TRIBUTE

Remember the Weeds ... and Ed

By BILL YOSHINO

When Ed Endow served as the JACL vice president for membership, he once wrote a letter to the lapsed members titled “Remember the Weeds.” Ed’s imagery suggested that just as a well-tended front lawn needs constant maintenance, so too must the JACL deal with the weeds of injustice, prejudice and ignorance in pursuit of a better world. And that’s what I liked about Ed — his plain-spoken, descriptive, always honest demeanor and approach.

I first came to know Ed when we ran into each other in the baggage claim area at the Philadelphia airport where we arrived to attend the 1998 JACL Convention. Ed offered me a ride to the hotel with his wife, Debbie and son, Robert. These were the pre-GPS days, when our conversation overtook my map reading causing us to miss the hotel exit resulting in a scenic tour of Philadelphia’s Society Hill area. With Ed, it was easy to get engrossed in conversation, sometimes to the exclusion of other things.

See EDWIN ENDOW/ Page 11

VETERANS DAY FEATURE

Yonsei Grandchildren of Nisei Vets Help Keep ‘Go for Broke’ Story Alive

Robyn Tofukji (left) wants to ensure that the JA veterans’ legacy continues to be passed on, including the story of her grandfather Tetsuo Asato (right), a member of the 442nd.

Whether it’s making a film or volunteering at various veterans’ events, these grandchildren hope their grandfathers’ stories of bravery continue to be told.

By CAROLINE AYAGI-STOM

Executive Editor

Like many grandchildren, 22-year-old Robyn Tofukji’s own personal hero is her grandfather Tetsuo Asato, 83. But in her case she means it both figuratively and literally.

Robyn’s grandfather Tetsuo is a World War II hero, part of the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team who along with the 100th Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service have been showered with accolades for their bravery.

And like Robyn, many of the grandchildren of these Nisei vets are realizing they are the bridge to help keep their heroic stories alive.

See ‘GO FOR BROKE’/Page 11

Portland, Maine Marks Little-known Chinese American History

A local attorney’s interest spurs efforts to place 20 historical markers at sites where the Chinese community once thrived.

By CAROLINE AYAGI-STOM

Executive Editor

The vacant lot at 615 Forest Avenue in Portland, Maine may not look like much today, but this spot has deep historical roots in the once prominent Chinese American community.

In the early 1920s, the Goons — the pioneering family of Dogan and Toy Len Goon and their eight children — embarked on a new life running a successful family laundry where the vacant lot now stands.

It’s a history that few locals in Portland, an area that has a relatively small Chinese American community today, are aware of. But now, a local attorney is spearheading a project to help mark this community’s history in the city.

“Nobody, the local Chinese or the local non-Chinese historians knew anything about the historic Chinese community when we began,” said Gary Libby, 61. “A few of the local Chinese who were descended from the pioneers knew their own family history but not much about the others.”

See HISTORICAL MARKERS/Page 10

INDEX

National ..................................3-5
Community................................6-7
Voices....................................8
Calendar................................14
Obit......................................15

Young Spielberg

Kevin Walker is making a complete documentary on the internment.

ENTERTAINMENT PAGE 9

Historic Election

As election day finally comes, APAs head to the polls in record numbers.

COMMUNITY PAGE 5

In an Economic Downturn, APA Nonprofits are Struck Hardest

With less funding coming in, the most vulnerable victims are the communities these vital organizations serve.

By LYNDA LIN

Assistant Editor

Forget the clichés about Wall Street and Main Street. What about Girard Street in Washington, D.C.?

“It’s a make or break year,” said Rick R. Chen of Asian American LEAD (AALEAD), a nonprofit organization headquartered at 1323 Girard Street where the nation’s economic downturn has struck hard.

For the past 10 years, AALEAD has helped low-income Asian Pacific American youth move out of poverty to become successful, self-sufficient adults. Currently, over 300 APA families in the D.C. and Montgomery County take advantage of AALEAD’s after school and youth development programs.

See APA NONPROFITS/ Page 12

Breaking Down the Silence Barrier

Autism doesn’t discriminate against race, gender or socioeconomic status.

By LYNDA LIN

Assistant Editor

One moment turned into days, then years of silence.

Ever since she got the news, sitting speechlessly in the doctor’s office, Sophia Shi has been a mother under siege.

“I need a second opinion,” she kept saying. All the medical tests came back normal, but the doctors said her toddler son had borderline autism. Sophia, a biochemist living in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, had never heard of autism before.

Did “borderline” mean young Kevin Shi could be pushed into normalcy? Sophia pictured her first-born son straddling a fence with his arms stretched out to his sides, eyes limpid, any mention of autism setting off a storm of emotion.

See AUTISM/Page 13

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See HISTORICAL MARKERS/Page 10

INDEX

National ..................................3-5
Community................................6-7
Voices....................................8
Calendar................................14
Obit......................................15

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See AUTISM/Page 13
By FLOYD MORI

There is a lot going on in the world these days. As preparations for the various elections, including the important Presidential election, take place, there are many problems with the economy. The JACL is not exempt from worries and concerns about the future.

The second National JACL Gala Awards Dinner in Washington, D.C., however, was a bright spot and enjoyed by those who attended. "A Salute to Champions of Redress" commemorated the 20th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, an act that provided redress and an apology to Japanese Americans who were interned in concentration camps during World War II.

The honorees were: The Hon. Norman Y. Mineta, John Tateishi, Grayce Uyehara, and Sen. Daniel Inouye was honorary chairman. Thank you to everyone who supported the Gala in any way. The sponsors were: AT&T, Eli Lilly, State Farm, Aratani Foundation, Freddie Mac, NEA, Anheuser Busch, Annie E. Casey Foundation, CBS, Patrick Atagi, Beth Fujishige, Donna Cole, John Tagami, Ray and Mary Murakami, and national JACL board members Larry Oda, Sheldon Arakaki, and David and Carol Kawamoto.

JACL districts and chapters that purchased tables, dinner tickets, and/or ads were: CCDC, EDC, MDC, PNW, Philadelphia chapter, Washington, D.C. chapter, Twin Cities JACL, Chicago chapter, Cincinnati JACL, Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL, Boise Valley chapter, New York JACL/INV Copani.

Individual support was received from: Judy Niizawa, Kaz Oye, Miyako Kadogawa, Aiko, Lou and Paul Igasaki, Norman Mineta, myself, Ross Macdonald (BB&T Bank), Kristine Minami, Michelle Yoshida, Josh Spry, Maya Yamazaki, and the national JACL board. Supporting organizations were: AJC, APAICS (Asian American Institute for Congressional Studies), APALA (Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance), JAVA (Japanese American Veterans Association), NJAMF (National Japanese American Memorial Foundation), and OCA (Organization of Chinese Americans).

Membership numbers are down within the JACL, and outside funding is not plentiful. The JACL has long been a membership driven organization. We NEED our members. Thanks to everyone who is a member of the JACL. Those who are lapsed members are not likely to hear this message from you who are their friends and family members. Please help us try to get our lapsed members to rejoin the JACL.

As we review chapter membership rosters, many chapters have almost as many listed as lapsed members as those who are current members. There are even some chapter board members and membership chairpersons on the lapsed list. This hurts the workings of the JACL.

Scholarship applicants often join the JACL simply to apply for scholarships and let their membership lapse as soon as they have received a JACL scholarship. Somehow we need to instill in them a feeling of purpose in belonging to the JACL so that they will WANT to continue as members.

It is so inexpensive for students to be members of the JACL, but it seems that most only join for the scholarships. This group should be our future leaders, but they have generally not had much of a sense of loyalty or commitment to the JACL. We hope they will feel a responsibility to give back to the community which helped to provide an education for them.

There will always be discrimination and prejudice in the world. The Topaz Museum recently received an extremely hateful letter from a group that is still espousing the idea that the internment of Japanese Americans was justified. They still call us by the hateful and hurtful N-word.

The JACL is needed to combat this type of racism and to protect civil rights. Higher membership numbers will help us in the fight for justice. If we could just get back half of our lapsed members, we could increase our numbers substantially. Some of them just need a personal contact from a chapter or family member. The JACL needs YOUR help to increase our membership.

