclusive, with 90 percent minorities and 40 percent women, they say.

Some gay and lesbian student groups have come out in support of JROTC and the ballot measure, saying some of their members have found a home in the program.

With confusion over the future of the program, enrollment in San Francisco’s JROTC has declined by about two-thirds in the past year. But around the country, participation in JROTC has climbed steadily.

If the school board decision stands, San Francisco would be the first city to remove the JROTC program.

Hawaii Tourism Chief Rex Johnson Resigns

Johnson exits amidst a firestorm over controversy over offensive e-mails.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Rex Johnson, the embattled Hawaii Tourism Authority president and CEO who came under fire for forwarding offensive e-mails, has resigned.

He submitted his resignation Oct. 8, after the HTA board met for about eight hours in executive session to consider his fate after hearing public testimony. Johnson issued a two-sentence statement in which he thanked the tourism industry leadership, community, staff and friends who showed him support.

“I intend to support Hawaii’s tourism industry in whatever way I can,” he wrote in a statement released by the HTA.

“At this point certain accusations have made Rex a lightning rod for controversy. This has become a distraction to the effectiveness of the HTA and we respect his decision. Rex’s decision is clearly in the best interest of all concerned,” said Kelvin Bloom, HTA board chair.

National Newsbytes

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Accused Japanese Businessman Found Dead

LOS ANGELES—A Japanese businessman accused of conspiring to have his wife murdered has been found dead in an apparent suicide.

District attorney spokeswoman Sandi Gibbons confirmed that 61-year-old Kazuyoshi Miura was found dead, He had hanged himself.

Miura arrived in Los Angeles Oct. 10 from the U.S. commonwealth of Saipan, where he had been held since his February arrest on a 1988 L.A. County warrant alleging murder and conspiracy.

Miura was accused of plotting to have his wife killed during a visit the couple made to L.A. in 1981.

SD Guard Sued for Race, Gender Discrimination

MIOUTH FALLS, S.D.—A retired colonel with the South Dakota National Guard is suing the Guard and several commanders on grounds she was discriminated against because of her gender and Japanese American heritage.

Col. Nancy Wetherill filed the federal complaint in U.S. District Court in Rapid City alleging that she was denied full retirement and prevented from future promotions and pay increases.

Wetherill, the only APA female officer and she was the only female to have reached her rank, was assigned to a building by herself to do work normally given to soldiers with a rank lower than colonel.

She joined the National Guard in 1974.

17,000 Could Get Purple Heart Under New Policy

WASHINGTON—An estimated 17,000 deceased U.S. prisoners of war could be awarded Purple Hearts under a new Pentagon policy.

Purple Hearts are awarded to soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines wounded by enemy action. But the awards have been denied in the past to POWs who died in captivity if it could not be proven they had been wounded or killed by the enemy.

The revised policy promises such deaths were the result of enemy action unless compelling evidence is presented to the contrary.

The new policy is retroactive to Dec. 7, 1941. Posthumous awards can be made to a family member or other representative of the deceased service member.

Series of Attacks Targets Elderly APAs

BETHESDA, Md.—Investigators are connecting 13 cases in which older APAs have been followed, assaulted and robbed.

Police officials say the same two men may be behind the attacks. The suspects spend considerable time watching their victims, carefully choosing them — likely from a location where they can blend in. The robberies took place in the afternoon and early evening.

Elderly APAs should keep their guard up, report suspicious behavior, and call police if they think they’re being followed, said the police.

Bomb Site Now an Oregon Trail

BROOKINGS, Ore.—A hiking trail has been dedicated to commemorate a little known part of Japanese and American World War II history.

In September 1942, Japanese pilot Nobuo Fujita dropped two bombs on the coastal town of Brookings to start forest fires. It was damp, however, so they didn’t do much damage — except leave a crater.

The revamped Wheeler Ridge Japanese Bombing Site trail has several interpretive panels that tell both the Japanese and American sides of the story.

University Gains Asian American Studies Program

BLOOMINGTON, Ind.—Indiana University has established a new Asian American Studies program.

The new program will first offer an undergraduate minor in AA Studies and will develop an undergraduate major and Ph.D. minor. It will also include 15 adjunct faculty members who have positions in other departments in other schools.
U. of Chicago Physicist Receives Nobel Prize

Retired University of Chicago physicist Yoichiro Nambu, 87, has won the 2008 Nobel Prize in physics, along with two Japanese citizens, for discoveries that help explain the behavior of the smallest particles of matter. Nambu, who moved to the U.S. in 1952 and has worked at the University of Chicago for 48 years, shares the $1.4 million prize with Makoto Kobayashi and Toshihide Masakawa, who were recognized for discovering the origin of the broken symmetry that predicts the existence of at least three families of quarks in nature. The trio also will receive a diploma and an invitation to Dec. 10 ceremonies in Stockholm.

Big Island Police Chief Leaving at End of Year

Hilo, Hawaii—Big Island Police Chief Lawrence Mahuna has announced he will retire from the department Dec. 31.

The Hawaii County Police Commission named Mahuna to the post in December 2002. He had been assistant chief in charge of the Administrative Bureau before becoming acting chief. Mahuna joined the police department as a recruit in February 1973.

Sato to Receive Saroyan Prize

Kiyo Sato is one of the recipients of the third William Saroyan International Prize for Writing. Sato was honored for her memoir of her family's history through the Depression, wartime hysteria and internment in Poston.

The biennial Saroyan Prize was established to encourage new and emerging writers and to honor William Saroyan's history through the Depression, wartime hysteria and internment in Poston.

Sato, a Shin Nisei who has a passion for using the Japanese Abacus, will be attending the University of California, Irvine to major in film and media studies.

Go For Broke to Build New Little Tokyo Headquarters

The new facility will feature an interactive exhibit about WWII JA veterans.

A new Go For Broke National Education Center is coming to Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. President George W. Bush has signed off on an appropriations measure for the 2009 fiscal year, which includes $4 million towards the building of a new National Education Center.

The new Go For Broke National Education Center, which is in its preliminary design phase, will feature an interactive exhibit built around videotaped oral histories from veterans of the 100th Infantry Battalion. The new two-story, 14,999-square-foot building, which will house the new headquarters for the Go For Broke National Education Center, will be located at 200 North Central Avenue beside the current Go For Broke Monument in Little Tokyo.

Still, “one of my professors used to say, ‘There are three types of people in the world: those who make things happen, those who watch what happens and those who are clueless and ask what happened?’” said Begonia.

Begonia was a 21-year-old SFSU student majoring in psychology when the strike happened. For the cause, he put down his books to pick up picket signs and attend marches and rallies.

