The ruins of a World War II Japanese American Assembly Center will take its rightful place in history at the JACL Tri-District Conference.

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Former Nat'l JACL President

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HARRY K. HONDA
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Re: Prop. 8
Same-sex marriage is not a civil rights issue. It is more of a moral issue.
Since the beginning of time, be it plant, animal or human being, the strong concepts of the preservation of their individual species has been eminent.
For the satisfaction of law and order, man and woman have long declared their togetherness by a ceremony at a church of their choice or at a court-of-law.

HARRY NAKATA
Kingston, Calif.

Thank You, JACL
Like many Americans, I’m familiar with the internment of the Japanese Americans during the 1940s. And I will admit that the U.S. government was wrong for doing it. It breaks my heart every time I think of it. The late President Gerald Ford called it the greatest civil rights tragedy of the 20th century. I agree with him wholeheartedly. I can certainly sympathize with the Japanese Americans. You see, even though I’m Caucasian (Irish/English), I’m also part Native American (Cherokee/Peoria), So I know a few things about people being mistreated racially by another group.
But since I’m also part Caucasian, I do feel the need to say this, too. I’m really very sorry for the internment that the Japanese Americans went through during the 1940s. It still breaks my heart whenever I think about it. Our government rushed to judgment and made a terrible mistake in doing what they did. It should never happen to the Japanese Americans again.
Thanks for all of the work that you and the rest of your staff do at your office of the Japanese American Citizens League.

PASTOR ROGER L. ROBINSON
Chicago, Ill.

Commentary
Witnessing History in the Making
For the inauguration, the best place to be was the National Japanese American Memorial.

By BRANDON MITA
Two years ago, I was frantically awaiting the fate of my future. LSAT test — check. Resumes — check. Personal statements — check. Law school application — check. I had applied to over 15 schools, but in reality, I knew that I was destined to attend only one. When I got my acceptance letter to the Howard University School of Law, it was an easy decision for me.
Now, a year and a half after my decision to be in our nation’s capital for law school, I see that my decision has been rewarded in another way — being able to witness history in the making.
On election night this past November, the entire law school packed itself into the President’s Bar in D.C.’s Chinatown to watch, then Senator Barack Obama, become the first person of color to be elected as the president of the United States. In addition to the rigor of obtaining a law school education, many of the students worked tirelessly in Ohio, Arizona and Virginia for Obama’s campaign.
After his victory speech, many of us marched from the Bar into the President’s Bar in D.C.’s Chinatown to watch, then Senator Barack Obama, become the first person of color to be elected as the president of the United States. In addition to the rigor of obtaining a law school education, many of the students worked tirelessly in Ohio, Arizona and Virginia for Obama’s campaign.

By FLOYD MORI
My first inclination was to leave town during the Inaugural week because we knew that D.C. would be a virtual gridlock with people and events throughout the city. But when we got invitations to attend the various events, my wife and I decided that we wanted to participate in this historic series of events. So we stayed and exhausted ourselves going to as many events as we could.
While the events were exciting and memorable to witness, the genuine spirit of togetherness and enthusiasm were the highlights of the week for me. People came from all over the nation just to be here. Most had no fancy invitations nor did they even expect to get into any of the events of celebration. They just wanted to be here at a historic time. They roamed the streets, rode the METRO, and hung out at the bars and restaurants.
A contractor from Detroit was on the METRO, and we struck up a conversation around the issue of the change to inclusion rather than exclusion. There was this young Republican couple from New York who became impressed with Obama’s ability to inspire to better things. The sports news writer from Alabama told me that she dropped everything just to spend a few days here hoping to get a glimpse of the President and his wife. She was rewarded with a front row view of the President dancing with his wife, Michelle and of course, standing next to me.
The New York City fireman, who was disabled and in braces, still bravely the crowds to get his seat at the swearing-in ceremony. A couple from San Antonio, Republican African Americans with the wife seven months pregnant with twins, dropped everything just for the opportunity to watch the Inaugural parade. I met so many happy people.
We are concerned about whether the spirit and attitude of change for

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A Permanent Legacy at Pinedale

A Remembrance Plaza at the former WWII assembly center will be dedicated during the JACL Tri-District Conference in Fresno, Calif. Feb. 14-16. A Day of Remembrance will also take place.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

A nondescript industrial area is all that remains today of what was once the Pinedale Assembly Center, but Kiyo Sato, 85, can still describe its World War II facade in surprising detail, erasing the 67 years that have since passed.

Like a black and white dusty film, Kiyo remembers the large compound surrounded by guard towers that comes into view upon her first drive to the Center in 1942. Passing through the main gate, black tar-papered barracks greet her family, one of which would be their home for the next three months.

“That’s all there was, just the cots and the one light bulb,” recalls Kiyo upon entering her family’s barracks.

But there were not enough cots for her seven siblings and parents. Luckily, one “young fellow” rounded up a couple of extra cots to squeeze into the tiny barrack.

It was this generosity from her fellow Nisei that still stands out for her during this difficult time in Japanese American history.

“What was so impressive to me was the young Nisei were so helpful. We were supportive of each other,” said Kiyo.

Kiyo’s story and the story of her fellow Pinedale Assembly Center internees will soon be memorialized with a permanent monument.

On Feb. 16 the Pinedale Memorial will be unveiled in Fresno, Calif. as part of the CCDC/PSWDC/NCWNPDC JACL Tri-District Conference. “Interment and Redress Remembered.” The event will also include a Day of Remembrance on Feb. 15.

“I was pleasantly surprised when I heard that little place was going to be memorialized,” said Kiyo, from her home in Sacramento. “I feel we need to do these things to remember history, to not pull this thing again.”

A Pinedale Legacy

The Pinedale Memorial, located on a site that already has state historical landmark status, is currently being built at 625 W. Alluvial Ave. in the northwest side of Fresno. The Remembrance Plaza will showcase cherry blossom trees surrounding a square fountain and 12 storyboard panels will detail the history of the JAs who were once confined in this area.

Jim Hirabayashi, 82, was one of the 4,823 Pinedale Assembly Center internees who were rounded up and sent here from May 7 to July 23, 1942. He was just a 15-year-old living in a rural area between Seattle and Tacoma when he and his family were forced to take the train ride to Central California.

“When I was in Pinedale we were confined in barb wire fence so I didn’t get much of a chance to see around there, just what I could see through barb wire. We hope our reception will be better this time than last time,” joked Jim, who plans to attend the memorial dedication.

Jim connects the Pinedale Memorial to the historic Civil Rights Movement, a topic he knows well. “This may be history to us but this is the future,” said Dale Ikeda, chair of the Pinedale Memorial Committee.

“Looking back at this history, where certain civil rights were taken away, this is very appropriate right now because sort of the same things are happening to Arab Americans rights now,” he said. “This may be history to us but this is not over.”

Lane Hibschburi plans to be by his father Jim’s side during the upcoming dedication. As a member of the Hibschburi family — which includes his famous uncle Gordon who dared to defy executive order 9066 during WWII — he grew up hearing his family’s internment stories.

As a descendant of a Pinedale internee, he feels an obligation to preserve the site’s history.