As a closing note, we would like to say thank you to Debee Yamamoto, former director of public policy in the D.C. JACL office. Debee worked very hard on the Gala, and we appreciate her efforts. After giving birth to her daughter Emi earlier this year, Debee has decided to leave her employment at the JACL to spend time with her baby. We wish her and her family well.
Lawsuit Filed to Stop Idaho Feedlot Near Minidoka

The broad coalition, including JACL, believes the Jerome County Commissioners made a mistake in their recent decision to approve the controversial feedlot.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho—A lawsuit has been filed in an effort to prevent a massive animal feedlot from being built near the Minidoka National Historic Site in south-central Idaho where about 9,000 Japanese Americans were confined during World War II.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and JACL are part of a coalition of groups and individuals that filed suit Oct. 21 in 5th District Court, seeking to stop the planned 13,000-animal dairy.

"It doesn't make any sense," said Charlie Tebbutt, an attorney with the Western Environmental Law Center, which represents the groups. "It's a lot like putting a hazardous waste facility next to a hospital."

"The involvement of the JACL shows a continuing interest by one of the major civil rights organizations in the nation. We hope that this will lend a degree of credibility to the lawsuit and aid in the reversal of the decision," said Floyd Mori, JACL national director.

Jerome County commissioners in August approved the feedlot to be located a little more than a mile from the Minidoka Internment National Monument.

But the groups who filed the lawsuit say a state law that prevented some opponents from participating in the process is unconstitutional.

That law, enacted about 10 years ago, allows only someone living within one mile of a proposed feedlot to offer information or an opinion about it. The national monument is located 1.2 miles from the feedlot.

The groups also allege the commissioners violated their own zoning ordinances by approving the feedlot.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

SEATTLE—The Army can't retry Iraq war objector 1st Lt. Ehren Watada on several key charges because that would violate the soldier's constitutional protection against double jeopardy, a federal judge ruled late last month.

U.S. District Judge Benjamin H. Settle of Tacoma said the government could not retry Fort Lewis-based Watada of Honolulu on charges of missing his unit's deployment to Iraq in June 2006 and for denouncing President Bush and the war.

To do so would violate Watada's Fifth Amendment rights by trying him twice for the same charges, Settle held.

"He dismissed the heart of their case," Watada lawyer Jim Lobsenz said. "We're very pleased. It's taken a long time."

The judge kicked back to the military trial court for further consideration two other conduct unbecoming an officer charges against Watada, opening the door to further court proceedings. Both of those charges involve public interviews Watada gave to reporters. A conviction on the two counts could result in two years in prison.

Settle said the military court should consider whether there are "constitutional defects" to retrying Watada on those charges before a civil court does.

In a statement late last month, a Fort Lewis spokesman said the base's commanding general, Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr., had not yet had a chance to review the ruling in depth.

"Once that review is complete, he will be able to make a decision on the way forward with this case," the spokesman said.

The recent ruling leaves Watada in a perpetual state of legal limbo as he continues working at an assigned desk job at Fort Lewis.

Watada contended that the war is illegal and that he would be a party to war crimes if he served in Iraq. His first court-martial ended in a mistrial in February 2007.

Watada is the first Army officer to face a military trial to be declared last February, Settle agreed, noting that the trial judge "did not exercise sound discretion" when he failed to determine whether a mistrial was appropriate.

In an interview with the Seattle Times, Lobsenz said he hopes the Army will dismiss the two remaining charges against Watada but if that doesn't happen he will return to federal court to try to get the two charges blocked. ■
Filipino Vets May Get Another Chance at Benefits

Akaka says he'll work to pass the benefits bill in a lame-duck session.

Inouye may get a key committee position.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

There is a glimmer of hope for Filipino veterans who fought alongside American forces during World War II — they may have another chance at getting their long-fought-for benefits in the Nov. 4 elections, Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, has said he would try to negotiate a bill with opponents to give Filipino veterans their equity and recognition.

Congressional leaders are considering such a session to take up an emergency economic stimulus bill.

"The veterans waiting for passage of the equity provisions in S. 1315 are not someone else's veterans — they are our veterans," said Akaka, chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, in a statement.

There are an estimated 18,000 Filipino veterans still alive and awaiting their benefits. About 470,000 Filipinos fought for the U.S. during the War; the Senate and House Republicans have fought the idea. The sticking point is a special $300-a-month pension for thousands of Filipino veterans living in the Philippines.

Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, the top Republican on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, has said the money should be used to improve benefits for U.S. veterans.

In September, the House approved legislation to make one-time payments of $9,000 to Filipino veterans who are not U.S. citizens and $15,000 to those who have gained U.S. citizenship.

At the end of the regular Congressional session, Burr blocked an effort by Akaka to pass the Filipino veterans legislation.

Burr recently told several Filipino veterans at Davidson College in North Carolina that he would be willing to talk with Akaka about a more limited pension for the Filipino veterans in the next Congressional session, which convenes in January.

"It's my belief that Sen. Akaka, being a good friend and certainly an advocate for the payment to Filipino veterans, will bring this back up in January when we go back into the 111th Congress," said Burr in a YouTube video posted by The American Coalition for Filipino Veterans. "I will work with him as best I can to try to hit the lower number and if we can come to an agreement on that we could have an accelerated process to having a bill passed."

Akaka wrote to Burr on Oct. 20 asking for the level of pension and compensation he would support.

"If we can agree on a compromise on the benefits level, there is no need to wait until next year," Akaka said in the letter. "I am willing to negotiate the extent of those benefits with you if you are prepared to recognize them as U.S. veterans," Akaka said.

Chris Walker, spokesman for Burr, told the Honolulu Advertiser that the senator has always been willing to work with Akaka on the issue.

Filipino veterans supporters say there is a chance Congressional leaders can come to a compromise, especially amidst reports that Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, D-Hawaii, another supporter of Filipino veterans, will succeed the ailing West Virginia Sen. Robert Byrd as chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations.

If this attempt to pass the bill in a lame-duck session fails, Akaka has said he plans to introduce the provisions in the next Congress.

S.F. Japanese Tea Garden Hopes to Regain Authenticity

The souvenir shop is at the center of controversy.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Lush landscape, Zen gardens and elegant architecture make San Francisco's historic Japanese Tea Garden in Golden Gate Park one of the city’s most famous landmarks.

But some city leaders say the venue is beginning to lose its authenticity.

The gift shop offers Buddha statues, magnets and t-shirts for sale, which some say makes the garden feel more like a tourist trap than a cultural destination.

Now, the city's Recreation and Park Department has begun a search for companies interested in managing the garden's teahouse and gift shop. This time the operator will have to follow some new guidelines.

"What we're looking for is to generate revenue and to also provide a complete and authentic experience for the visitors to the Japanese Tea Garden," said Charles Pon, spokesman for the Recreation and Park Department, to KCBS San Francisco.

Two years ago, when the department went through the same process looking for a new operator, controversy erupted.

The Lo family, which has leased the concession from the city for 15 years, is Chinese American. But Japantown leaders supported a bid from a J'A cafe owner.

The department rejected both bids, leaving the Los with a month-to-month lease and the tea garden.

Now, everyone agrees that authenticity is key.

The garden was built in 1894 for the California International Exposition and draws hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. It is also one of the park's largest revenue makers.

The department is asking for ideas on what products the new managers should offer and how they plan to bring traditional activities or programs to the garden.

"We now dedicate a whole section of the gift shop to selling books about Japanese gardens and origami, even though they don't really make money," said Vincent Lo to the Chronicle.

Lo said his family will look at the new request for bids and is likely to apply to stay at the tea garden.

Applications will be due by Jan. 8, and a decision will be made by March. The five-year lease probably will begin on April 1.

National Newsbytes

By PC. Staff and Associated Press

Angel Island Immigration Station Not Threatened by Fire

SAN FRANCISCO—Angel Island has reopened on a restricted basis after a fire ravaged much of the historic state park.

The historic immigration station at China Cove did not sustain any structural damage, according to park staff.

The blaze, which ignited Oct. 12 and created a spectacle visible from all around the bay, consumed 380 acres of the 780-acre island. Investigators have determined the fire was started by human activity, but the exact cause remains under investigation.

APA Man Forced to Say 'I Love America'

BOULDER, Colo.—A claim by an Asian Pacific American man who said he was assaulted and forced at knifepoint to say "I love America" is being investigated by Boulder police as a bias-motivated crime.

The 22-year-old told police he was walking down the street on Oct. 31 with some friends when the group was confronted by another group of men. While holding a knife to the victim's throat, the suspect punched him and forced him to affirm his love for America.

Police were offering a $1,000 reward for information leading to the suspect who could face a felony menacing charge.

Court Refuses to Free Chinese Muslims

WASHINGTON—A divided federal appeals court has refused to allow the immediate release of 17 Chinese Muslims being held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In a 2 to 1 decision, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit sided with the Bush administration in halting the detainees' release while the government prepares its full appeal.