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New Reports Reveal APA Voting Power

Most APAs are undecided in this presidential election, making the APA vote a pivotal one.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Asian Pacific American voters have emerged from being a silent minority to becoming a strong political force, according to new reports that say APAs could play pivotal roles in upcoming local and national elections.

A new report published by the Leadership Education for Asian Pacificics, Inc. (LEAP) likens the emerging strength of the APA vote to the powerful Hispanic vote in the 1980s. APAs are becoming a strong voting constituency because of rapid population growth, according to the public policy institute.

"We wanted to fill a gap by publishing a major policy report on the political and civic interests of this increasingly influential group as it gains momentum and gathers national attention," said Dr. J.D. Hokoyama, president and CEO of LEAP. "Our report includes a wealth of new research and findings on political and civic engagement, providing a clearer understanding of Asian Americans and their influence in the country.

The report, "The State of Asian America: Trajectory of Civic and Political Engagement," reveals that about 61 percent of APAs are foreign born, the highest rate of any minority group in the country. This trend is expected to continue through 2030.

And like Hispanics voters, APAs identify as Democrats by a margin of two to one, according to the report.

APAs have the strongest political muscle in states like California, New York, Texas and Nevada. In Virginia, another state with a significant APA voting bloc, the APA contingent helped to contribute to Sen. Jim Webb's razor thin victory over Republican incumbent George Allen, said Dr. Paul Ong, editor of the report and professor at the University of California, Los Angeles' School of Public Affairs.

"The political mobilization of Asian Americans — with one of the highest growth rates of voting age citizens among all racial groups in the U.S. — will have a significant impact on local and national elections in coming years," said Ong.

Another new national survey reveals that while many APAs support Barack Obama in this presidential election, a sizable portion remain undecided — which means the potential for a powerful APA swing vote this November is high.

The new "National Asian American Survey," a poll conducted by a pioneering generation of young APA political scientists, is being self-billed as the most comprehensive survey of APA political views ever conducted.

From Aug. 18 to Sept. 26, more than 4,000 APA likely voters were surveyed in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese.

The research found that 41 percent of APA likely voters support Obama, while 24 percent support McCain. Among that, a majority of Japanese Americans said they would vote for Obama while a majority of Vietnamese Americans sided with McCain.

But more than one third of likely APA voters remain undecided.

"A very large number of Asian Americans are nonpartisan," said Taeku Lee, one of the report's authors and a political science professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

"The Asian American vote is very much up for grabs."

Immortalizing WWII JA Heroes


This unit came to be known as the "Lost Battalion" since it was cut off for six days behind enemy lines in the forests of the Vosges Mountains in eastern France. Tucci said the comic book will bridge generations and "bring attention to a true story of heroism, humanity and sacrifice.

The new comic book series, which also weaves in stories of the JA internment, debuts nationally Nov. 5.

One study found that 41 percent of APA likely voters support Barack Obama, while 24 percent support John McCain for president.

JA Veterans Group Dedicates Memorial in Korea

Over 100 members and friends of the Japanese American Korean War Veterans (JAKWV) recently traveled to South Korea to dedicate a memorial for Japanese Americans killed during the Korean War.

At the September event, four more names of JAs killed in the war were added to the 247 names on the memorial. The individuals added were: Henry Enoka, Mose E. Kuni, Frederick Nobutoshi Pestana, and Yoshikiyo Tengan.

Attendees at the dedication program included members of the 2nd Infantry Division as well as representatives of the South Korean government and community.

At the event, the Korean Veterans Association (KVA) also presented Korean Service medals to those who had not previously received them. This medal is given to all veterans who served in Korea. On this trip, 14 medals were given to veterans who were on their first return trip to Korea.

In 2001, the JAKWV built and dedicated the memorial located in Paju City's Imjingak Park. Min Toniai and Ed Nakata led the group of 115 veterans and friends in the original trip.

On the trip, JA veterans also visited the Demilitarized Zone, former invasion tunnels and the South Korean War Museum where lists of all those killed in action include the KIAs from all United Nations countries.

S.F. JACL Makes a Difference

(Back row, l-r) Volunteers Haruka Roudeshush, Tomoharu Satō, Greg Marutani, Nikidhi Hikari, Hiroshi Shimizu, Bo Yoshimura; (front row, l-r) Aileen Trieu, Mogumri Kaminaga, Daniel Xavier and Graig Inaba.

For the recent National AIDS Memorial Grove Volunteer Work Day, members of the Nakayoshi Young Professionals and the San Francisco JACL dug over 1,200 holes to plant one- and five-gallon plants along the southern slope of the grove in Golden Gate Park.

San Francisco JACL sponsored the event.

"When we return next year, we will all be able to see what a difference our efforts made to this unique and special place in Golden Gate Park," said Greg Marutani, a chapter board member who has organized this event for the past 14 years. ■
By KATHY AOKI

In JACL’s 79-year history, many people consider Redress the epitome of what the organization has accomplished.

Aug. 10, 2008, marked the 20th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan’s signing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which gave reparations to Japanese Americans who were interned by the U.S. government and sent to War Relocation Centers during World War II.

The decision to pursue Redress began in 1978 at the JACL National Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Legislative Education Committee (LEC) was formed in 1982 by the JACL as their lobbying arm to work on achieving Redress.

In May 1985, the JACL national board considered Redress their top priority and gave the LEC the responsibility to not only lobby and work to have Redress bills introduced in Congress, but also to help protect JACL’s tax-exempt status.

Minoru Yasui was elected in late 1984 as the chair of LEC’s first board of directors. The committee members were Denny Yasuhara, Harry Kajihara, Kaz Mayeda, Cherry Kinoshita, Grant Ujifusa, Jim Tsujimura, Frank Sato, Yosh Nakashima, Shig Wakamatsu, Rose Ochi, Art Morimoto, David Nakido and Joseph Raul.

Kajihara was chair of a fundraising drive in June 1985 to help support the LEC, whose legislative lobbying program was run from JACL’s office in Washington, D.C. Ujifusa, who served as the legislative chairman, was instrumental in developing the Washington, D.C. program and LEC’s legislative strategy.

Gracey Uyehara served as an at-large member before becoming LEC’s executive director in 1985. She worked from her office in West Chester, Pennsylvania and also committed three to four times a week to the JACL office in Washington, D.C. Her staff members were Associate Director Colleen Darling, who worked on JACL’s Redress Program under John Tateishi and Rochelle Wadzuma, who was on the JACL Washington, D.C. staff.