“The Issei went through some terrible times and handled things so well. They practiced non violence and they protected the children, that was their main goal — kodomo no tame ni,” said Kiyo.

Even when we got to camp they kept doing things to keep the children happy. The children who came out of camp, they went straight out to their schooling. They didn’t lose a step. They did pretty well,” said Marielle Tsukamoto, 71, who was just a five-year-old girl when she and her parents were taken to the nearby Fresno Assembly Center during WWII.

“Many misunderstood the internment experience. Mary passed away in 1998 but Marielle is doing her best to continue her mother’s legacy. That’s why she feels the Pinedale Memorial is so important.”

“This is another step in ensuring that the story of the internment and the heroic efforts of the 442nd, 100th, and MIS will not be lost in history,” said Marielle. “I know my parents and so many others would be so relieved that the country has taken this direction.”

“Remembrance Plaza will be a place to reflect on the past, assess the present and look to a better future,” said Dale Ikeda, chair of the Pinedale Memorial Committee.

“The former internees can take pride that their sacrifices, perseverance and patriotism paved the way for a better life for their families and future generations.”

“The Issei did all they could to shield their Nisei children so they could go on to prosper as Americans.”

From that moment on, Mary dedicated her life to teaching the lessons learned from the internment experience. Mary passed away in 1998 but Marielle is doing her best to continue her mother’s legacy.

That’s why she feels the Pinedale Memorial is so important.

“All that remains of the former Pinedale Assembly Center is a dilapidated warehouse (above). But now thanks to the efforts of the local JA community, a memorial will be unveiled in Fresno Feb. 16. Pinedale Memorial Committee Chair Dale Ikeda (left) believes the memorial represents the courage of the Issei and Nisei.”
Still No Regrets Says JA Lieutenant for Filing Successful Discrimination Lawsuit

Over 10 years ago Lt. Brian Moriguchi fought discrimination within the L.A. Sheriff's Dept. Retaliation is still an issue but his experience spurred his dedication to civil rights.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

It's been 10 years since Lieutenant Brian Moriguchi, 44, won his landmark discrimination lawsuit against the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and although he sees some of the negative fallout continuing today, the experience was nothing less than life changing for the Yorosei.

Today, Brian has dedicated not only his job but his personal time to fighting hate crimes and discrimination much like the kind he suffered as a sergeant willing to raise his voice against the LASD.

"I'm glad I filed the lawsuit. It was the right thing to do and I wouldn't change what I have done," he said in an exclusive interview with the Pacific Citizen. "It was an eye opener to me, the importance of civil rights."

Brian easily admits that before his troubles began at LASD, the issue of civil rights was not high on his list of priorities. But the grey areas that once existed became a lot clearer once he started to fight for his own rights.

"I was able to define my own ethics and integrity," he said.

It was also his lawsuit that brought him to JACL. He credits the Pacific Southwest District with helping him gain a voice in his fight against the discrimination being aimed at him. He joined the organization soon after and on Jan. 25 he was sworn in as the San Fernando Valley chapter's newly installed president.

"I guess it was time to step up and be more involved."

A Landmark Lawsuit

Second Chances at Life

The APA community is in the dark when it comes to organ and tissue donation, but the need continues to grow.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

The scar running down Todd Sato's chest is a badge of honor. "It's a reminder of what happened."

Over 10 years ago, Sato, 28, underwent a life-saving procedure: his failing heart was replaced with a healthy one. Since then, the Los Angeles, Calif. native has spent each day enjoying life's simple things like playing more than just one game of basketball without becoming exhausted.

"I'm very grateful," said Sato, a Yorosei.

He was born with "Blue Baby Syndrome," a cardiac or pulmonary defect that causes inadequate oxygenation of the blood. At eight months old, he underwent an experimental operation that seemed to correct the condition. But three weeks after his high school graduation in 1998, Sato relapsed and went into the hospital in need of a miracle.

Help came from a stranger. Early one morning a nurse woke him up and said they had found him a heart.

Sato's new heart has given him the opportunity to go to college and serve on the JACL national board, but to date he still does not know who to thank for the gift. In organ donation procedures like his, it's typical for both parties to remain anonymous. All he knows is that his donor was a 19-year-old male who lived nearby. But the gesture isn't lost on Sato.

"Someone gave me the gift of life."

He received something that can't be plucked off a department store shelf or ordered online. Its availability is the result of unspeakable sadness met with overwhelming relief.

"It's the greatest gift," said Sabrina Ho, Asian community development coordinator for OneLegacy, a nonprofit transplant donor network. Its beauty is its egalitarian nature — organ and tissue donation does not discriminate against race, gender or income. And it's in demand in the Asian Pacific American community where cultural beliefs and misconceptions often get exacerbated by popular culture.

At press time, there are 100,575 people waiting for organ transplants, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing. About 17 people die each day waiting for transplants, and because new names are added to the national waiting list faster than the number of organs available for transplants, the gift of life is needed now more than ever.

"Just think of the people you could save," said Sato, who just found out from his doctors that he needs a second heart transplant.

Twin Miracles

The 2002 Hong Kong film "The Eye" — which Hollywood remade last year — took advantage of the cultural fear of "haunted" body parts. The horror flick is about a woman's ability to see ghosts after undergoing a sight restoring cornea tissue transplant procedure. The fallacies even find their way onto television shows. In a recent plotline of the popular ABC medical drama "Grey's Anatomy," a heart transplant recipient haunts his fiancée.

There's no truth there, said Ho. In her line of work, she has found that knowing the truth about the procedures usually douses the odds of families granting permission for organ and tissue donation.

"Make an informed decision. Don't make a decision based on Hollywood." The truth about organ and tissue donation lies in the people it touches and the inexcusable bonds it creates between donor and recipient.

Growing up, Anabel and Isabel Stenzel struggled with the simple act of breathing. The 38-year-old identical twins, who are of Japanese and German descent, were born with cystic fibrosis (CF), a defective gene and its protein product that causes the body to produce thick and sticky mucus that clogs the lungs.

"I told the doctor, 'I don't know what [CF] is. Please write it down for me,'" said the twins’ mother Hatsuko Stenzel, a Shin Issei.

"The doctor refused and said it's bad," said Hatsuiko, 68.

If they were lucky the doctors said the twins would survive
By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Celebrating the Pacific Citizen's 80-year Legacy

Through wars, Redress and revolutions, the Pacific Citizen was there. When events shook the community, the black and white newspaper published by the Japanese American Citizens League steadily reported the news.
The paper — simply called the P.C. by its readers — relied on the power of words to inform, advocate and serve as a beacon of hope during the Japanese American community’s darkest hour.
The P.C. was the only national JA newspaper during World War II, said Ben S. Kuroki, 91, the famed Distinguished Service Medal for his service during WWII.

Japan’s Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor not only propelled the U.S. into war, it unleashed a national epidemic of racism against a community of innocent citizens. JAs were rounded-up for incarceration in barbed wire internment camps, their businesses were closed and their newspapers were forced to shut down — all except the P.C., which along with the JACL, moved operations to Salt Lake City and continued publishing.