Lawyers for the detainees, a group of Muslims from China known as Uighurs (pronounced WEE'gurz), had asked that they be freed into the U.S. pending the time-consuming appeal.

The appeals court ordered both sides to submit additional briefs by Nov. 7. Judges will hear oral arguments on Nov. 24.

Hawaii Shows Low Diabetes Rate

HONOLULU—A new study from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that Hawaii has one of the lowest rates of new diabetes cases in the country.

The report says that fewer than six out of 1,000 adults were diagnosed with diabetes in Hawaii, Wyoming and Minnesota in recent years.

But experts say Native Hawaiians, Filipinos and Japanese populations are diagnosed with diabetes at higher rates.

Police Insurance Fraud Ring Targeting Asians

NEW YORK—Police officials have broken up a large insurance fraud ring that targeted APA drivers in Queens.

The 19-month sting, dubbed "Operation Direct Hit," charged 61 people with orches­tering car crashes in Flushing to defraud insurance companies of more than $1.6 million dollars since 2005.

Scammers targeted APA drivers because they thought they were "bad drivers [who] would be blamed for the accidents," officials said. The Queens District Attorney Richard Brown charged at least one defendant with a hate crime.

Hate Crimes Committed Against 2 NJ Sikhs

WAYNE, N.J.—An Oct. 27 attack on a 67-year-old man is believed to have been committed by the same suspect who also attacked a 10-year-old boy just weeks earlier. Authorities believe the motive behind both attacks was hate.

Ajit Singh Chima said he was doing his morning exercise routine on Carteret Street when a man in his 20s attacked him.

Weeks earlier, Gagandeep Singh was walking home from school when he was attacked. Because both victims are Sikhs, police believe the motive is hatred, based on the victims' religious beliefs.
San Jose JACL Recognizes Community Leaders

At its Nov. 1 recognition dinner, the San Jose JACL gave out five awards to deserving leaders and organizations for their commitment to the community.

The honorees were: Warren Hayashi, president of the Fuji Tower board of directors and long time chair of the Nikkei Matsuri Committee; Ray and Lucy Matsumoto, San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin Advisory Board member; James B. Peckham, Sr. and James B. Peckham, Jr., community leaders who opposed Alien Land Laws and helped save San Jose's Japantown during WWII; Jim C. and Eiko Yamachich, former JACL president and chair of the Japanese American Museum of San Jose; and Nihonmachi Outreach Committee, an organization dedicated to educating the public about the WWII JA internment.

Post Office Named for Mui

Former San Gabriel Mayor Chi Mui has become the first Chinese American in California to have a federal post office named after him.

Hundreds of people turned out at the Oct. 25 dedication ceremony, including Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Pasadena, who authored the bill authorizing the San Gabriel Post Office, located at 120 S. Del Mar Avenue, to be renamed in honor of Mui.

Mui died of cancer in 2006 at age 53.

PSW JACL Announces New Mike Honda Fellow

Tracy Huang, a recent graduate from National Taiwan University with a degree in Foreign Languages and Literature, is the PSW District's new Mike Honda Fellow.

During her 10-month fellowship at the PSW office in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, Huang will focus on civil rights advocacy and develop new ways to educate the community about issues that are important to JACL and the APA community.

Dela Cruz-Viesca is Appointed to L.A.'s Human Relations Commission

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has appointed Melany Dela Cruz-Viesca, the assistant director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center, to the city's Human Relations Commission.

Dela Cruz-Viesca also serves as the managing editor of AAPI Nexus, a nationwide journal published by the Jini and Eiko Yamachich Center focusing on APA community issues. She is also a member of the U.S. Census Bureau, National Census Information Center Program Steering Committee.

SELANOCO Awards First Hiromi Ueha Scholarship

The SELANOCO JACL recently awarded its first ever Hiromi Ueha Scholarship to Natalia Maki Yamashiro.

The $1,000 scholarship was presented to Yamashiro, a graduate student at UCLA, by board members and the Ueha family.

Hiromi, who passed away in 2006 at the age of 33, served as the chapter president, PSW governor and national youth chair.

Kimura to be Honored in Concert

The Anti-Defamation League will honor Lillian Kimura at its Nov. 17 “ADL In Concert Against Hate,” an event that honors heroes in the fight against intolerance, extremism and terrorism.

Kimura, a former Manzanar internee, served as the JACL's first female national JACL president.

The concert tells the stories of ordinary people who performed acts of courage and compassion when confronted by hatred and bigotry.

Growing APA Vote Sheds Passive Past

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

LORTON, Va.—For a long time, says Loc Pfeiffer, his fellow Asian Americans were passive participants in American politics. But things are changing.

“ Asians don’t like confrontation or being adversarial, but that’s politics,” says Pfeiffer, a 41-year-old lawyer who was six when his parents brought him to America.

“The more we’re raised and bred here, the less likely we are to be passive. So much of our culture, it’s a very, very obedient culture. You don’t argue with the government. You don’t argue with Big Brother. There’s the assumption that you give up all your individual rights for the whole. Which is astounding to me, because I’m American now.”

As an assertive Asian American matter, especially in place like Virginia and Nevada, swing states where Asians have been growing in numbers and influence.

With a booming population of highly educated, increasingly Americanized voters, this former “silent minority” is entering the most engaged and visible era of its political history.

The number of Asians in the United States has grown 25 percent in the last seven years, to 15 million, said Jane Junn, an associate professor of political science at Rutgers University.

Educated people are more likely to vote, and 50 percent of the Asian population has a college degree, compared with 25 percent of the U.S. population, Junn said.

“There comes a point where there’s a critical mass,” said Junn, whose parents were born in Korea.

When you’re only one person out of 100, you’re very self-conscious about (becoming politically active). But there is power in numbers.”

Some say Barack Obama’s rise from humble origins resonates with many Asians who value education and hard work as the keys to success and have been forced to fit their heritage into an American framework.

“So much of what we deal with is the notion of being outsiders, foreigners, of being outside the social dialogue of the United States,” said writer Jeff Yang. “You look at Obama and those are some of the same aspirations and slanders being cast at him. He’s kind of the closest thing we can have legally to an immigrant in the White House. He’s somebody who understands this journey that Asian Americans and other immigrants have made.”

In the past, Asians were largely overlooked during past presidential campaigns because of their widely varied nationalities and concentration in the reliably Democratic states of California and New York.

But both campaigns had national Asian outreach efforts this time around. In Virginia, Obama’s campaign focused on sending language-specific volunteers to register voters from particular countries. The McCain campaign’s priority was securing the support of community leaders from the Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Indian and Filipino communities.

In the state of Virginia the Asian population has grown from 3.7 percent in 2000 to 4.8 percent in 2006, above the national average of 4.4 percent. Virginia’s Asians are concentrated in the D.C. suburbs, where the Asian population reaches as high as 16 percent in Fairfax County, as well as the Norfolk area, where the naval operations have attracted Filipinos.

In 2006, after incumbent Republican Sen. George Allen was caught on tape using the slur “macaca” to describe an Indian from the opposing campaign, he lost to Democrat Jim Webb by 7,231 votes out of 2.37 million ballots cast. Seventy-six percent of the Asian vote went against Allen.

In the past, many Asians nationally have feared Republican because of the party’s record of fighting Communism, support for small business owners, and emphasis on personal responsibility and family values.

Two-thirds of U.S. Asians are foreign-born. Their American-born children are now thriving, many in professions like medicine, law and high-tech industries. English is the first language of this second generation. And they landed squarely in the Obama sweet spot of young and educated supporters.

“I’m proud of my heritage,” said Michael Chang, 34, “but I think of myself as American.”

S.F. Chinatown to Get New College Campus

By Pacific Citizen Staff

A decade after the project was proposed, San Francisco's Chinatown will finally be getting a new city college building. In a decision that may have ended the protracted legal battle, a Superior Court judge has refused to block the construction of a high-rise campus in Chinatown for City College of San Francisco. 

On Oct. 17, Judge Paul Alvarado denied an injunction sought by local business owner Montgomery Washington, who has argued that the City College project would detract from some of the city's historic buildings.

The company will have another chance to block construction when its lawsuit against City College goes to trial in April. A separate lawsuit by a group called Neighbors for Preservation, Land Use and Community Education, challenging the college's environmental review of the project, is scheduled for a hearing in December.