The LEC’s goals and objectives were to provide updates to the Pacific Citizen to inform the JACL membership on the status of their Redress lobbying and continue their legislative strategy — which included working with Senators Daniel Inouye and Sparky Matsunaga from Hawaii and Congressmen Norman Mineta and Robert Matsui from California. LEC members also worked to develop coalitions with others to gain support for their Redress bills.

Some people consider Matsunaga instrumental in obtaining Congressional support for Redress. He introduced legislation that led to the formation of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians.

Jerry Enomoto became the chair of the LEC board in 1986 after the passing of Yasui. The board members were Ujifusa, Kinoshita, Wakamatsu, Kajihara, Tsujimura, Raul, Morimoto, and Yasuhara with new members Mollie Fujikawa, Gene Takamine, Peggy Liggitt, Cressey Nakagawa and Henry Tanaka.

At the time LEC was working on the Redress bills, HR 442 and S.1009, there were 60,000 surviving internees. When President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, it was a day of celebration but also a time to remember the internees who had already passed away and never received their apology from the president and their $20,000 reparations check.

Both JACL and LEC worked to ensure that the regulations governing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 were followed and were responsible for keeping the JA community informed about how the distribution of Redress funds would be administered.

Kathy Aoki is a Contra Costa JACL chapter member.

Why I Support Barack Obama

By PAUL IGASAKI

This country, our world, desperately needs leadership. Leadership that will call us, and call our allies, to new possibilities. We cannot rely alone on military strength to keep world peace or to keep our nation safe. We can show that working together we can reverse the trend of environmental deterioration and make this nation less dependent on oil. We can end an ill-conceived war and direct our attention to challenge terrorism.

We can make a health care system that provides for all of us, and does not force families to choose between poverty and well-being. Our schools need to get the support that makes them the best in the world and our colleges available to more than the wealthy. And we need to restore our economy, ending an era of "anything goes" for powerful financial institutions.

How do we fight terrorism? Do we do it by throwing aside the rules, the promises that define the United States? As a Japanese American, I know that this is not the first time that our fear and our prejudices allow us to forget that we are a nation that promises equal rights and due process of law.

By standing strong by our Constitution, applying its principles in our dealings with the world, we will build an alliance against terror and genocide more powerful than fear or threats. We do not need torture and we should not practice it.

Neither President Bush, nor candidate John McCain will provide that leadership. Sen. Barack Obama will. This is a rare moment in history. As so many in the world are torn apart by religious or ethnic differences, we will elect the first African American to the presidency just 40 years after laws forbade his parents’ marriage or his attending many of our public schools.

When some in this country deny our nation’s immigrant heritage, we can affirm it by electing a president who values it — his father came here for an American education. His belief in diversity and tolerance came from growing up in multicultural Hawaii and having relatives with white, Asian and African roots.

That is the America of the 21st century and the world will learn that diversity is a resource, not a cause for violence.

Thomas Jefferson said that the viability of our democracy is the responsibility of every citizen. JAs became community organizers to redress the injustice we faced during World War II. It took decades for retirees and students, homemakers and businesspeople, Republicans and Democrats to come together to determine how best to seek justice.

Like the abolitionists that took action to end slavery, suffragettes that won the vote for women and peace activists that opposed some of the wars we have been involved in, American history and American patriotism is exercised by citizens that take responsibility for our future.

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was won by our community, coalition allies and others who believed justice is part of the American heritage. Bipartisan Congressional majorities and Presidents Reagan and Bush ultimately supported the Redress bill and its funding.

As a teacher of law, Obama taught about the injustices of the relocation and, as a community organizer, he applied the lessons that we learned on behalf of Chicagoans facing unemployment following the decay of Rust Belt industries.

McCain was in the Senate and he voted against the Redress bill, breaking with the Republicans and Democrats that sent a message on behalf of our Constitution. If that is what being a “maverick” is, we don’t need that kind of leadership. Whatever his reasons, Barack Obama and I, have a different view of what American justice is all about.

John F. Kennedy 48 years ago called Americans to national service and called for the world to work together for freedom. Barack Obama has asked the same of us...

Paul Igasaki is deputy CEO of Equal Justice Works. He also served as vice chair & chair of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the JACL's Washington, D.C. representative.

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The end of the marathon is fast approaching and the time of decision will soon be close at hand. Almost 20 months ago, the 2008 presidential campaign began. And soon it will be over.

I feel bad for political Web sites like FiveThirtyEight.com and RealClearPolitics.com. What will they do with themselves when there is no more data to mine and no more minds to sway?

Web sites like those, Wolf Blitzer’s beard, and so many other factors have made this particular political season one of the best presidential races to follow. There is so much information to comb through, it makes your head spin.

Even better than watching the various national and state polls sour and dip is watching the talking heads trying to give meaningful reasons for each little blip on the latest trend line. Even better than that is watching those same pundits trying to calculate the ever elusive energetic youth vote.

Some of those pundits point to the fact that youth cannot be properly polled because, for the most part, cell phones are not included in polling operations. Others seem to disqualify this segment of the American population because of stereotypes of lazy young voters who generated low voting rates in past elections. While still others over estimate the combination of same-day registration and early voting initiatives.

None of these brilliant minds can accurately predict what the youth vote will do to this year’s election.

Maybe I can.

Seeing how I was born the year that Ronald Reagan was sworn into office, I am technically not considered a part of the youth vote. However, the fact that I do not have a landline (Yes, I only have a cell phone; it is 2008 of me) and watched MTV’s “TRL” while still in high school means I am not that far ahead.

This will only be the third presidential election that I will vote in, and I find my thoughts and opinions formed in the crosscurrents of the past and future.

I am old enough to remember life without the Internet, but young enough to frequently use Google as a verb in speech and action. I am young enough to “believe” in global warming, but old enough to know that going green means leaving a better planet for those who follow.

I am young enough to have read about the civil rights movement while in school, but old enough to understand its nuances in today’s culture. I am old enough to be tired of partisanship, but young enough to believe we can get past it.

As a member of this generation, I can comfortably be a Republican who believes the biggest challenge of the future is eradicating global poverty, not religious fundamentalism.

I am a member of a generation that has been given everything. Does this make us spoiled? I hope not. But it does give us confidence and assurance that we can be whatever we choose. We can be free market Democrats or we can be Republicans who see how the invisible hand of the market works.

With youth comes mental flexibility. While I still consider myself a Republican, I strongly agree with many tenets of Democratic theory. The mentality of the rising generation often bucks at the conventional wisdom of the past. I do not have to fit neatly into the contrived definitions of liberal or conservative. I can define the issues that matter to me and watch the politicians twist to fit into my mold, not I theirs.