Through its pages, the paper became a trusted news source informing its readers about news on the community and the nation.

"The P.C. gave the JACL a viewpoint," said Kuroki.

This year, the P.C. turns 80. It’s been 80 years of unprecedented national news coverage, enterprising stories and in-depth features. So in its anniversary year, the newspaper that for so long reported on the stories important to the community is turning the mirror on itself and allowing community leaders of past, present and future to reflect on its legacy.

No doubt there is a lot of history to cover.

"I congratulate the Pacific Citizen as it marks 80 years of informing and serving the Asian Pacific American community," said Sen. Daniel K. Inouye in a statement. "I commend them for their celebrated history, and wish them many more years of success."

Pulitzer Prize Nominated WWII Coverage

What started out as a bulletin for JACL members evolved into a reputable news source under the editorship of Larry Tajiri. When the JACL was established in 1929, the P.C. — then called the Nikkei Shimin or Japanese American Citizen — was adopted as the official national publication of the newly formed civil rights organization. By 1931, the publication’s name was officially changed to the Pacific Citizen — a name that was chosen in a national contest.

In an October 1948 issue of the JACL Reporter, IH. Gordon described Larry as “myopic, rotund and amiable editor.”

Before Tajiri, the P.C. had been printed “on one sheet, not taken very seriously, even by the JACL members,” said Greg Robinson, an associate professor of history at the Université du Québec A Montréal and author of “By Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans.”

“Larry turned it into an outstanding newspaper,” said Yoshiko Tajiri, Larry’s younger sister who worked in the P.C.’s circulation department during the war.

With Larry and his wife Marion on staff in Salt Lake City, the P.C. became a weekly. It was put together on the fourth floor of the Beacon Building on 25 East Second South Street. The P.C. occupied one room of the JACL suite and Larry’s desk was always piled high with copies of newspapers from all over the U.S., said Yoshiko.

Larry’s column, “Nisei USA,” was a regular feature and Marion also wrote a regular column under the pen name Ann Nisei. The P.C. covered every stage of the evacuation — in which JACL took the stance of cooperating with U.S. authorities in the evacuation — including news about Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu and Minoru Yasui, the brave men who protested their WWII internment.

It covered every development of camp life and the extraordinary heroics of JA soldiers. Although the P.C. was known for its support of the Nisei WWII veterans, articles did appear on those who protested service in the U.S. military, the “No-No Boys” and the “Rescued.”

By the early 1950s the JACL decided that the P.C. needed to return to the West Coast to Los Angeles. But for the first time in over a decade the paper would be without Larry and Marion. In the Sept. 27, 1952 issue — Larry’s last as editor — he said the P.C.’s objective was to tell the Nisei story.

"The P.C. published the story but the Nisei have written it," he wrote in his “Nisei USA” column.

Redress and the Aftermath

With the P.C. in Los Angeles, the paper came under the editorship of former Shun Nichibeir staffers Harry K. Honda. His first issue of the P.C. was published Oct. 4, 1952. Honda would continue his work with the P.C. in many different leadership roles until his retirement in 2002.

By 1952, the JACL Reporter was discontinued and Honda led the P.C.’s new editorial voice.

"How do we balance the editorial spread? More JACL chapter news? More Nisei community news? More news of national impact affecting the Japanese American in particular?" said Honda about the coverage. "The overriding goal, of course, was to make the press deadline."

Since the war, the P.C. had been the stomping ground for many well-known journalists and community leaders including Hosokawa, Togo Tanada, Saburo Kido, Mie Matsaoka and Bill Manatani.

"But unique were the ‘Minority Report’ columns by Edison Uno in the 1970s demanding reparations/Redress because of the WWII evacuation and the camps," said Honda. "Several complained in the P.C., that they were against Redress. There was no price to denial and loss of civil rights by the U.S. government."

The P.C. was there every step of the way during the Redress Movement to record the community’s triumph of getting an official apology and monetary compensation for WWII internees.

“We had to reach every member of the organization to help with the grassroots lobbying, and the P.C. was the most effective vehicle for doing so,” said John Tateishi, JACL’s Redress director and former national director.

But in its attempt to get different voices heard, the P.C. itself became the center of controversy when some JACLers objected to coverage of other community groups including the Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress, said George Johnston, a P.C. staffer from 1987-90.

"But while (fellow assistant editor) Laurie Mochidome and I were on the editorial staff, we thought it best to publish news and opinion that we felt was of consequence to the JACL membership, the thinking being that it was better for the membership to be informed rather than not," he said.

In 1988 when President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Civil Liberties Act, Honda attended the event on behalf of the P.C. The image of Reagan with former U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, Sens. Sparky Matsunaga and Daniel Inouye, and Rep. Robert Matsui is an iconic image that illustrates the magnitude of this accomplishment.

Post Redress, the P.C. continued to be a conduit for information and a forum for debate over issues of same-sex marriage and the National Japanese American Memorial.

"My belief is that a newspaper should make readers think and provide a forum where different voices could be heard," said Martha Nakagawa, the P.C.’s assistant editor from 1998 to 2003.

Online Revolution

As the community has continued to evolve, so has the JACL and the P.C. Today, the P.C. has become truly a national Asian Pacific American news publication providing award-winning coverage on immigration reform, same-sex marriage and 1st Lt. Ehren Watada.

The P.C. is also reaching younger generations in the new digital age.

With the addition of its popular Web site in late 2005, the reach of the P.C. is now truly worldwide. With the click of a mouse, readers who may have not heard of the JACL or the P.C., get instant access to the articles, videos and information that can still connect communities.

"I think the awareness that I get from reading the P.C. about hate crimes/incidents towards Asian Americans makes me want to get involved and challenge stereotypical and ignorant views and actions," said Paul Fisk, 27, a graduate student at the University of Utah.

But many of the JACL’s leaders and readers are not yet ready to part with the P.C. in print.

"I’m a kind of person who likes the written word," said Lillian Kimura, who was elected the JACL’s first female national president in 1992. "I really do want the print edition."

"The P.C. brings current national Asian American issues to my doorstep. I enjoy reading it because it’s a very unique paper that focuses on civil rights issues that happen around the nation," said Mike Mikawa, 22, a student at the University of California, Berkeley who also reads the P.C. in print.

With 80 years behind it, the P.C.’s legacy is still being written.

"We’ve inherited an important legacy but our work continues," said Caroline Aoyagi-Storn, P.C. executive editor. "As we continue to expand our national APA coverage, our increased online presence will be vital."

"I think it’s important to have a record of any organization and the P.C. is a great vehicle. In the next few years, I see it as being both online and in print," said Lori Matsukawa, Seattle’s KING TV anchor. "The P.C. should reflect the important work JACL is doing as a watchdog of civil liberties."

Check out P.C.’s new Web site: www.pacificcitizen.org
Asian American Political Profile Rising in U.S.

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO—When three newly elected Chinese American city supervisors climbed on stage in Chinatown, flanked by dragon dancers and lit up by camera flashes, they were hailed for making history in a city their forebears have shaped since the Gold Rush Days.

Now their November sweep has been topped with the election of one of them, David Chiu, as president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors — the second most powerful position in local government.