But city college officials, who told the Pacific Citizen that they were "receptive" over the court victory, hosted a Nov. 1 groundbreaking ceremony at the site of their new Chinatown/North Beach Campus on the northeast corner of Kearny and Washington streets.

Construction is slated to begin next summer, with a tentative completion date in early 2011.

The campus will consist of a 4-story, 215-foot tower and a four-story building at Washington and Columbus Avenues. It will house 42 classrooms and laboratories, administrative offices and a community auditorium to serve 6,500 students.

City College students now take classes at about a dozen sites scattered around Chinatown.

"Now the college can move forward in hopes of getting these students into a genuine campus and genuine college community and not just be spread out in these old buildings," Alan Sparer, the college's lawyer, told the San Francisco Chronicle.
The funds for Proposal from the U.S. Army to Education Center has won a Request histories of Nisei Occupied Japan.

American veterans of the Hawaii, and the National Japanese Iraq this Japan Occupation Study to inter­U.S. Army Center of Military Intelligence Service During World War II” by Dr. James McNaughton.

“It is important that we study the Military History especially mean­
ingful,” said Christine Sato­Yamazaki, president and chief execu­tive officer of the National Education Center.

The funding period for the Japan Occupation Study began on Sept. 1, 2008, and continues through Aug. 31, 2011, followed by two 12-month continuation options through Aug. 31, 2011. The budget is $150,000 each year.

The National Education Center is hiring a historical analyst to work exclusively on the program. In addition to background research within its own database, the organization is reviewing records and materials related to Nisei linguists in the Occupation of Japan held by the National Archives, the Smithsonian Institute and other repositories.

Using its research as a base, the National Education Center is con­ducting and recording oral history interviews and also transcribing and editing them.

The National Education Center had already interviewed several Nisei linguists who served in the U.S. MIS during WWII and then stationed in Occupied Japan. An estimated 3,000 Nisei MIS members served in Japan from 1945–1952 during the U.S. Military’s post­WWII occupation. For more information: www.goforbroke.org

Youth, Leadership are the Focus of PSW’s ’09 Programs

In an effort to promote youth, community leadership and advoca­cy, the JACL Pacific Southwest District has developed a slate of youth leadership programs that will be unveiled in 2009.

“By creating these programs JACL PSW hopes to show youth and the community the necessity of investing and developing youth into responsible, active and thoughtful community advocates,” said Craig Ishii, PSW regional director.

The slate of programs for 2009 include:

• “Bridging Communities Program” (co-sponsored with Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress) will connect high school youth in the Japanese American community with the Muslim community. The program will gather 40 youth for a pro­gram designed to create an under­standing of different cultures, reli­gions, and traditions. In addition to workshops, the participants will take part in the Day of Remembrance program as well as the Manzanar Pilgrimage.

• “Mobilize for Policy 2009” will educate and train 15-20 collegiate youth to effect change in policy affecting the Asian Pacific Islander community. Throughout a series of workshops from late January to April participants will gain a better understanding of the issues facing the Asian and Pacific Islander com­munity as well as potential ways for them to effect change.

• “LT and Me Survey Project” is a youth survey to ascertain needs and wants in the Little Tokyo Community. Understanding that youth are the future of the communi­ty, this survey will help to incorpo­rate the youth’s voice in a changing Little Tokyo.

• “Project Community 2009” will create high school community advo­cates to be active in the Little Tokyo community. Through a series of interactive sessions, participants gain an understanding of identity as well as the importance of preserva­tion of the JA community. The pro­gram will gather 15-30 high school students for an eight-week program starting in late June to mid August on Tuesday evenings in Little Tokyo.

Each program is designed to not just train leadership but to create young community advocates in the community, civil rights and policy arenas. These programs will cumula­tively train over 100 youth on advo­cacy issues in the community. The 2009 PSW Programming Slate is part of a larger effort by the JACL to move in a direction of leader­ship development while still stay­ing true to its basic mission of pro­moting civil rights for our communi­ty and all others victimized by preju­dice and discrimination. Developing community leaders is JACL’s proac­tive approach to civil rights advoca­cy.

The JACL PSW District program­ming is made possible with the sup­port of various organizations and funders including: Southern California Edison, Union Bank of California, AT&T, the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLEP), the JACL Legacy Grant Program and Japanese American Community Services. For more information, contact JACL PSW Program Coordinator Ken Kubo at programs@jacpsw.org or 213-626-4471.
I Felt Truly a Part of the JACL Family

By MEILEE WONG

As my term as the first Norman Mineta fellow comes to a close, it’s hard to believe that it’s been almost a year since I came to Washington, fresh out of college. I had the great pleasure and privilege of learning from Floyd Mori, JACL national director and Debee Yamamoto, former policy director. By imparting their wisdom from their extensive D.C. and life experience, as well as incredible kindness, I felt truly a part of the JACL family.

One thing I learned from my experiences as a fellow is that advocacy is done in a multitude of ways. I had the opportunity to participate in what might be considered traditional Washingtonian activities, such as meeting with members of Congress and their staff, attending committee hearings, helping with briefings and meeting with many other nonprofits based here in D.C. I had the opportunity to serve as staff for the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, which is a coalition of many national APA advocacy organizations. My tasks as staff were challenging, such as helping coordinate press conferences across the country, and managing publication of the NCAPA platform, a collection of APA policy priorities for the coming presidential administration regarding healthcare, education, immigration and housing, among others.

I learned an incredible amount about the wide array of issues our community faces, as well as the diversity within our community itself.

My fellowship took me on travels all over the country, to help advocate for the many different facets of the APA experience. I went to Kansas City to work on a committee that helped reduce minority undercut in the agricultural census. I went to Cornell University in upstate New York to present workshops on legislative issues and leadership for young APAs. I was even able to return home to northern California to observe and participate in JACL board meetings.

JACL is an incredible organization with many levels and ways for anyone to get involved. From the local chapter level to the regional level to the national level, JACL truly offers something for any interest, any time commitment.

I have learned an incredible amount over the course of my fellowship, and I would like to thank all of the staff, board members and other volunteers who have contributed to my experience. I wish Elaine Low, former Ford Fund Fellow in Chicago, and Naomi Lim, former Daniel Inouye Fellow in Washington, D.C., the best of luck in their future endeavors.

From playing taiko at the Sacramento chapter picnics growing up, to working in the D.C. office, I hope to remain involved with JACL for many years to come.

Meilee Wong recently completed the Norman Mineta fellowship in Washington, D.C.

Jerry Enomoto Looks Back at LEC and Redress

By KATHY AOKI
Special to the Pacific Citizen

“Many people thought Redress was a great idea but were doubtful this would ever happen,” said Jerry Enomoto. “I give Edison Uno much credit because he had a vision and was instrumental in pursuing Redress.”

Enomoto, a Nisei, grew up in San Francisco and attended Lowell College Preparatory High School when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. His family was interned in Tule Lake. Enomoto received his master’s degree in social work from UC Berkeley.

A member of JACL since the 1950s, Enomoto served as a president of the San Francisco JACL chapter, a district council chair and JACL national president from 1966 to 1970.

“One of the keys in attaining Redress was the wartime achievement of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team,” said Enomoto.

“Key players were Senator Daniel Inouye, Senator Spark Matsunaga, Congressmen Robert Matsui and Congressman Norman Mineta.”

Enomoto was the chair of the Legislative Education Committee (LEC) in 1986 after the passing of Minoru Yasui. The LEC served as the lobbying arm for JACL and raised $700,000 to support a Redress bill that would eventually pass through Congress and be signed by President Ronald Reagan.

“JACLers gave what they could to support Redress.” — Jerry Enomoto, former LEC chair

One thing I learned from my experiences is that advocacy is done in a multitude of ways. I had the opportunity to serve as staff for the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, which is a coalition of many national APA advocacy organizations. My tasks as staff were challenging, such as helping coordinate press conferences across the country, and managing publication of the NCAPA platform, a collection of APA policy priorities for the coming presidential administration regarding healthcare, education, immigration and housing, among others.

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Meilee Wong recently completed the Norman Mineta fellowship in Washington, D.C.
Election Season in Japan

As I write this, it is the eve of Election Day. "Not that I am old enough to say this," I said to my boyfriend, "but isn't this one of the wackiest election seasons in recent history?"

My boyfriend replied that while this may be true, he also read somewhere that people tended to look back on the election that they voted for in their 20s as the most memorable.

True, I am 23 and this was only my second time participating as a voting citizen in the presidential race. And yet — along with the very historical significances of this particular race that by now we are all familiar with — I had another personal reason for why I should remember the 2008 election season so vividly. Much of my memories of this election were spent abroad in Japan.