Because of this flexibility, I can be a Republican who supports federal investments in scientific research, including stem cell research, to open the doors of technology to real health care and green energy discoveries and solutions.

I am young enough to seek older, more experienced minds and opinions, but old enough to see through the occasional biases and hypocrisies.

I can be a Republican who vehemently supports Senator Barack Obama.

I can be whatever I choose. And at this time, in this election, so can you.

My call to you is to look at all the issues. Maybe green technology is not your passion. Maybe foreign policy does not excite you. But surely something does. You need to find those things that speak to you.

Then find the “candidate-of-best-fit.” But, whatever you do, don’t vote the way you always do just because it’s the way you always have. If you follow this advice, you will feel a lot younger, I promise.
When Everyone Told Her No, She Rewrote the Rules

Kimberlee Bassford shines a light on the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink's life and legacy in a new documentary.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

I like to say before Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, there was Patsy Mink," said filmmaker Kimberlee Bassford about the little girl from Hawaii who grew up to become the first woman of color in Congress.

In history books, the sum of Mink's 12-term career in the House of Representatives stretches past page margins. The late Congresswoman was a history making elected official, the driving force behind Title IX legislation, and the nation's highest office. Before Sen. Clinton and Gov. Sarah Palin, Mink was knocking down the thickest of glass ceilings. The irony isn't lost on Bassford, 31, whose documentary, "Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority," premieres at the Hawaii International Film Festival.

"She wasn't ah-shucks, that sweet?" said filmmaker Bassford. It was a silence heavy with emotions for an extraordinary woman.

"She didn't toot her own horn," said Bassford, whose previous work includes "Unnatural Causes," a PBS series investigating socioeconomic and racial disparities in health. But also because the media mostly counted Mink out as a severe underdog. Back then, Mink drew the same ah-shucks attitude that continues to plague women today. She's running for president? Isn't that sweet?"

"It was a reoccurring theme in Mink's career — she fought for equality that many take for granted today. "Women no longer have qualms about career choices. But there are still barriers. We saw that in this presidential race when Hillary Clinton was treated poorly," said Bassford.

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"Women no longer have qualms about career choices. But there are still barriers. We saw that in this presidential race when Hillary Clinton was treated poorly," said Bassford. But also because the media mostly counted Mink out as a severe underdog. Back then, Mink drew the same ah-shucks attitude that continues to plague women today. She's running for president? Isn't that sweet?"

Finding Inspiration

"I was born after Title IX, so I grew up thinking I could become anything I set my mind to do, whether it's go to law school or become a documentary filmmaker," said Bassford, who is of Chinese and Filipino descent.

"I was born after Title IX, so I grew up thinking I could become anything I set my mind to do, whether it's go to law school or become a documentary filmmaker," said Bassford, who is of Chinese and Filipino descent.

Growing up, she was always passionate about artistic expression. She danced and became a cheerleader at Punahou School, Obama's alma mater. Then she went to earn her bachelor's degree in psychology at Harvard University and plunged into a period of self-reflection. What was she going to do with her life? Bassford enjoyed teaching, but she didn't want to be confined to a classroom, so she enrolled in the graduate journalism program at the University of California, Berkeley and embarked on a career as a documentary filmmaker.

While Bassford was in graduate school in 2002, Mink passed away. The filmmaker started researching.

"So many things surprised me," said Bassford.

"When Mink arrived in Washington, D.C., she became the nation's novelty. In news articles, she was constantly described as "pretty." She appeared on TV shows to endure questions about her ethnicity and gender. In rare news footage, Mink is seen frolicking in the snow with Hubert Humphrey. On another show, she even performed the hula — something very un-Congress like, said Bassford.

"She was always cast as the 'other,' both as a minority and as a woman."

To research, Bassford read everything she could find about Mink and talked to people who knew her best, including daughter Gwendolyn Mink, now a Woman Studies professor at Smith College.

"Mink's widow, John, supported the documentary, but passed away before Bassford could interview him. Production began in October 2006 for the $500,000 film, which was funded through grants and personal donations including one from tennis legend Billie Jean King.

Bassford met King in D.C. on "National Girls and Women in Sports Day." She was researching at the Library of Congress, but when she saw the tennis icon, she couldn't resist. "I went up to her and said, 'Hi, Ms. King. I'm making a documentary on Patsy Mink."

The Boy's Club

"She was the first Asian American woman from Hawaii in Congress taking on this old boy's club," said Bassford.

In Hawaii, the "boys" were JA men with household names like Inouye and Matsumoto. In 1959 after Hawaii gained statehood, Mink decided to run for the House of Representatives. Daniel K. Inouye was going to run for the Senate. But Democratic Party leaders thought the Senate seats should be reserved for the party elders, so Inouye was encouraged to run for the House seat instead — against Mink.

"The machine bosses never wanted Patsy in power, maybe because she was too independent; maybe because she was a woman," said Bassford.

Mink ran over 20 campaigns in her life. She lost many, but always bounced back like a daruma doll.

"To me, she exemplifies what I want all my politicians to be. She had an ego. But to her politics wasn't about power. She really wanted to be a servant of the people."

Recently, Bassford held a small preview screening of the documentary for Mink's family, including Gwendolyn and Patsy's brother Eugene Takemoto.

After the film ended, the room was quiet. "I got nervous. Was this a good thing?" said Bassford. It was a silence heavy with emotions for an extraordinary woman.

"They were all crying."

"To me, she exemplifies what I want all my politicians to be."

— Filmmaker Kimberlee Bassford, 31, (left), about the late Patsy Mink (top).

What does war solve?

"A Passage Through SEVEN LIVES is a stunning and perceptive memoir/history of Japanese culture and imperialism before and after the World War II," said filmmaker Bassford.

"A Passage Through SEVEN LIVES is a stunning and perceptive memoir/history of Japanese culture and imperialism before and after the World War II," said filmmaker Bassford. "Kyo Takahashi weaves a majestic tapestry, using the history of Japan and bloody battlefields as the warp, and lives of people who were involved in the war, as the weft. Every fact was blended in carefully with artistic illustrations, creating a shocking and enlightening panorama."

"This book is a valuable addition for those not familiar with Quaker Friends' supportive actions for Japanese Americans who were sent to the internment camps." —from Reviews

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the executive director of the JACL Legislative Education Committee (LEC). She was asked to fill the position by Mike Masaoka until sufficient funds for the lobbying campaign could be raised. For the job, Grayce commuted weekly from her home in Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. Three years later with her leadership, the Redress bill was signed into law.