It is fitting that San Francisco, which is 34 percent Asian and home of the nation's oldest Chinatown, is leading the way on Asian American political representation. But the country's fastest growing minority group also is reaching new heights on the state and national stage.

Experts say their newfound clout is not due to numbers alone.

The political engagement of AAS is growing. Many immigrants are earning citizenship. Community organizations are mounting voter registration drives. Ethnic media are increasingly endorsing candidates and covering political campaigns. And politicians are scoring victories, even in areas without a strong Asian electorate.

Countrywide, there are more than 2,000 Asian and Pacific Islander elected and appointed representatives, according to UCLA's Asian American Studies Center. In California, AAs hold two seats in the state Senate, 10 in the Assembly, plus the posts of state controller and chief of the Board of Equalization. A decade ago, there was only one high-ranking AA official, the state treasurer.

"We're finally gaining full admission to the club," said David Lee, who teaches political science at San Francisco State University.

The AA population has expanded from 0.5 percent in 1960 — prior to repeal of restrictive immigration laws — to 5 percent now. The U.S. Census projects they will grow to 8 percent by 2050.

Many people of Asian descent have stepped beyond their national identities to develop a pan-Asian perspective, giving both money and votes to AA candidates who might not share their national origin, according to Don Nakanishi, director of the AA Asian American Studies Center.

That has translated into victories at the local level, where AA politicians are poised for higher office. "People are moving up — it's happening very quickly," said C.C. Yim, a businessman who helped found the Asian Pacific Islander American Political Association, which nurtures future leaders.

Chinese-language newspapers are increasingly reporting on political campaigns, encouraging readers to vote, and endorsing candidates, said Tim Lau, editor in chief of the West Coast Sing Tao Daily, the largest of the San Francisco Bay Area's five Chinese-language dailies.

"We realized we had a responsibility to our readers," Lau said.

In addition, states with legislative term limits, such as California, have seen opportunities open up for minorities who might have had a tougher time fighting entrenched incumbents.

"Having the field cleared and giving everyone a clean slate has been particularly helpful to Chinese Americans," said state Sen. Leland Yee, who rose from positions on San Francisco's school board and board of supervisors to become the first Chinese American elected to the state Senate. "What you're seeing is a changing of the guard."

Meanwhile, the American-educated children of earlier generations of immigrants are entering politics.

"We represent a new demographic," said Chiu, the new board president, saying he could not have become a supervisor without the support of interest groups outside Chinatown. "We have our feet in both our ethnic communities and the broader mainstream community. And that's essential — to win, we had to build multiracial coalitions."

That need also was apparent in Louisiana where voters elected Republican U.S. Rep. Anh "Joseph" Cao last year, making him the first Vietnamese American in Congress. His victory followed the election of Bobby Jindal, a son of Punjabi immigrants, to Congress and then to the governorship in 2007.

The election of Barack Obama and his consideration of several AAs for high-profile positions also served as incentives for AAs to jump into politics, said Nakanishi.

"After Obama, it's not unthinkable that a guy like Jindal could become president some day," he said. "There is still a lot pioneering going on, but Asian Americans are really becoming an even more viable and visible actor in American politics."

"American Asians mirror the statewide patterns that have emerged in other surveys, where young people voted overwhelmingly against Prop. 8 but their parents or grandparents voted strongly in support of Prop. 8," said Marshall Wong, co-chair of API Equality-LA.

APALC surveyed 1,200 APA voters in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, including hundreds of voters who identified as limited English speakers.

"This data underscores what many of us working in the community have known all along, that educating our communities in a language they understand is critical in winning the battle for marriage equality," said Hyundoo Lee, national organizing coordinator at the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium.

NATIONAL NEWS

National Newbytes

By Pacific Citizen Staff and Associated Press

Economic Recovery Bill Allots Millions to WWII Filipino Vets

WASHINGTON—If passed, the Senate's economic recovery package spends up to $198 million in lump-sum payments to aging WWII Filipino veterans. The compensation, supported by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, would go to about 15,000 living veterans who were promised postwar benefits for their service in WWII as a part of U.S.-led forces.

Money was allocated for Filipino veterans last year, but was never spent. Critics say the issue has no business in the recovery bill, but advocates say the money is deserved and belongs in the recovery package because Filipino veterans are dying.

WWII 442nd RCT to be Featured in Wash. Memorial

WASHINGTON—Sculptor Andrew L. Chernak is featuring the World War II 442nd RCT story in his Gold Star Mothers Memorial in Washington, D.C.

American Gold Star Mothers, Inc. honors the mothers of Armed Forces veterans. Chernak, a Vietnam War veteran, said the 442nd will be a focal point of the WWII section.

The five mothers and six children who will be featured are: Sami Murata and sons Sgt. Robert Murata and PFC Harry S. Yamasaki; Yae Moriguchi and PFC Haluto Muriguchi; Josephine Nogais and Capt. Edward Joseph Nogais; Misayo Ninomiya and PFC Takao Ninomiya; Fuyuko Okura and Pvt. Susumu "Babe" Okura.

Senate Passes Bill to Expand Child Health Coverage

WASHINGTON—The Senate, on Jan. 29, passed a bill extending government-sponsored health insurance coverage to about 4 million uninsured children. The bill, which was approved 66-32, authorizes an additional $32.8 billion over the next 4 1/2 years for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). The bill now goes to the House of Representatives and then to the president's desk.

More than 7 million children were enrolled in SCHIP at some point in 2008. The program was created more than a decade ago as a way to provide health care to children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid but too low to afford private coverage.

"Nowhere does the saying that 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure' have more meaning and significance than it does with proper health care for the children of the nation," said Floyd Mori, JACL national director, in a statement urging lawmakers to pass the measure.

New Pan-Asian Store Planned for Old Mitsuwa Site

LOS ANGELES—A new Asian-themed supermarket will replace the Little Tokyo outpost of Mitsuwa Market.

A representative of Coldwell Banker, which handles leasing for the Little Tokyo Shopping Center and acts as a spokesman for the group that acquired the mall in 2008, told the Los Angeles Downtown News that the new market will carry Japanese, Korean, Chinese and American food products. Although a name has not been selected, it will likely incorporate the phrase "Little Tokyo."

City's First Vietnamese American Council Member Faces Recall

SAN JOSE, Calif.—Madison Nguyen, the councilwoman from District 7, is in a fight to save her job. On March 3, thousands of residents will vote to either keep or recall Nguyen, just the third time in the city's history that voters will consider a recall.

Community activists criticized Nguyen's choice to name a shopping area on Story Road "Saigon Business District." They argue that crime and gang violence have increased and that she has stopped listening to the community.

Nguyen was elected in 2005 as San Jose's first Vietnamese council member.

Report: APAs Narrowly Supported Proposition 8

New data has confirmed that Asian Pacific American voters in California narrowly supported Proposition 8, the November ballot initiative that restricted marriage to be between a man and a woman.

The 2008 Southern California Voter Survey conducted by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) is the largest and most comprehensive exit poll of Asian Pacific Americans in California.