Though I lived with my relatives in a rural part of town where the pregnancy of a neighborhood cat was newsworthy for kitchen table gossip, our house was at least connected to the Internet. This meant that before I headed off to work in the early afternoon, many of the morning hours were spent holed up in my little room behind the family kitchen scouring online newspapers and political blogs for the latest information.

Looking back on it now, living on a rice farm in a remote corner of Japan when one of the most dramatic events of American history was unfolding back home felt lonely at times. While impassioned citizens were canvassing for voters or crying tears of patriotic joy at rallies, I was stuck on the other side of the world in the peace and quiet of rice fields and old Japanese people.

I imagine this is how foreigners must feel in another country when their home country is playing in the World Cup and there is no one else within immediate vicinity to share the excitement with.

Indeed, I had other American friends living in Japan, but as they all lived at least an hour away from me, my meetings with them were few and far between. These American friends were just like me — English teachers stranded in an obscure city of Japan, or Japanese Americans pursuing their dream to live and work in the motherland.

Though I was here in Japan reconnecting with my Japanese roots and learning how to become more Japanese, it was in no way mutually exclusive with my very American excitement and anxiety over the outcome of the presidential race. However superificial my political discourses were with these friends, they reminded me that I was a part of a bigger movement back home.

They were little things: like the ecstatic text I received from my friend and fellow teacher on my cell phone, claiming that he cried when he watched Hillary’s speech at the Democratic convention on his laptop. Or how sitting on the second-floor of a restaurant that overlooked Tokyo’s Imperial Palace, my JA friend and I worried out loud about the state of our economy, our crumbling health care system and the direction of our country.

No, I wasn’t organizing voter registration rallies, or holding signs in the street or knocking door-to-door in swing states to persuade undecided voters. I was in Japan and watching all of these things happen from another country. Sometimes it takes being abroad to realize the things that you take for granted back home.

This happened to me when I spent the night at my Japanese friend’s house. That following morning, I woke up earlier than my friend and like clockwork, already had a laptop open to scroll through the latest news and political updates. The biggest news that day was that Tina Fey finally took the hint and dressed up for the first time as Sarah Palin on “Saturday Night Live.”

I’m sure my Japanese friend didn’t know who Tina Fey was, or how this was a momentous event in the American pop culture landscape that would be ironically referenced to in many years to come, and there was no way that I was going to miss this. She did know that whatever was happening on the laptop, I was very interested and it all had something to do with the presidential race back home.

"You’re so lucky," she told me. "Most young Japanese people couldn’t care less about politics."
Finding a Part in Internment History

An aspiring Yonsei filmmaker is road tripping across America to film a documentary on the lingering effects of living behind barbed wire.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

In the ruins of old internment camps, Kevin Walker sees stories that need to be resurrected.

“It still defines who we are today,” said the 22-year-old aspiring filmmaker about the World War II internment of Japanese Americans. “To examine everything happening in our world right now, we must take a step back and reflect on how we arrived at this point.”

Over 60 years after the last JA family was released from their barbed wire home, the experience continues to touch some of the most unlikely community members. Kevin, a Yonsei who is also of English and German descent, had not come into existence yet when his grandparents were taken to Tule Lake. In fact, his mother hadn’t even been born. And growing up in Vancouver, Wash., the internment was hardly a popular topic of conversation. His grandparents Shigeno and Toshio Ichikawa rarely talked about their years spent in the desert, and most didn’t push them to open up.

Now Kevin wants to chronicle other internment stories in a feature-length documentary he is currently shooting while road tripping across the country. With a cinematographer by his side, he is filming at the 10 main campsites and 17 assembly centers.

“It’s been crazy 14- to 16-hour workdays,” said the recent Emerson College graduate to the Pacific Citizen. On this particular day, Kevin is heading to Topaz in Delta, Utah with Wyoming’s Heart Mountain in his rearview mirror.

The film project, which is being financed by his parents, has a budget that is yet to be determined. They film by day and stay in small town motels by night. It’s all very Jack Kerouac, except with the expressed purpose of documenting history.

“It just started out as a family project and grew,” said Kevin.

His documentary also has taken him to Tule Lake, where his grandparents met and married. On their wedding day, the newlyweds climbed and slid down Castle Rock on a toboggan. So over 60 years later, Kevin climbed Castle Rock too. He didn’t slide down though.

“A few people have contacted him defending their WWII beliefs. Many had family members who died in battle at the hands of the Japanese. "They categorize one minority as a whole," said Kevin. "Bitterness and hate can cloud anyone’s judgment." He’s hoping to finish the documentary in early 2009.

“Kevin had a wonderful relationship with his grandmother,” said his mother Bobbi Walker, a former internee. "I felt a connection when I went on those pilgrimages," he said. "Physically there isn’t that much there, but the personal stories from these former camp survivors bring the places to life." Some of the stories continue to haunt him. He interviewed one former Minidoka intern who broke down in tears when she described seeing acres of barren desert wasteland. "It’s hard. I’m an emotional person," said Kevin. "Sometimes you just want to lie down on the floor, curl into a ball and think about what you’ve just heard."
Chinese community generally."

Libby, with the help of the Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine, has located several Chinese sites where they plan to place markers explaining each location’s story. In all he hopes to mark 20 historic sites that includes laundries, grocery stores, restaurants and a gambling den.

One of the historic sites, an idea modeled after the Portland Freedom Trail that honors the pioneering local African American community, will be the former Goon Family Laundry.

"I would be so proud, as I’m sure my other family members would be,” said Constance Psaros of Boston, a granddaughter of Dogan and Toy Len. "We are a quiet bunch and have achieved our own successes without fanfare or boasting, but something like this would be a wonderful and meaningful tribute to our family."

An American Dream

Doris Wong, the seventh child of Dogan and Toy Len, runs her own court reporting firm in Boston. She attributes her success to the early values her parents instilled in her and her siblings.

“We all had ‘jobs’ in the laundry suited to our age and abilities,” said the 75-year-old who now runs her business with the help of two nieces including Psaros. “I remember turning out the pockets of shirts and slacks before they were washed. I did the dishes. My siblings ironed clothes, waited on customers. We just all worked together doing what had to be done for the business.”

Today, all eight Goon family children can boast successful careers. Amongst them are doctors, engineers and an attorney. Because the word “goon” has some negative connotations, some of the kids eventually changed the spelling of their name to Guen or took on their mother’s maiden name Len.

But all are proud of the Goon family legacy in Portland. My mother was a wonderful woman,” said Libby Wong, Toy Len’s granddaughter. "She passed away in 1993 but I was so proud of her. She was named Mother of the Year in 1952 and American Mother of the Year."

"I always marveled at how my grandmother managed the business while raising a large family mostly on her own without most of the modern conveniences we have now,” said PSaros, 54, the eldest daughter of Josephine Moy (formerly Josephine Goon). Wong noted that her mother did not read or write in Chinese or English since girls in China were not educated and she too was busy running the family business. Still, “she imparted to us the values that ensured our success as individuals.”

“It was a pretty big deal at the time,” said Libby of Toy Len’s Mother of the Year status. “She was quite the celebrity at the time. That family really exemplifies the American dream.

In addition to parades in the New York City, Boston and Philadelphia Chinatowns in her honor, Toy Len was also invited to a reception hosted by First Lady Bess Truman at the White House.

Toy Len passed away in 1993 at the age of 101.

A Local History Discovered

Libby’s interested in digging into the local Chinese American history was spurred by a 2001 article in the local paper titled “Are There Any Chinese in Maine?”

It was written by a local professor and Gary soon struck up a friendship. They started digging and soon the two discovered that there was quite a rich local Chinese American history. Even after the professor moved out of state for a new job, Libby continued the project.

“By then, I was hooked and kept going,” he said.

The Chinese have been in the city of Portland since the 1850s. One of the earliest Chinese immigrants was Ar Tee Lam who arrived in the city in 1855 and ran a Chinese restaurant. The first known hand laundry business was established in 1877 by an enterprising 14-year-old named Sam * Lee. In 1920 the Chinese population of Portland was roughly 70 residents.

In 2000 there were a little over 2,000 Chinese Americans in the state of Maine according to the U.S. Census. About 200 live in the city of Portland.

A few years ago, Libby had a chance to meet some of the Goon family descendants after they contacted him during a family reunion in Portland. He took some of the relatives on a tour of the area their family once thrived.

It was fantastic as it gave the grandchildren a chance to see where we grew up,” said Wong.