But when she took to the stage at the Gala, Grayce said credit for the bill's successful passage doesn't belong to just one person.

"Her main message was that recognition properly goes not to her individually, but to rank and file chapter members and the LEC leaders who worked so hard on the lobbying effort and provided the muscle to get the bill passed," said Paul Uyehara, a current Philadelphia JACL board member, about his mother.

"And people may have forgotten that although she was working for LEC almost full time, she was not being paid," added Paul, who attended the event with Grayce and his dad Hiroshi. "But again, she has not been one to toot her own horn and I think she really does think that the orchestra makes the music, not the conductor."

It was sentiment echoed by another "champion of Redress" — John Tateishi, the JACL's immediate former national director.

"I'm very humbled by the recognition, especially coming from the JACL after all these years," said Tateishi, who became the organization's national redress director in 1978.

As the Redress director, Tateishi crafted the campaign's legislative and public affairs strategies and lead the movement that culminated in the Redress bill being signed into law.

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

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

Those who have seen Going for Honor, Going for Broke say:

"Excellent. Great for junior high and high school students."

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

Bonus Material: This DVD contains a version of the "Echoes of Silence" database compiled by the Americans of Japanese Ancestry WWII Memorial Alliance. Running time: 16 mins.
COMMENTARY

Vote No on Prop 8: Our Daughter is Not a Second-Class Citizen

By HAROLD KAMEYA

Twenty years ago, our then-20-year-old daughter Valerie told us she was gay. As Sansei from Hawaii raised in a socially conservative Japanese American culture, Valerie’s announcement devastated us.

At that time, we were woefully ignorant on issues of sexual orientation, including that being gay is not a choice. As part of that ignorance, we were saddened that we would never see our daughter get married or have a family.

Fortunately, we were referred to an organization called Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). We were the only Asian Pacific Americans in PFLAG, but it became our lifeboat, guiding us in our search to understand a topic that none of our JA friends or family ever spoke about.

In 1990, we were asked to share our experiences with a group of gay APAs. That meeting was a turning point for us. After we spoke, we were moved by the tears on the faces of the audience. They told us about the pain that gays and lesbians faced. In turn, they opened up our minds and hearts, and we decided to help break the silence in our community.

Supported by other straight allies, clergy and churches in the United Church of Christ and PFLAG, we founded our chapter in 1992. We were the only Asian Pacific Americans in PFLAG. We were the only Asian Pacific Americans in PFLAG. We were the only Asian Pacific Americans in PFLAG.

In 1994, that door has been opened. Since then, we have also become more accepting.

This has been difficult. We have found that our community does not like to deal with subjects that are “uncomfortable” or outside the normal scope of daily conversation.

Thus, as parents of a gay daughter, we were amazed and touched when the national JACL endorsed marriage equality for same-sex couples in 1994. It was a bold and courageous decision — and one that profoundly inspired us. To both of us, it was a sign that our otherwise closed community might be cracking open the door ever so slightly to gays and lesbians.

Ellen and Harold Kameya are voting no on Calif.’s Proposition 8.

In part, open support for gays and lesbians from community organizations, elected officials and positive media stories have helped shift public opinion.

For example, in its 2006 voter survey, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center found that 63 percent of JAs supported marriage equality for gays and lesbians.

That support for the freedom to marry makes us very happy. Ellen and I have been married for 42 years. When we think about marriage, we think of our own wedding day, when we publicly declared to the world our love and commitment to each other. It was a day cherished by our families and friends, and most of all, by the two of us.

It is a day that I never thought our daughter Valerie would be able to celebrate.

When the state Supreme Court recognized that barring marriage to same-sex couples violated our state Constitution earlier this year, our daughter gained something that is both precious and common — the basic right to marry the person of her choice. Her mother and I are thrilled that our daughter can now marry.

As Californians go to the polls to vote this November, it saddens us that some voters might want to take away Valerie’s right to marry the person she loves. On Nov. 4, please do not make our daughter Valerie a second-class citizen by voting yes on Proposition 8.

To help stop Proposition 8, contact Asian Pacific Islander PFLAG, apipflag@yahoo.com or API Equality-LA at www.apiequalityla.org.

Harold and Ellen Kameya are long-time residents of Granada Hills, Calif.
ANTI-MUSLIM
(Continued from page 1)

“Propaganda distributed via The Oregonian can only spread misinformation and instill fear and distrust of all Muslim Americans in our community,” said Dozono, chief executive officer of Azumano Travel, to the Pacific Citizen.

Like many others who objected to the DVD, Dozono canceled his subscription to the daily newspaper. He compares The Oregonian’s decision to distribute the controversial DVD to the newspaper’s role during World War II in fanning the flames of anti-Japanese American sentiment.

“The Oregonian had a leading role in misinforming and convincing the readers of the paper that it was in the nation’s interest to evade and incarcerate all JAs…” said Dozono.

FILIPINO VETS
(Continued from page 1)

according to a spokesperson for Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, a sponsor of the Senate measure.

Sen. Richard Burr, the ranking member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee chose to block Akaka’s request to form a conference committee on the Senate floor before Congress adjourned, said Jesse Broder Van Dyke, Akaka’s press secretary.

Akaka, chairman of the Veterans’ Affairs Committee, has vowed to renew his advocacy in the new Congress next year.

“While Congress voted to establish a nearly $200 million Filipino Veterans Equity fund this year, opponents of Filipino veterans equity successfully blocked the legislation required to provide veteran status and compensation to the few remaining Filipino veterans of World War II,” said Akaka in a statement.

“We have been defeated, but we are not defeated. I intend to return to this issue in the next Congress. The march toward equity is not over,” he added.

S. 1315, the Veterans’ Benefits Enhancement Act of 2007, an omnibus veterans’ benefits bill, contained provisions to provide WWII Filipino veterans who served under U.S. military command with recognition as veterans, a limited pension, and increased compensation for their twilight years.

These provisions were adapted from S. 57, the Filipino Veterans Equity Act, introduced by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye. Akaka led a successful floor fight for S. 1315 in the Senate, defeating an amendment to remove the Filipino veterans language and securing Senate passage by a vote of 96 to 1.

In the House, the Filipino veterans’ provisions were stripped and efforts to negotiate a final version of the bill were blocked when the bill was returned to the Senate. The measure’s failure coincides with Filipino American History Month, which many veterans and advocates regard as salt on a wound.

During WWII, Filipino men who were citizens of the Philippines then a U.S. possession — fought under the command of the U.S. military. After the war, Gen. Omar Bradley and the U.S. government recognized them as U.S. veterans. But less than a year later, their veteran status was stripped by an act of Congress.