Overall, APAs narrowly supported Proposition 8 — 54 percent voted "yes" while 46 percent voted "no." Korean Americans were significantly more likely to support Proposition 8 by a wide margin, according to the report.

Preliminary data shows that — similar to other racial and ethnic groups — age and religious belief were determining factors in voting on Proposition 8.

Fluent English speakers between the ages of 18 to 34 who "never" attended a church, temple, or mosque voted strongly against Proposition 8.

"Asian Americans mirror the statewide patterns that have emerged in other surveys, where young people voted overwhelmingly against Prop. 8 but their parents or grandparents voted strongly in support of Prop. 8," said Marshall Wong, co-chair of API Equality-LA.

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"This data underscores what many of us working in the community have known all along, that educating our communities in a language they understand is critical in winning the battle for marriage equality," said Hyundoo Lee, national organizing coordinator at the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium.

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By ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Immigration History Preserved on Angel Island

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Ishimaru Named as EEOC Acting Chair

Longtime JACL member Stuart J. Ishimaru has been named acting chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). He has been a commissioner of the EEOC since 2003. Ishimaru, a San Jose, Calif., native, has also served as counsel to the assistant attorney general for civil rights and provided advice on a broad range of issues.

The five-member commission is charged with enforcing Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and is responsible for enforcing federal laws that make it illegal to discriminate against a person on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age (40 or older), or disability.

Fong Nominated for DHS Post

President Barack Obama has announced his intentions to nominate Ivan K. Fong as general counsel for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Fong, who is currently the chief legal officer and secretary for Cardinal Health, Inc., has served previously as deputy associate attorney general for the Department of Justice. During his tenure, Fong was the primary author of "Involving the Use of the Internet," a groundbreaking report on cyber crime policy.

Harada Wins Community Service Award

At its 26th Annual Lunar New Year Dinner, the Asian American Coalition of Chicago honored Yoshiro (Yosh) Harada with its Community Service Leadership Award. Harada, a lifetime member of the Chicago branch of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), has been involved in various community service activities.

Arizona JACLer Wins MLK Award

Mas Inoshita, a historian, civil rights advocate and Arizona JACL member, was recently honored with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Servant-Leadership Award. Inoshita's family story is intertwined with Arizona history.

Kawamoto Wins Teaching Award

Carol Kawamoto, a 6th grade teacher at Westfield Elementary School in Concord, was recently named one of the winners of the 5th Annual "I'm Thankful For My Teacher..." Contest.

Oishi Takes Home Community Leadership Award

Joe Oishi, 97, was recently awarded the TakeoOkamoto Community Leadership Award. Oishi's life story is intertwined with the history of the Berkeley Buddhist Church, East Bay JACL, and the Contra Costa JACL, where as membership chair he recruited the largest number of new members in the chapter's history. He continued as membership chair from 1960-1975 and held other offices in his 30-year board membership.

The award is presented in memory of Takeo Okamoto, who was a pioneer in the San Francisco JA community. The award is given to persons who exhibit the spirit found in Okamoto's modesty and scholarly demeanor.
A few weeks ago, I met up with your mother after work. She wanted to find one of those Chinese street vendors who could render the letters of your name into calligraphic swirls of birds, animals and flowers. It took only five minutes for the street vendor to paint your name — Kiyomi — and it is hanging in your room right now.

I saw your room when your father threw a big party at your house in honor. Everything is very pink and very beautiful — including the little pillow hand-sewn by your great-grandmother. There are also Japanese porcelain dolls sitting on your dresser. Your shelf is already filled with books. There is one that shows Japanese American girls doing odori dancing, and another picture book of traditional Japanese fairy tales.

I'm telling you these things because you haven't seen your room yet. You won't for another two months until you are finally born. Your mother already instructed your great-grandmother to speak to you in only Japanese. This, of course, is coming from the woman who spent her childhood ditching Japanese language school so she could later at the nearby Hello Kitty store.

And being a Japanese school flunkie myself, I can completely relate. Do as we say, not as we did.

I imagine that being a Japanese American girl for your generation will be very different from the generations before us. Your mother once mused over the phone with me how strange it is that you will grow up in a world where having a black U.S. president is not some faraway dream, but a simple fact of life.

And what a colorful, multicultural world you will grow up in. You are so lucky to be living in Los Angeles, one of the most diverse places in the world. When you want to eat yummy mochi ice cream or sushi, you can always ask your mother or father to drive you to Little Tokyo or Sawtelle Boulevard. I hope you grow up enjoying the annual Tofu Festival and Nisei Week in Little Tokyo as I did when I was growing up.

When you are a little older, you might explore all the other neighborhoods of the world gathered within this one big city — like Chinatown, Koreatown, Little Ethiopia, Little Armenia, and Thai Town. Maybe you will be excited as I am to see how in this city, different things from different parts of the world are always meshing and transforming to form an entirely new and different idea. Los Angeles, after all, is probably the only city where you can see a Korean BBQ taco truck driving around your neighborhood!

It's so strange for me to think that a new JA like you is already coming into this world. I am proud of the accomplishments of my generation; I also feel that our generation is still very young and still has a long way to go. If I had it my way, your Saturday morning cartoons will have more Asian American programs, and not the cheesy ones about a Chinese boy who can do kung fu and transform into a dragon.'

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But maybe these are solutions your generation will come up with. And maybe in this new and complex world you grow up in, questions of racial identity will be overshadowed by greater issues that demand the integrity of our common humanity — like stopping wars, stopping global warming and poverty in third-world countries.

But I may be getting too ahead of myself. After all, you are still swimming in an underwater world where you are not yet capable of thought. Right now, you are busy forming eyelashes and fingernails. Every cell in your body is spinning in anticipation of the moment when you take your first breath of this world.

Yumi Sakugawa writes from Los Angeles.
Tamlyn Tomita throws her hands in the air and confesses that the last few years have been a transitional time in her career. The actress, 43, who famously launched countless boyhood crushes as Ralph Macchio's love interest in "The Karate Kid, Part II," is starting to move into mom roles.

"I've been mom how many times this year or last year? Wow!" she exclaims with a laugh. "Let's see, there's the popular NBC series "Heroes," where last year she played Niki Okada's onscreen mother and George Takei's wife - despite in real life only being nine years older than Oka and 28 years younger than Takei. If there ever was any doubt that Hollywood is cruel, remove it now.

Because while sitting in the lobby of the Miyako Hotel in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo and talking community and history with the Pacific Citizen, she's still every inch as lovely as her "Karate Kid" Kumiko character and sophisticated as Waverly in "The Joy Luck Club." Occasionally flashes of spunky Shiro, her 1994 role as the Japanese Hawaiian plantation worker in "Picture Bride" bubbles to the surface too.

"It's just a natural part of life," says Tamlyn, a Sansei who was born in Okinawa. "I won't be able to go up against actresses who are in their 20s anymore."

But she doesn't mind. "It's just a matter of really taking delight in the roles that are out there and saying 'Oh my God! I'm a mother? No way!'

And with over 20 years in Hollywood, while many other former young actors have fizzled (Hello, have you seen VH1's "Confessions of a Teen Idol"?), Tomita has been a steady force with a lengthy IMDB.com Web page to prove it.