Recently Libby held the first Chinese historic marker ceremony at 573 Congress Street, the former location of the Empire Restaurant which existed from 1916 to 1953. Locals gathered to mark the community’s history with a lion dance and traditional drum performance.

Although they have commitments from about half of the businesses, others are concerned that marking their businesses with a historical marker may pose problems if they want to make any future changes to the property.

“We have about 20 sites where we want to place historical markers, not 20 places where the owner has agreed to let us do that,” said Libby.

Eventually he hopes to copy the project in the cities of Augusta, Bangor, Lewiston and Biddeford.

Wong and her family later moved to Lynn, Massachusetts in 1952 but she has only positive memories of Portland.

“My fondest memory is the privilege of truly living in a melting pot scenario where the neighbors and schools accepted our entire family and were helpful and friendly,” she said, “because they saw us working together and were wonderful students, one and all.”

She’s grateful that her family’s history in the area will be remembered.

“I applaud Gary’s efforts in documenting the history of the Chinese community in Portland,” said Wong. “We are all grateful and pleased for Gary’s interest in preserving this part of Portland’s history and including mother’s accomplishments as part of that history.”


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**Markers (above) will commemorate Portland’s Chinese American history like this English class (left).**
"GO FOR BROKE"  
(Continued from page 1)

"It is crucial that the Nisei story lives on, and many veterans have not yet shared their stories," said the Yonsei from her home in Torrance, Calif. "It is important for us, as the younger generation, to carry on the stories and legacy of 'Go For Broke.'"

Robyn recently recorded her grandfather's story on film. "My Grandfather, My Hero: An American Story," was her senior thesis as a film major at Occidental College. She hopes to eventually film the on the festival circuit. "She got things out of me that no one else could," said Tetsuo who lives on, and many veterans have not otherwise told their story.

"This Veterans Day he plans to honor the Nisei veterans at a special ceremony at the USS Missouri. I wish I had learned more from them," said Neil. "It was only after volunteering as a docent at the Go For Broke Monument in Little Tokyo that he began to feel more comfortable sharing his story. He believes it's important that the descendants of the Japanese American WWII veterans help pass on their legacy.

NISEI LEGACY: World War II veterans (H) George Fujimori, Ken Akune, and Tetsuo Asato volunteer as docents at the Go For Broke monument in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

"There are not many of us left now," he said. "What we did, what happened to us, despite all that we went to war. It's our American story ... and we are passing it on."

Talking Story and Reunions

Mika Ito, 25, recently went to her first Nisei veterans reunion in Las Vegas. It was the first time she saw her grandfather Lawson Sakai, 85, amongst a roomful of his fellow 442d Veterans.

"The bond that many of the vets have with each other is something that can't compare to any other relationship," said the Yonsei from La Crescenta, Calif. "Having been through the War with each other has brought them to feel like family. The event felt almost like a large family reunion.

She ended up learning more about the other Nisei vets than her own grandfather who still says very little about his combat experience. But the reunion was the impetus she needed to enlist her family members in helping to document her grandfather's story.

"There is an urgency to learn as much as we can before it's too late," said Mika. "This is a major learning process for me, but I'm doing my best to do as much as possible as soon as possible before it's too late." Lawson knows his granddaughter wants him to start writing down his history. He just hasn't gotten around to it.

Still, he realizes the importance of telling the story of how a group of young JA men fought with honor even while their own families were confined behind barbed wire. "Most grandchildren do not know their grandfather served in WWII," he said. "It is very important that we tell the story to the future generations as the WWII Nisei will soon be gone."

For many of these grandchildren, curiosity about their grandfather's war experiences had the same origins: a high school or college assignment.

Erie Tanaka, 25, a second lieutenant in the Air Force who is currently doing her medical residency in New York, remembers sitting down with her grandfather Earl Tanaka's fellow 42nd soldiers for a middle school project.

"No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't get them to talk about their war buddies and what they accomplished as a group. Like the other grandchildren, she feels an obligation to pass on to her grandmother's legacy but she also wants to build on what they accomplished.

"For me personally, the Nisei legacy is more than heroism on the battlefield ... I also think about the sense of volunteered sacrifice associated with their generation," she said.

"My generation should appreciate the hard work and sacrifice that raised Japanese Americans to positions of leadership in government, education, law, medicine — opportunities that were not available before the War."

Time is Running Out

When Neil Yamamoto, 26, of Hawaii wanted to learn more about the Nisei veterans legacy, the opportunity to ask his grandparents first-hand had sadly passed. Harumi Yamamoto and Harry Hiramoto — Harumi of the 442nd and Harry who served as a technical sergeant in Washington during WWII — had passed away in 1996 and 1995, respectively.

"I wish I had more time with them and I wish I had learned more from them," said Neil. "It was only after they died that I began to understand the legacy of the Japanese American veterans, and my interest has since blossomed into somewhat of a career."

Today, Neil works as an education department assistant at the USS Missouri Memorial Association of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where he helps tell the story of the USS Missouri to the younger generations. This Veterans Day he plans to honor the Nisei veterans at a special sunset ceremony at the USS Missouri.

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programs, said Chen, their manager of development and communications.

Like many others, Chen has been following the news about the global credit crunch, rising unemployment and the implosion of some of the nation’s leading financial institutions. One headline hit close to home for AALEAD.

“Freddie Mac was a dedicated funder of our Family Strengthening program,” said Chen, adding that the troubled mortgage behemoth recently changed their funding priorities and phased out youth programs. In September, Freddie Mac was taken over by the federal government as it faced growing losses.

“We’re really scrambling here,” said Chen.

Since the economic downturn, AALEAD has seen a decrease in grants, so they’ve had to cut activities like field trips and workshops with hired trainers and speakers. For now, they’re fortunate enough to keep from cutting existing programs by using money in their reserves to cover shortfalls, said Chen. But this is the last year they will be able to do that.

There are more than 900,000 public charities in the United States. And given the current economy, many nonprofits — which rely on the generosity of individual contributors, foundations and corporations — have been left reeling.

But at risk in the fallout of the financial crisis are not just the APA nonprofits, but also the vulnerable APA communities they serve.

A Critical Need
In an election year, where America’s socioeconomic map only includes Wall Street and Main Street — where political leaders tout the rights of “Joe the Plumber” — APAs want to know where they stand. Paul the Landscaper says his business is diversified enough to be recession-proof so far. However, he has lost some business from developers who have foreclosed on their properties.

“I think this is a temporary lull,” said Paul Saito, the owner of Saito Associates, a landscape architecture and urban planning company in Fresno, Calif.

It’s a prediction APA nonprofits can only hope for.

“The actual impact of the crisis remains to be seen, but the potential impact is devastating,” said Diane Narasaki, executive director of the Seattle-based Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS).

Many APA families can’t turn to mainstream services because of language and cultural barriers. At its main office at 3639 Martin Luther King Jr. Way and its Bellevue office, ACRS serves 23,000 clients in 30 languages with an annual budget of about $11 million.

They’ve already felt the impact of the economic downturn, said Narasaki. Their nutrition program, which includes a community food bank, is the third most used food bank in Washington’s King County — where APAs make up over 13 percent of the county’s population.

Unlike other food banks, ACRS stocks rice and produce familiar to the APA palate. But in one year, the cost of rice has more than doubled while ACRS has seen an influx of new clients who are suffering from the bad economy.

“People come from far and wide,” said Narasaki. Most are elderly people or fixed incomes trying to make ends meet, but lately she has seen more younger people and families with children who rely on ACRS as their main food source.

In recent days, people have lined up outside the food bank at 5 a.m. to wait until ACRS opens at 11 a.m., said Narasaki.

In the current food crisis, ACRS only has the money to feed their clients for eight months. They’ve had to reduce their rice distribution by half.

“It hurts the staff and the volunteers in the food banks,” said Narasaki about giving smaller amounts of rice. “It’s really painful to see the great need not being met.”

The organization’s financial crunch is at the center of what seems to be a perfect storm.

Most of ACRS’ funding comes from government sources at the federal, state, county and city levels. But Washington is projecting a deficit of $3.2 billion. King County is anticipating a $93 million deficit. To make matters worse, ACRS had previously received annual grants from Washington Mutual, the savings and loan giant, to support their vocational services program. On Sept. 25, in the largest bank failure in American history, federal regulators seized the troubled WaMu and reached a deal to sell most of the operations to JP Morgan Chase. Narasaki does not know if their grant will be renewed.