“If JAs and all Oregonians have the responsibility to say never again will we allow any ethnic or religious groups be discriminated,” said Selby.

“The Asian American community is all too familiar with the DVD was announced, Portland JACL immediately voted to join the Good Faith Coalition in protesting the dissemination of a message that could possibly incite hate and violence against our Muslim brothers and sisters,” he added.

“Obsession” features scholars, journalists and others describing radical Islam as a worldwide terrorism movement committed to destroying Western culture.

Nationally, about 70 newspapers distributed “Obsession,” sponsored by the Clarion Fund. A few papers refused to carry the DVD.

After “Obsession” was distributed to readers of Ohio’s Dayton Daily News, a 10-year-old girl was sprayed in the face Sept. 26 while at a local Islamic mosque. Police officials have said the incident is not a hate crime, but a board member of the Islamic Society of Greater Dayton told the newspaper that many people at the mosque speculated that the incident was the result of the “Obsession” DVD.

Clarin, a New York-based non-profit organization founded in 2006 to address “the most urgent threat of radical Islam,” spent millions of dollars distributing the DVDs mostly in battleground election states.

“We found [newspapers were] the most economical and best way to get it out there,” said Clarion Fund spokesman Gregory Ross to the Associated Press.

The New York Times distributed “Obsession” on the grounds that rejecting it would violate the sponsor’s right to free speech. The decision generated letters, cancellations and even a protest. The controversy has also raised questions whether newspapers should offer a platform to everyone willing to pay for distribution.

Kelly McBride, head of the ethics faculty at the journalism think tank Poynter Institute, said papers generally reject ads only if they promote illegal activity or might incite violence. “The Obsession” DVD, at most, makes people angry, she said.

“It’s pretty hard to make an argument to reject it,” she said. “It’s hard to articulate a standard that would give you the opportunity to reject something like the ‘Obsession’ DVD but allow other types of political, religious or anti-religious speech.”

Many community members disagree.

“This DVD crosses the line,” said Dozono.

“A complaint has been filed with Portland’s Office of Human Relations,” said Selby, a commission advisor who helped to make the “Obsession” DVD the main topic of discussion on the next meeting agenda.

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Nov. 8th: Holiday Inn Downtown, 1055 Van Ness, Fresno at 2pm
Nov. 16th: JACCC Building 3rd & San Pedro, LA (Little Tokyo) at 2pm

Hosted by Blue Shield of California, these meetings are to discuss our health plan benefit changes for 2009. There will be refreshments, giveaways and a raffle prizes. No RSVP is required.
to estimates, will help make up the deficit, said Spry.

“The so-called deficit is more of an accounting delay than a deficit,” said JACL National Director Floyd Mori.

The summer months have always been a financially difficult time for the JACL. Much of the organization’s revenues are “back-end loaded,” said JACL National President Larry Oda, who added that fundraisers like the Pacific Citizen’s annual Holiday Issue and the Annual Giving campaign needs to be completed in order to get the whole financial picture.

As of Aug. 31, the JACL has a $119,976 deficit, one of the largest in the last few bienniums. The reason for the deficit is not new — “lagging membership and its impact on revenues is the most bothersome issue we have to deal with,” said Mori.

“We are not facing a crisis”

Membership makes up about 43 percent of expected revenue for 2008, according to the secretary/treasurer report submitted at the Sept. 27 national board meeting in Washington, D.C.

Over the years, JACL’s membership numbers have been steadily decreasing. At the end of September, membership revenue was down $74,000. If this trend continues, membership revenue could be down $97,000 by the end of the year.

For an organization that has struggled with membership, the country’s economic downturn has created another obstacle. In this type of economy, families are generally more prone to go into savings mode, said Spry. “The bad economy may cause a steeper decline in membership.”

“The present economic turmoil is not a good thing for anybody, including JACL. We had a severe upheaval in our economy at the beginning of the millennium which had dire consequences on the JACL budget,” said Mori.

But he adds, “We are not facing a crisis. Thinking crisis and acting crisis often precipitates an actual crisis. We are not flush with cash, but we do have reserves.”

Oda agrees. “Things aren’t real bad yet,” he said, adding that the national board’s commitment to begin a systematic review of program completions will help monitor the organization’s financial health.

JACL’s investments are down about $1 million compared to the end of 2007, said Spry, adding that the loss does not exceed what the market has lost. “The decline is in line with the benchmarks we’ve set with Highmark so the money is being managed appropriately. We are stepping up the frequency with which we’re reviewing though to every month just to be diligent.”

As of Aug. 31, the Legacy Fund is at $6.2 million, the Life Trust Endowment is at $478,698 and the National Endowment sits at $427,471. The Masaoka Endowment Fund is at $359,802 and the JACL Reserve Fund sits at $418,603.

“There’s a happy medium somewhere, we just need to discover what that is for JACL.”

Larry Oda, JACL Nat’l President

$418,603.

“The National Investment Policy Committee is very active in overseeing the management of our portfolio. While our investments are both in equity and long-term securities, we are not involved in mortgages. However, the precarious position of some of the major financial institutions could undoubtedly have a negative impact on JACL’s investment portfolio,” said Mori.

“In the short term our investments are safe and income for this year is already taken. There has been a decrease in the value of our portfolio, but it has been less than what the market has experienced,” he added.

The Future

The economic crisis has already claimed other non-profit organizations that relied on grants, said Spry. Fewer grant opportunities means more emphasis on membership.

“Economic stress and turmoil will force us to look at efficiencies, but more importantly it will allow us to look at new opportunities to advance the JACL. We cannot continue to do business as usual,” said Mori.

In July, the national council adopted a 2009-10 budget that includes aggressive membership goals to fund programs and move towards, what some national board members are calling, “a new JACL” — an organization with more vibrant programs for its members.

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To help meet the challenge, Oda has appointed Ryan Chin, a Seattle JACL member, as the new vice president of membership. Chin occupied the same post from 2002-04. The national board confirmed his appointment Oct. 10. Leilani Savitt, former national youth representative, is also the new MDC governor.

For an organization that continues to face membership decline, it’s a new reality that requires full participation from the national board and the chapter members.

“We have some aggressive goals for membership in the next biennium,” said Mori. “I think the goals are achievable and with a combined effort of all segments of JACL. We are focusing on the new programs, improved outreach and communications, and innovative national membership development. The old ways need to be adjusted to make way for new technology and we will focus on youth and families.”

Economic hardship is nothing new for many veteran JACL staff members who have guided the organization through hard times in the past, said Oda. But those hard times are occurring more often.