In the last few months, television projects have been popping up non-stop: "The Mentalist," "Eureka" and maybe even "Heroes" again ("You never know!").

She names the projects between snaps of fingers and pauses to reflect. "I've been very, very lucky."

"Karate Kid": 23 Years Later

After all this time, people still recognize Tamlyn in the role that launched her career. She could be walking down the street and hardened businessmen in suits would just melt remembering scenes from the film where Kumiko coyly dances in her kimono. They usually say, "You're that girl!" and maybe even start thinking about the chorus of Peter Cetera's "Glory of Love."

"It's cute, very sweet."

Before sharing screen time with other Japanese American legends like Pat Morita and Nobu McCarthy, Tamlyn was a history major at the University of California, Los Angeles and Little Tokyo's Nisei Week queen in 1984. From the beginning, her career and the community have always intersected.

The idea for Tamlyn to audition for the "Karate Kid" came from Helen Funai, another former Nisei Week queen. When she landed the role, Tamlyn's father, the late Shiro Tomita, said Funai had to be her manager.

"She basically mothered me through the first few years of my career. I wasn't alone." Shiro, who was interned at Manzanar during World War II, was a Los Angeles Police Department officer who helped to form the nation's first Asian task force.

"I remember growing up and feeling that sense of community here in Little Tokyo."

Tamlyn's mother Asako, who is half Okinawan and half Filipino, experienced the other side of WWII. "With English being her third language it was very difficult for her to tell her kids about what it was like growing up in the war on that side."

In the fourth grade when Tamlyn finally read a very abbreviated version of the U.S. internment of JAs in her schoolbook, she rushed home and asked, "Dad, did this happen to you?" In response, Shiro gave his daughter a copy of Estelle Ishigo's book, "Lone Heart Mountain."

It's partly her parents' influence that she says drives her to be an active community leader. She's been a Nisei Week host for the past eight years and a constant presence at community functions.

"It's that sense of trying to retain that sense of history and to pass along these ideas of what it means to be Japanese American."

This year during Nisei Week, Tamlyn brought her uncle as part of her "entourage" and had him sit in the thick of ondo dancers.

I said, "Yeah, that's right. This is all our people."

Itinerant Actor

"I think with actors unless we're super successful - like a Tom Hanks or a Julia Roberts - we're always itinerant workers. It's from job to job."

It's the kind of lifestyle that even after so many years makes Asako worry about her daughter. Even with the big budget splashy movies like "The Day After Tomorrow," Asako would ask, "Okay, what are you going to do next?"

In Wayne Wang's 1993 film "The Joy Luck Club," Tamlyn made history as part of the Asian Pacific American cast in the first APA film to be released into mainstream America. She still gets recognized as Waverly Jong, the grown up chess champion. Since then, Tamlyn has seen Hollywood evolve to include some more roles for APA actors.

"It does feel like it's opening up, but the bottom line to me still is that change is occurring slowly," she said. "There are more opportunities for roles that are not ethnic specific, but they're not leading roles."

Once in awhile, APA actors pop up in the peripherals of new films and television shows, provide some comic relief or added drama and then just disappear.

"We're just the seasoning. We're just the flavor still."

That's why she doesn't shrink from the label of community leader.

"You have to take it with the sense that by the fact that we're of a non-white face, it's a political statement. We're here to play. I'm going to sit at this table representing a whole group of people behind me. And I know there are people who would love to have the opportunity to speak and say something ... I happen to be very, very fortunate to have the opportunity to say what I need to say in order to propel our community and say, 'Hey, we're here! Count us!'"

In the recent politically charged presidential elections, whenever Tamlyn would hear pundits talk about "black and brown" ethnic communities, she would want to shout out "yellow!"

She leans forward and smiles. "Actually, I like to say 'golden.'"

ONLINE EXTRA

To see a photo gallery and video of Tamlyn Tomita, go to www.pacificcitizen.org
Bill Seeks to Award WWII Nisei Vets With Congressional Gold Medal

Members of the highly decorated World War II 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion may be able to add the Congressional Gold Medal to their collection.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., has introduced HR 347, legislation to pay tribute to the WWII Nisei veterans commonly known as the “Go For Broke” regiments for their dedicated service. The Congressional Gold Medal is Congress’s highest civilian honor.

The medal is presented both for singular acts of exceptional service and for lifetime achievement. Once legislation is passed, Congress commissions the U.S Mint to design and create a medal that is unique to each individual or event that it is being awarded for.

Schiff introduced a similar measure last year to honor the men who waged wars both against racial injustice at home and abroad against U.S. enemies. During WWII, many young Nisei men fought bravely to protect the country that imprisoned their families behind barbed wire internment camps.

“At a time when they could have easily turned their backs on a country which had seemingly turned its back on them, these men chose the noble, bold, and more difficult route,” said Schiff in a statement. “It is long past due that Congress recognize their heroic efforts with Congress’s most prestigious award.”

The Go For Broke regiments earned several awards for their distinctive service in combat, including: seven Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses, 560 Silver Stars, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 15 Soldier’s Medals, 4,000 Bronze Starts and over 4,000 Purple Hearts.

For their size and length of service, the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd RCT were the most decorated U.S. military units of the war. Last year, as part of HR 2638 or “The Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act,” Schiff helped to secure $4 million for the construction of the Go For Broke National Education Center in Los Angeles.

JACL Establishes Nakahira Memorial Scholarship

Shigematsu “Shig” Nakahira has been described as a good and helpful friend, a 442nd veteran, a capable accountant, an excellent bowler and a quiet doer of good deeds.

Sadly, Shig passed away in December 2007 at the age of 87. In his will, he continued his good deeds by making a generous donation to the National JACL Scholarship Program. The Shigematsu Nakahira Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship will begin in 2009.

“The JACL is so fortunate to have truly altruistic members like Shig Nakahira,” said David Kawamoto, national JACL vice president for planning & development, who worked with Shig’s niece, Millie King, on the scholarship details. “He represents the best of the JACL and we are honored to have a scholarship bearing his name.”

Nakahira grew up on a farm in the Stockton and Sacramento area and was interned at the outbreak of World War II. He went on to serve in the Army’s 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Company C. After the war, he used his GI bill and graduated from Northwestern University with a major in business administration. In 1948, he moved to Madison, WI, and worked as an accountant. He later joined the Wisconsin Department of Revenue until his retirement in 1986.

In 1953, he married Mieko Inbe of Chicago. A fatal car accident that same year claimed her life and he suffered major injuries. He never remarried.

Longtime friend Paul Kusuda recalled that Shig “had all kinds of golf equipment” and was an excellent bowler. As treasurer of the Madison Area Retired Bowlers Association he encouraged the group to make contributions to the Food Kitchen drive helping to raise $3,000 each year. He was awarded the Kathryn Lee Humanitarian Award for this work.