In 2007, banks were the second-largest corporate givers to the U.S. nonprofits. The crisis in the financial sector adds more hardship to a year in which experts say corporate giving already has been down.

“It’s difficult. I don’t know how ACRS will be,” she said. ACRS’ last fundraiser generated less revenue than in the previous year. It’s been consistent with most nonprofits — regular funders just don’t have the financial means to give anymore, said Narasaki.

A Balancing Act
For the next fiscal year, the JACL is projecting a deficit if the budget is not adjusted, said Larry Oda, national JACL president. “Our revenues, including investment income and membership revenue, are at risk.”

The 79-year-old nonprofit — which champions civil rights, promotes educational values and preserves the heritage and legacy of the Japanese American community — has also been affected by the economic downturn.

The JACL relies on membership revenue as well as individual and corporate gifts to its chapters and national office. The non-profit is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who work with the full-time staff of two.

“The JACL has to balance the need to continue our important work with the need to be mindful of our financial responsibilities,” Oda said.

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A Dream Village
People say it takes a village to raise a child, so Anna and a few other like-minded APA parents decided to build one.
What began in 1996 as a support group has grown into a viable non-profit organization — the Friends of Children with Special Needs (FCSN) — complete with its own 6,000-square-foot Fremont headquarters and apartment complexes for families with children who are enrolled in their over 30 programs.

On certain days at the Dream Center, Master Ricky leads ShaoLin kung fu classes for adults and school-age children with special needs. "He's cute," said Sophia, 41. "I denied everything and didn't trust anyone."

Until recently, Sophia kept Kevin's autism a secret — even from his grandmother. Instead she focused on learning more about the condition and privately working with her son on his social skills. She never brought Kevin to parties or showed him off to her co-workers. "I was afraid to talk," said Sophia. And after so many years of silence, she has found her voice. Now, she can't stop gushing about Kevin, 9. He's a loving brother and a thoughtful helper around the house.

AIDS
(Continued from page 1)
shut and walking towards an unknown future.
That was almost seven years ago when Sophia heard exactly why Kevin was not developing speech skills. Autism is a range of disorders that hinders the ability to communicate and interact. Most doctors believe there is no cure.

At one and a half, other children his age were talking up a storm while Kevin remained silent. He didn't play with other children. At 17 months, he finally took his first steps — on tiptoe. Yet Sophia, who is first generation Vietnamese American, found it hard to believe her hands

She never met anyone in special

denied everything and didn't trust

"It's part of the center's holistic and
cultural approach to treating autism."

In May, FCSN began leasing a 2,000-square-foot facility in a San Jose, Calif., strip mall for expanded programs.

Over the years, Anna has seen FCSN's membership grow from double digits to 600. The community has come a long way since FCSN's inception, she said. When Lawrence was diagnosed with autism, Anna and her physician husband Albert Wang, fell into many cultural trappings.

When Anna expressed concern about young Lawrence's poor language skills, community members reassured her that boys tend to begin speaking later than girls.

"People said, 'Wow, your kid doesn't even make noise. You can take him to a restaurant!'"

Many children with autism develop normally through their first year. In their second year, definite signs of developmental disorders will manifest including poor social skills, poor eye contact and the tendency to avoid crowds. An estimated one in 150 American children is diagnosed with autism. It transcends all race, sex and socioeconomic borders.

"People need to pay attention to these warning signs especially in the Asian community," said Anna.

"It was very difficult for them to admit that Charlie had a problem."

Before her life was touched with the disorder, Kristina knew nothing about autism or children with special needs. Like every other member of her family, she excelled in school. She never met anyone in special education, so she had to come to terms with the idea that things may be different for Charlie.

"It was unfathomable at first," said Kristina, who now blogs about autism. "He's not going to college? He's not going to play the violin?"

Cultural Barriers
Getting her second generation Chinese American parents to understand their grandson's autism diagnosis was "the most painful thing in the world," said Kristina Chew, 39.

Kristina's first and only child, Kristina was a docile baby, so they thought Charlie was the same.

"It was very difficult for them to admit that Charlie had a problem."

Before her life was touched with the disorder, Kristina knew nothing about autism or children with special needs. Like every other member of her family, she excelled in school. She never met anyone in special education, so she had to come to terms with the idea that things may be different for Charlie.

"It was unfathomable at first," said Kristina, who now blogs about autism. "He's not going to college? He's not going to play the violin?"

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
East

BOSTON
Sat., Nov. 15—Paul Niwa, My Life as an Alien: Tales of an Asian American Expatiate in Asia; 4:30-6 p.m.; Emerson College Walker Building, Room W223, 120 Boylston St.; Niwa is a journalism professor at Emerson College; presented by New England JACL. Info: yamamoto@nejacl.org or 781/259-9444.

Fri., Dec. 5—Annual Harry Dow Dinner; 6:30-9:30 p.m.; China Pearl Restaurant, 9 Tyler St., Tina Matsuoka is the keynote speaker; $125/person. Info: Zenobia Lai, 857/919-0565 or zeno_lai@yahoo.com.

NEW YORK
Sat., Nov. 15—Screening, "The Footprints of Japanese-American Soldiers"; 1-5 p.m.; Japanese American Association of New York, 15 W. 44th St., 11th Floor; personal accounts by Nisei soldiers will follow the screening; free; hosted by New York JACL. Info: Aileen Yamaguchi, 212/873-4170, aleen-y@att.com or Lillian Kimura, 973/690-1441, lckimura@att.net.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Tue., Nov. 18—Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership's 19th Annual Benefit Gala; 6-9 p.m.; Four Seasons Hotel, 2800 Pennsylvania Ave.; keynote speakers include Norm Mineta, the Honorable James Ho and Congressman Mike Honda (invited); Info and tickets: www.capul.org.

Midwest

CLEVELAND
Sat., Nov. 8—39th Annual American Holiday Fair; 1-5 p.m.; St. Ignatius High School, 1911 West 30th St.; free; food, craft and produce booths plus entertainment, door prizes and more; sponsored by Cleveland JACL. Info: 216/921-2976 or 440/268-9674.

DAYTON
Sun., Dec. 14—IACL Holiday Party; 2-6 p.m.; Wright State University; potluck.

MEDITENCE LAKE, Minn.
Sat., Nov. 15—Twin Cities JACL's 62nd Annual Charities 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.

Pacific Northwest

PORTLAND
Sun., 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.jpagardencan.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.oronikkei.org.

INTERMOUNTAIN

DENVER
Sat.-Sun., Nov. 15-16—Exhibit, Reflections on the JA Experience in Colorado; 11-2 p.m.; Japanese American Resource Center of Colorado; exhibit on the history of Sakura Square and surrounding communities in Colorado.

Northern California

SACRAMENTO
Sat., Jan. 31, 2009—Florin JACL Officer Installation and Fundraiser Reception, "Strength Through Unity"; 2-4 p.m.; Sacramento State Library Art Gallery, 6000 J St.; special awards to Amos and Mary Freeman and Georgette Imura; keynote speakers. Info: 916/525-0716 or assistant@shimodalaw.com.

SAN FRANCISCO
Sat., Nov. 22—Play reading and book signing; 2 p.m.; NAHA, 1684 Post St.; play reading from Hiroshi Kashiwagi's "The Betrayed"; Kashiwagi will be signing his book Shoe Box Plays following the play reading.

Central California

CLOVIS
Feb. 14-16—CC-NCWNP-PSW JACL Tri-District Conference; events include: golf tournament, local tours, Saturday mixer, youth dance, plenary sessions and dedication of the Pinadel Memorial.

Southern California

LOS ANGELES
Sat., Nov. 8—On Ensemble '08: YOBU; 8 p.m.; Aratani/Japan America Theatre, 244 S. San Pedro St.; a musical odyssey of undulating rhythm and groove; $31/balcony, $28/JACCC members and seniors; tickets: 213/680-3700. Info: www.jacc.org.

Sat., Dec. 6—Spirit of the Season 7 by Hiroshima; 7:30 p.m.; Aratani/Japan America Theatre; special holiday concert by Hiroshima featuring Julie Su and Dean Avi Soifer; Info or RSVP: 619/232-6203, ext. 129.

Sat., Nov. 15—Screening, "Daniel K. Inouye: Hero of the Brave"; 7:30 p.m.; U.C. Riverside, University Lecture Hall 1000, 900 University Ave.; free. Info: 951/203-9146 or nichibei-su@att.net.

SAN DIEGO
Thu., Nov. 13—Book signing and lecture, "Japanese Americans in San Diego"; 2-5 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: 619/236-5800.