“If you couple that with our historical decline in membership, it gives us an indication that change is in the air,” Oda added. “We’ve begun to supplement membership dues with corporate sponsorships and grants but we must make a choice to remain a grassroots organization that is true to its mission or one that does the bidding of its benefactors.”

“There’s a happy medium somewhere, we just need to discover what that is for JACL.”

HONORING THE PAST.
CELEBRATING OUR FUTURE.

If you or someone close to your heart needs additional assistance with daily living, there’s a place of comfort and joy waiting. That place is Nikkei Senior Gardens – a unique assisted living community in the Arleta area where seniors can live as independently as possible, yet be surrounded by the culture, family and warmth of the Japanese-American community. Here you’ll discover the compassion, security and care you expect, in a convenient location that keeps loved ones close to each other.

There’s no better time than now! Nikkei Senior Gardens is scheduled to open in December. Call (818) 899-1000 today to find out more. Nikkei Senior Gardens is a non-profit community open to all.

Nikkei Senior Gardens
9221 Arleta Avenue • Arleta, CA 91331
(818) 899-1000 • www.NikkeiSeniorGardens.com
Calendar

Midwest
GRINNELL, Iowa
Through Oct. 26—Exhibition, "Return of the Yellow Peril A Survey of the Work of Roger Shimomura, 1969-2004; Grinnell College, Buckbaum Center for the Arts, Sixth Ave. and Park St.; gallery hours, Sun.-Wed. noon-5 p.m., Thur.-Sat. 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Info: 641/269-4660.

MEDICINE LAKE, Minn.
Sat., Nov. 15—Twin Cities JACL's 62nd Anniversary Chrysanthemum Banquet; 5 p.m. silent auction, 6 p.m. dinner and program; at the Chateau, 10715 South Shore Dr.; Tom Ikeda, keynote speaker: $30/adult, $20/Nisei, $13/child under 12; RSVP by Nov. 3 to Joanne Kumagai, 763/420-6639. Late reservations will not be accepted.

INTERMOUNTAIN
DENVER
Sat., Nov. 1—Health Fair; 9-1 p.m.; Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple, 1947 Lawrence St.; free screenings for cholesterol and triglycerides (both require fasting for 12 hours), allergies, diabetes, bone density, TB and more. Info: Charmaine Palmer, 303/449-8526 or aaloah@msn.com.

MANITOU SPRINGS, Colo.
Sat., Nov. 1—9th Annual Japanese Cultural Festival and Bazaar; 10-3 p.m.; the Business of Arts Center, 515 Manitou Ave.; featuring entertainment, bazaar items and food. Info: Josie Caruso-Rathe, 719/576-2229 or www.jasc.org.

Pacific Northwest
KENT, Wash.

PORTLAND
Through Nov. 2—Chrysanthemum Festival; 10-4 p.m.; Portland Japanese Garden, 611 SW Kingston Ave.; free with garden admission; $8/adults, $6.25/seniors and college students with ID, $5.20 kids 6-17, under 6 are free. Info: www.portlandjapanese-garden.com.

Nov. 15-30—Exhibition, "Dream Weaver: The Bamboo Art of Jiro Yonezawa"; 10-4 p.m.; Portland Japanese Garden, 611 SW Kingston Dr.; free with garden admission; $8/adults, $6.25/seniors and college students with ID, $5.20 kids 6-17, under 6 are free. Info: www.portlandjapanese-garden.com.

Nov. 16—Lecture, Nancy Moore Bess, author of "Bamboo in Japan"; 2:3 p.m.; Portland Japanese Garden, 611 SW Kingston Dr.; Bess will lecture on bamboo in Japan; $15/garden members, $20/non-members (reservations required). RSVP: www.portlandjapanese-garden.com/events or 503/542-0280.

Through Jan. 11, 2009—Exhibit, "Oregon Nisei Baseball: The Early Years"; Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, 121 NW 2nd Ave.; hours: Tue.-Sat. 11-3 p.m. and Sun. noon-3 p.m.; $3/admission; exhibit honors the 10th anniversary of the ONLC. Info: 503/224-1458 or www.oregonnikkei.org.

Northern California
SAN FRANCISCO
Sat., Oct. 25—Kenko no hi Health Fair; 9-1 p.m.; Christ United Presbyterian Church, 1700 Sutter St.; obtain flu shots and take part in various health screenings. Info: Yo Hironaka, 415/751-1267 or sfjcl@yahoo.com.

Sat., Nov. 1—JACL Health Benefits Trust insurance renewal meeting; 2 p.m.; JACL headquarters, 1765 Sutter St.; the meeting will show any benefit changes for 2009; light refreshments, raffle prizes; no RSVP.

SAN JOSE
Sat., Nov. 1—San Jose JACL Recognition Dinner; 5:30 p.m. no host cocktails and silent auction, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program; Holiday Inn—San Jose, 1740 N. First St.; $75/person, $750/table of 10; honoring Warren Hayashi, Ray and Lucy Matsumoto, James Peckham Sr., James Peckham Jr. (both posthumously), Jimi and Eiko Yamaichi and Nihonmachi Outreach Committee. Info: Jeff Yoshiska, 408/563-8191 or yojosika@msu.net.

Mon., Nov. 3—A Juni Hitoe Alumit, The World is a Poem: Introduction to Poetry with Neil G. Young and Lucy Atsumoto, Jame

SOUP TO SUSHI
(a special collection of favorite recipes)
New Deluxe 3-Ring Binder Cookbook With Over 750 Recipes $25 (plus $5.50 handling)
Wesley United Methodist Women
596 N. 5th Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Free flu shots and health screenings are available at numerous health fairs across the country.

Sat., Nov. 15—Screening, "Daniel K. Inouye: An American Story"; 1-2 p.m.; Serra Mesa-Keamy Mesa Public Library, 9005 Aero Dr.; this biographical film tells the story of the senator from Hawaii who is now the 3rd most senior senator in the U.S.; presented by the San Diego JACL.

Sun., Dec. 14—Book signing and lecture, "Japanese Americans in San Diego"; 2 p.m.; downtown San Diego Public Library - Central Branch, 820 E. St.; author Susan Hasegawa will be on hand to sign copies of the book. Info or RSVP: 916/226-5890.

Nebraska
LANSING
Sat., Nov. 1—Las Vegas JACL's Hawaiian Luau; 11-4 p.m.; West Flamingo Park, 6255 W. Flamingo Rd.; live entertainment; raffle prizes; $12/Adult tickets. Info: Las Vegas JACL, 702/382-4443.