Shig was an active member of the JACL’s Wisconsin Chapter and a 100 Club Life Member. In addition to JACL, he generously funded scholarships for the Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund. He also contributed to the Japanese American National Museum, American Red Cross and Disabled American Veterans. Kusuda recalls he and Shig would often go to a nearby farm to buy Asian-type vegetables like daikon, nappa, and gobo. Shig would often buy 30 to 60 pounds of vegetables and use his own special recipes to make takawon and tsukemono, giving out much of it to his friends.

“They were more than tasty; they were the best,” said Kusuda.

JACL Accepting Applications for Masaoka Fellowship

Do you want to get insider experience working for a member of Congress in the nation’s capital? It’s time to apply now for the JACL’s Mike M. Masaoka Congressional Fellowship.

For the past 20 years, the JACL has placed future Asian Pacific American leaders in the offices of members of Congress to learn all facets of the workings of Congress. During the six-month fellowship, the chosen candidate will work in the Washington, D.C. office of a member of the U.S Senate or the U.S. House of Representatives.

Candidates for the Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship must be U.S. citizens and members of the JACL. He or she should be a graduating college senior or a student in a graduate or professional program. Preference will be given to those who have demonstrated a commitment to Asian Pacific American issues, particularly those affecting the Japanese American community.

The Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship was established to honor Mike M. Masaoka, who passed away in 1991, for a lifetime of outstanding public service in promoting justice, civil rights and human dignity.

Dr. Tom Tamaki, of Philadelphia, has administered the fellowship since its inception but the fellowship is now being handled by the JACL’s Washington, D.C. office.

“The Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship provides an excellent experience for a young person to learn about public policy and the workings of the United States government,” said Floyd Mori, JACL national director.

Applications for the Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship must be received by Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship office April 15. The recipient will be selected by June 1.

For more information: www.jacl.org or e-mail policy@jacl.org

PSWD Launches New Youth Programs

JACL PSWD has launched two new programs to encourage community activism among youth.

The district saw the start of its first annual Mobilize for Policy program, which empowers youth to become community advocates. The program’s workshop sessions, which started Jan. 24, allow 15 college students from the Greater Los Angeles area to participate in a series of workshops on topics ranging from identity to identifying community issues.

The sessions’ goal is to help young APAs better understand themselves, the community and how they can effectively voice their community’s concerns on a policy level.

PSWD’s other new program, Bridging Communities, seeks to connect Japanese American youth to the Muslim American community by celebrating the strengths and differences between the communities.

Starting Feb. 21, 40 high school students will engage in workshops with discussions, group activities and site visits that will allow participants to learn about the Muslim and Japanese cultures. These sessions will focus on topics ranging from ethnic identity, culture/religion, civil rights and activism.

Since the Sept. 11th terrorist attacks and the start of the second Iraq War, Muslim communities throughout the nation have experienced heightened hostility and discrimination because of their ethnic identity.

The JACL recognizes that the hostilities and civil rights infringements on Muslim communities post-Sept. 11 are similar to the injustice forced upon JAs during World War II. The program seeks to build heightened awareness in both communities through education. NCRR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Islamic Shura Council are also working in partnership with PSWD for the Bridging Communities program.

CCLPEP Grant Applications Now Available

Grant applications for the 2008-2009 California State Library’s California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) are now available.

Grant awards totaling $450,000 are available for this cycle. The deadline for grant applications is 4 p.m. on Feb. 17.

CCLPEP is the result of the 1998 California Civil Liberties Public Education Act, an initiative sponsored by Assembly Member Mike Honda.

According to the act, “The purpose of the California Civil Liberties Public Education Act is to sponsor public educational activities and development of educational materials to ensure that the events surrounding the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of civilians and permanent resident aliens of Japanese ancestry will be remembered, and so that causes and circumstance of this and similar events may be illuminated and understood.”

Grant categories for this cycle include Nisei oral history, gathering and safekeeping of written documents, art, photographs etc.; and preserving internment camps, assembly centers, and other endangered resources. The maximum grant amount is set at $25,000.

Grant applications are available at: http://CivilLiberties.library.ca.gov.

What does war solve?

“A Passage Through SEVEN LIVES is a stirring and perceptive memoir/history of Japanese culture and imperialism before and after the World War II. "Yyo Takahashi weaves a meticulous 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.” —From reviews

A Passage Through SEVEN LIVES

—The Pacific War Legacy—

by KYO TAKAHASHI

6”x9” paperback, 504 pages includes over 250 illustrations, 25 maps, and charts. $23.99

10% goes to the AFSC Peace Fund

available at Amazon.com Alibris.com & BarnesAndNoble.com

isbn: 0896159862
San Jose JACL Honors Community Leaders

The star-studded recognition dinner drew Honda, Mineta and many JACLers.

A record-breaking crowd recently attended the 7th Annual San Jose JACL Community Recognition Dinner to honor those who have distinguished themselves in service to the community.

At the event, San Jose JACL President Gail Sueki gave a brief summary of the year’s activities and asked for a moment of silence to honor the memory of Judge Wayne Kanemoto, one of the pioneers of San Jose’s Japantown. Kanemoto was one of the first Nisei to be appointed as a judge on the U.S. mainland.

The event’s honorees included Ray and Lucy Matsumoto, Warren Hayashi, Jimi and Eiko Yamaichi, James B. Peckham, Sr. and James B. Peckham, Jr. (both posthumously) and the Nihonmachi Outreach Committee.

Each honoree received a certificate and glass photo frame with the word “Kansha” or deep appreciation etched into it. They also received framed proclamations from Assemblywoman Sally Lieber’s office and certificates from Congressman Mike Honda, who also attended the event and, in a speech, acknowledged the role the JACL has played in the community.

San Jose Councilmember Kansen Chi also presented a plaque to the San Jose JACL.

The fundraising event was also attended by former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and his wife Deni. Other JACLers who were in attendance included Larry Oda, JACL national president; Alan Nishi, NWCNP district governor; and Kim Nakahara, NWCNPd vice governor.

At the event, former NWCNP District Gov. Thaya Mune Craig and her husband Jim, of Placer County JACL, won the benefits drawing — four round-trip tickets anywhere Southwest Airlines flies.

Wisconsin JACL Honors its Own at Inaugural Luncheon

The Wisconsin JACL’s inaugural luncheon attracted a packed house of 42 attendees.

The Jan. 24 event gave the chapter the opportunity to honor some of its hardworking members. Lucille Miyazaki received the Member of the Year Award with many of her friends and family members in attendance.

Ed Kotokuchi, who delivered the invocation before the awards ceremony, was recognized for being a charter member of the Millennium Club.

Sherri Fujihira also received a prestigious award. She was one of the few Wisconsin JACL members who qualified for the Sapphire Pin Award for her years of service to the JACL.

The awardees received beautifully crafted cards, chiyogami dolls and other party favors, which were all handmade by Fujihira and Barb Suyama.

At the same event, guest speaker and professional photographer Kevin Miyazaki, presented some photos taken from his exhibit, “Camp Home.” The exhibit, located at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, was made possible by a Mary L. Nohl Fellowship. Miyazaki focused on the buildings of the barracks at Tule Lake and how they still exist as structures for other families.

Even though the buildings have deteriorated, there is still a connection with the Japanese American community.