Hawaii

HONOLULU
Wed., Nov. 12—William S. Richardson School of Law recognizes Professor Eric Yamamoto; 5:30 p.m.; Oahu Country Club; featuring Julia Su and Dean Avi Soifer; RSVP by Nov. 5 to law-event@hawaii.edu or 808/956-8478.

AND NOW I ALSO SEE WHAT PART OF ME IS CHINESE. IT IS SO OBVIOUS. IT IS MY FAMILY. IT IS IN OUR BLOOD.
—THE JOY LUCK CLUB

BEYOND PRESENCE: HER STORIES OUR STORIES
A series of Saturday forums discussing Asian American women
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David Henry Hwang Theater at the Union Center for the Arts
120 Judge John Aiso Street in the Little Tokyo district, downtown L.A.

Calendbr
DEATH NOTICE

ELEANORE KAZUKO NAKASHIMA TOI

Eleanore Kazuko Nakashima Toi was born in Fresno to Hiteyo and Hiroshi Nakashima on Dec. 27, 1926 and suddenly passed away at her home in Fremont on Oct. 10, 2008. She is survived by her son, Dr. Randall H. Toi of Alamo; two loving granddaughters, Erin Hisey Toi and Blair Misao Toi; her sister, Betty Jane Oki of Reddeley; brother, Stephen Nakashima of San Jose; and faithful dog, Doxie. She was predeceased by her loving husband of 42 years, Joseph H. Toi, who was taken from her in 1990; older sister, Bernice; and younger brother, Yukio. Eleanore was an avid bridge player, belonging to the Fremont Senior Center Bridge Group and several local groups for many years. She also loved spending many hours working in her immaculate garden at her Fremont home for over 37 years. She was a faithful 4'ger fan, an ardent Cal Bears, Oakland A's and Giants fan and a devout Steve Young admirer who rarely missed a 4'ger's home game over the past 25 years! Her effervescent personality and joyous laugh will truly be missed but she will finally be reunited with her one and only true love, Joseph.

Private services were held at Alta Mesa Memorial Park Cemetery, 695 Araratadero Rd., Palo Alto, on Oct. 17, 2008. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Aldersgate United Methodist Church, 4243 Manuela Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94306.

DEATH NOTICE

MINORU ENDO

Minoru Endo passed away peacefully on October 27, 2008, at the age of 91. His wife of 64 years, Aya, passed away previously on August 31, 2006. He leaves his sons, Keith and Larry; his daughters-in-law, Debbie and Caron; Keith and Debbie's children, Sarah, Corey, and Seth; and Larry and Caron's children, Sasha and Josh. In addition, he leaves his great-grandchildren, Anna, Naomi, and Sophie.

Minoru Endo was born in 1917 to Shinsho Endo and Tei Kassyaho Endo in San Francisco, Calif. His pre-war years were spent in California. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley. Like other West Coast Nikkei, he was interned in the interior during WWII, in his case at the Topaz, Utah relocation camp. He married Aya Mineta of San Jose, California, just after the war's beginning so as to remain with her during the war. He joined the U.S. Army in 1942 as part of the Military Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota, and later at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. He was part of the U.S. Military Intelligence in post-war occupied Japan until 1949. After his war service, Min moved to New York and joined American Commercial, Inc. and Mikasa, becoming vice president during his long career there.

Throughout his long life, Min served his community, particularly the churches to which he belonged, the Japanese American Citizen's League, the Keykoso Experimental Education Project, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the company for which he worked for 40 years, and most of all, his family.

For those who wish, in lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Japanese American United Church, 255 7th Avenue, New York, NY 10001, or Christ United Presbyterian Church, 1700 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115.
‘GO FOR BROKE’
(Continued from page 11)

To honor the Nisei veterans, I will make an offering at the family altar and will remember their sacrifices.

Although some descendants of the Nisei veterans were lucky enough to have welcomed their war heroes home, others were not. Matt Stevenson’s great uncle Kenkichi, a second lieutenant of the 100th, was killed June 5, 1944, near Lanuvio just before the liberation of Rome.

It was when he was about 11 years old that Matt first heard about his great-uncle’s wartime service. He asked if he fought for the Japanese or for the American side.

“I have never met anyone that was in the 100th/442nd ... I would love to talk story with the 100th/442nd veterans, especially those of course who were in my uncle’s company,” he said.

“I feel an immense amount of responsibility to pass on their story since my uncle never married and had no children.”

Walking In Their Footsteps
A few years back, Robyn had a chance to visit Italy with her grandfather and fellow members of the 442nd. In addition to hearing the heartfelt stories of comrades in arms, she walked along the very same paths as the JA soldiers.

“Actually hearing their stories, seeing what they experienced ... it truly opened my eyes,” she said. In her free time, Robyn tries to dedicate as much time to the Go For Broke Educational Center, a nonprofit whose mission is to tell the Nisei veterans story.

Sometimes she heads to the Go For Broke Monument in Little Tokyo where the “three amigos” — her grandfather and his two best friends Ken Akune and George Fujirnori — greet passerbys as docents and share their wartime stories.

“My grandfather has told me that, although he has shared his story numerous times, it never gets easier,” she said. “It warms my heart when I see them together at the monument and all the volunteers and wives at the center. There is such a strong sense of camaraderie, hard work, and purpose.”

As a Yonsei, wish to follow their example.

APA NONPROFITS
(Continued from page 12)
corporate donations to fund its programs. Because of the downturn, the Legacy Fund is below the threshold for distribution, said Oda.

“We based our next budget on an increase in membership, but our history has shown a steady decline. Our budget is also dependent on investment income, which currently does not appear to be an option,” he said.

Hard economic times may make membership dues unaffordable and additional contributions elusive. The key to weathering the financial storm is a balancing act.

The Finance Committee will meet to review the current program commitments as a prelude to revising the 2009-10 budgets, said Oda. “I expect that there very well may be a scaling back of program expenditures, but I am committed to maintain staff levels.”

The JACL has weathered financial challenges before and the “staff is experienced in accomplishing program goals with changing resource pools,” added Oda. “This experience will be valuable in the coming downturn.”

Nationally other nonprofits have been responding to the challenge by launching fundraising appeals earlier.

Many nonprofits depend on year-end donations. AALEAD has shifted its focus to fundraising. Board members have been given lists of the D.C. area’s top businesses to solicit. The families they serve deserve a fighting chance, said Chen.

If services from APA nonprofits are threatened, it’s difficult for the individuals they serve to turn somewhere else.

“The problem is the stereotype of the model minority,” said Narasaki. “Many think APAs don’t need help. ‘The need exists.’

On the Web
www.jacl.org
www.aacs.org
www.aalead.org

AUTISM
(Continued from page 13)

In the APA community, autism is sometimes synonomous with mental retardation, she added. The stigma drives some parents to hide the condition rather than ask for help.

“If once a month I receive a call from a parent who is home schooling [their special needs child],” said Anna.

Once, the father of an APA family who refused FCSN support killed his own son and committed suicide.

“It’s so heartbreaking,” said Anna. “Kids and families suffer if they don’t ask for help.”

Still, the community’s perception of autism and other developmental disorders is much better now. Every year, FCSN and their students march in the local Chinese New Year parade. “We show the Chinese community we are out there.”

Many APA parents with special needs children like Sophia have received the message.

“Once, the father of an APA family who refused FCSN support killed his own son and committed suicide.

Anna.

On the Web
www.fcsn1996.org
www.autismvox.com

ANNE NAMBA DESIGNS

Hawaii designer, Anne Namba, will present trunk shows of her 2008 FALL / HOLIDAY collection in San Francisco and San Jose, available to view and purchase.

Also, selected items from her Annual Sale will be included for the first time.

Friday, November 21–Sunday, November 23

SAN FRANCISCO
Hotel Drisco
2901 Pacific Ave.
(corner of Pacific & Broderick Ave.)
Friday, November 21, 9am–7pm
Saturday, November 22, 9am–6pm
(415) 346-2880 / (800) 634-7277
www.jdhotels.com/drisco

SAN JOSE
Benefiting the San Jose JACL*
The Issel Memorial Building
565 North 5th St.
Sunday, November 23, 11am–5pm
(408) 295-1250
info@sanjoselajcl.org

On the Web
www.anennamba.com
www.annenamba.com

* A portion of Sunday’s sale will be donated to the JACL.

For more information, contact:
Anne Namba Designs • 324 Kamani Street, Honolulu, Hi 96813 • (808) 589-1135
anne@annenamba.com or www.annenamba.com