YAMATO TRAVEL BUREAU
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PROPOSED TOURS FOR 2009
Feb. 23-Mar. 5 Yama To Ten Magical Days in Egypt/Land and Cruise
Cruise sailing we have blocked throughout 2009

PACIFIC CITIZEN
14 OCT. 17-NOV. 6, 2008

PORTLAND

San Diego
This, Nov. 13—Book signing and lecture, "Japanese Americans in San Diego"; 6-8 p.m.; San Diego Historical Society, Museum of San Diego History, 1649 El Prado, Suite #3; author Susan Hasegawa will be on hand to sign copies of the book. Info or RSVP: 619/232-6203, ext. 129.


Sat., Nov. 15—Go For Broke National Education Center's 7th Annual Evening of Aloha Gala Dinner; Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S. Figueroa St.; Ret. Gen. Eric Shinseki is the keynote speaker; food prepared by Roy Yamaguchi and Chris Yeo. Info: www.goforbrokeregion.org or 310/222-5702.

YAMAITO TRAVEL BUREAU
290 East First Street, Suite 1112
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3827
(213) 680-0333 OR (800) 334-4982
Email: groups@yamatotravel.com

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Nagaoka, Former L.A. County Sheriff Chief, Dies at 62

Michael M. Nagaoka, an Army veteran and former chief of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, passed away Sept. 27. He was 62 years old.

Nagaoka served the Sheriff's Department for 34 years during his law enforcement career, he served in various assignments including Detective Bureau, Training Bureau, Trainer, Nicole Shimizu and Christopher (Sharon) Burnham; and Fred (Sachiko) Hasegawa; and sister, (Josephine) and Jon (Debbie); 8 gc.; 2 ggc.; sister, Tomoko (Mira) Quan; 4 gc.; 4 ggc.; brothers, Ron and Jack; and sister, Ruth. Takatori, Chester Takashi, 78, Parma, Idaho, Sept. 19; Korean Conflict veteran; survived by friend, Martha Buttram; sister, Kimi (Aki) Honda; brother, Frank (Iida); and sister, Yoko Takatori.

He is survived by his wife of 52 years, Taeko Joanne and their three children, Christopher (Sharon) Burnham; and Darren; and sister, Nancy Trainor, Nicole Shimizu and Jon (Debbie); 8 gc.; 2 ggc.; sister, Tomoko (Mira) Quan; 4 gc.; 4 ggc.; brothers, Ron and Jack; and sister, Ruth. Takatori, Chester Takashi, 78, Parma, Idaho, Sept. 19; Korean Conflict veteran; survived by friend, Martha Buttram; sister, Kimi (Aki) Honda; brother, Frank (Iida); and sister, Yoko Takatori.

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Manzanar Unveils a Comprehensive Curriculum, ‘Educator Resources’ Box

The Manzanar National Historic Site has released a new curriculum and an “Educator Resources” box to help educators and parents teach younger generations about Japanese American history.

The materials are designed to challenge students to explore civil liberties and civil rights as they learn about the World War II internment of JAs and other facets of Manzanar’s history.

The 235-page curriculum, which includes lessons for both primary and secondary levels, explores the concept of identity through discussions focused on perceptions, racial identity and war hysteria through the lens of JA internment.

In addition to the curriculum, the “Educator Resources” teacher box includes a variety of Manzanar historic documents, artwork and photos. Award-winning documentaries like, “Remembering Manzanar” and “Manzanar: Desert Diamonds Behind Barbed Wire,” are also included.

Other teaching materials in the box include “The Japanese American Legacy Project Civil Liberties Curriculum” CD-ROM, which features an overview of Denso’s extensive online resources. Denso is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization that is committed to digitally preserving JA WWll historic resources.

A reproduction of the May 1942 “Instructions to All Japanese” exclusion poster is also included in the box.

Two thousand copies of the “Educator Resources” teacher box were produced with nearly $32,000 in grant funding from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program.

Manzanar’s first curriculum was developed in 2002 with the support of a National Park Service “Parks As Classrooms” grant. The Manzanar National Historic Site was established in 1992 to tell the stories of the relocation of nearly 120,000 JAs during World War II. Manzanar was the first of 10 relocation centers built for JAs excluded from the West Coast.

APA Groups Receive Funding to Create Health Outreach Campaign

Asian Pacific American advocacy groups are hoping to develop a new model for improving the health of its community’s immigrants — through media.

With new funding from the New Routes to Community Health, a program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Benton Foundation, that dream is a step closer to coming true.

Two APA collaborations are receiving $225,000 over three years to create locally-focused media and outreach campaigns that speak directly to immigrants’ health concerns at the community level, according to New Routes.

The collaboration of immigrant groups, media makers and APA leaders are working together to produce original content in English as well as in immigrants’ first languages, including Chinese, Lao and Vietnamese.

Using a wide range of media such as television and radio features, first person narratives, live theater, print, the Internet and social marketing campaigns, the projects will map the difficulties of immigrant life in the U.S.

The winning projects include a DVD vignette to help elderly Southeast Asian elders. The project will encourage discussion on health disparities and communication barriers faced by immigrants in the Philadelphia area. The project partners are the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Associations Coalition, University of Pennsylvania WHYY public broadcasting, Thomas Jefferson University and Temple University.

In total, eight grants were given to collaborations in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St Paul, Oakland, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Media content created by the projects will be available at www.newroutes.org for community use.

S.F.’s Communities of Color Take to the Stage

In a multicultural collaboration, San Francisco’s Asian American Theater Company and Lorraine Hansberry Theatre are joining forces to promote the performing arts.

LHT was founded in 1981 to present high-quality plays by African American playwrights. The AATC was established in 1973 to develop and present original works of theater about Asian Pacific Americans. Under this new partnership, the AATC and LHT will assist each other in casting and co-promoting plays for both theaters’ audiences.


Also next year, the AATC will present the world premiere of Aurore Khoo’s dark comedy “Fayette-Nam” about a young African American army private who goes AWOL on the eve of being shipped to Iraq. He confronts his hopes and fears with the help of the Lee family, who own the Chinese restaurant and donut shop he has hole up in.

This is an opportunity to strengthen ties between two artistic communities, said AATC’s interim executive director Darryl Chiang. In 2006, AATC produced Jeanne Barroga’s “Walls” at the African American Art & Culture Complex.

“Waitin’ 2 End Hell” will be presented at PG&E Auditorium, at 77 Beale Street and “Fayette-Nam,” will be presented at the Thick House in Potrero Hill.

On the Web

www.hhtsf.org
www.asianamericantheater.org