The event was made possible with the support of Fujihira, Suyama, Irene Bridgeford, Miyazaki, Otto and Vivian Hida.

Java Announces Scholarship Guidelines for ’09

The second annual Japanese American Veterans Association Memorial Scholarship competition is now open, updated with revised eligibility rules and changes in application requirements.

The program — which honors the memory of Maj. Orville Stalvey, 442nd RCT, Jack Tashiro, MIS member and past JAVA treasurer, and Douglas Ishio, son of JAVA founder Phil Ishio — provided three $1,000 scholarship awards last year.

An additional $1,000 scholarship in the memory of Gene Takahashi, a Korean War veteran, was specially awarded in 2008.

The JAVA scholarship program is open to any applicant who is a lineal descendant of:

• A person who served in the 442nd RCT, including exercise.

Completed applications must be received by May 15. For complete contest rules and the application form, go to www.javaco.org. For more information e-mail Calvin NImamiyai at calvinnimaii@aol.com.
MORI
(Continued from page 2)
the better will prevail in the halls of Congress. I think there is great hope as I listened to people from all walks of life and of all political persuasions come together in one big sea of optimism. We are worried of expectations that are too high. But I have always felt that you have to aim high to hit distant and lofty goals. I think our nation is ready for all of us to find common ground and move beyond strict political rhetoric and dogma that prevent us from solving the human problems of the day.
Was the Inaugural experience worth my postponed trip out of town? Of course, it was. I will never regret sitting for hours waiting for the opening ceremony to begin and standing for hours in front of a stage to watch a couple of minutes of the First Couple dancing together.
I met so many great people who felt as I did. They didn’t complain about long lines and people that cut in. They didn’t ask your political party, but if they discovered that you were of a different political persuasion, they were accepting and willing to discuss differences and still go on speaking kindly of the President and what they were hoping to see happen.
There is hope that everything is going to get better. ■

LT. Moriguchi
(Continued from page 4)
Here in the boonies, Brian got his first taste of fighting hate crimes and he knew he had received his calling in life.
Brian was able to not only specialize in hate crimes, he was also training fellow officers in fighting these same crimes. He was also named chair of the Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission helping the community network with their fellow police officers.
Today, Brian is the president of the Professional Peace Officers Association, an organization of 8,500 members, helping to fight for the rights of his fellow officers and helping to create laws that help law enforcement do a better job.
“There’s a lot of satisfaction,” he said.
But Brian’s newfound passion for fighting discrimination is not only his job, it’s also turned into active volunteerism with his work with the JACL. In addition to his recent SFV chapter presidency, Brian is also co-chair of the PSW district’s Civil Rights Caucus.
It’s here where Brian works to help those who had have had their civil rights violated and to lend support to those who have been discriminated.
One project he is currently working on is legislation that will protect undocumented immigrants from deportation when they report hate crimes. Today, Brian believes these types of crimes are being underreported for fear of retaliation.
His work in civil rights is something he tries to bring home to his fellow Japanese Americans.
“I realize that the JA community may not be the target today as we were in World War II, but I think all people should be concerned about discrimination,” said Brian. “Post-911, racial discrimination surfaced quite quickly.”
“In my view the sensitivities he has developed has made him someone uniquely prepared for the position of chapter president,” said Phil Shigekuni, a longtime member of the SFV chapter. “Brian is someone our community can hold up for gratitude and respect.”

Father-Son Legacy
As Brian takes over as SFV chapter president, he will be following in the footsteps of his father Bob, 77, who served in the same role in 1968.
There’s no doubt how much pride Bob has for his son.
“I’ve always had pride for him,” he said. “[Brian] was always concerned for the underdog.”
It’s the same pride Bob has for his son’s commitment to fight for what he believes is right, even if it means facing some difficult challenges within the Sheriff’s Department.
“That really put a strain on him but he went through it even though others would not join him,” said Bob. “He stood his ground and they did all kinds of things to discourage him, they retaliated. But he stood his ground and went through with his lawsuit.”
“I think he’s proud of what I’ve become,” said Brian of his father. “He’s proud of the fact that I took a stand against injustice, that I’m trying to take a more active leadership role in addressing civil rights”
When Brian was 18 he volunteered at the Sheriff’s Department, getting his first taste. He decided to take some college criminal courses to see if he would enjoy working for the department full-time and soon he was hooked.
At the age of 21 he applied for a position and he hasn’t looked back since. With 23 years of experience under his belt now, Brian has little time for regrets.
What he does sometimes miss is his former work as a detective.
“The satisfaction you get when you are able to put someone in jail who has done a great deal of harm to people and see the relief of victims,” described Brian.
Still, he has a hard time seeing himself as a role model.
“I see so many other JAs and non-JAs who are far better role models than myself,” he said. “But I would tell people to be yourself and do the right thing. If it doesn’t feel right, don’t do it.” ■

For more information: www.jacl.org
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2ND CHANCES
(Continued from page 4)

five years. But they beat the odds until they were in their 20s. Ana was the first to undergo a lung transplant in 2004. Isabel received her new lungs in 2004. When they recovered from their procedure, they both did what came naturally.

"My parents always taught me that when someone gives you a gift, you write a thank you card," said Anabel.

Their letters convinced two families that their difficult decisions had made an impact.

"Deciding to donate his organs wasn't easy. It was an all-day deliberation session," said Beth Maritionally. Her youngest brother James Don's lungs gave Anabel a second chance at life. Don died of a brain aneurysm at 29 and left his five siblings with a decision no one wants to make:

"If James were here, he'd go for it,"

Both Anabel and Isabel, who now live in the San Francisco Bay area, met their respective donor families in 2006. Isabel's donor, Xavier Cervantes, was 18 when he died in a car accident.

"I like to say that I'm tri-racial now," said Isabel. To honor her healthy lungs, she's also learning to play the bagpipes.

The journey has been a personal evolution for the twins and their parents.

"I grew up thinking my illness was something I should hide," said Isabel. All the medical equipment was kept in one room in the house and their parents got double-paned windows just for the twins' room. In hindsight, they say that was a void in their hearts. Then in 2007 they received a letter saying Erin's cornea tissue helped two visually impaired individuals.

"I have been praying for them off and on. Whoever they are, I want to thank them because it's a reminder," said Jennifer. "Her eyes are giving life to these two people. They need to pursue as much as possible.

"Those are not ordinary eyes." There are many beliefs and misconceptions in the APA community; some believe that the body should be buried whole. Others believe that the transplant procedure would disfigure the body—it won't. Even if you have a pink donor sticker on your driver's license and it falls off, your next of kin still has to make the decision, said Ho. The signed donor card is the legal document.

The safest way is to register online at www.donatelife.net.

"The APA community needs all deceased and living donors."

"But most disagree unless they have the education or have talked about it."

On the Web

www.donatelife.net
www.stenzeltwins.com
www.onelegacy.org

The Grace of Giving Life

Jennifer Choe knows every mom thinks their child is bright, but she insists her Erin was advanced in all areas. The tiny girl from Calif. loved to sing and laugh and write. When she turned four, she demanded to read because she was a "big girl."

It makes sense now. "She was always so anxious because she knew that her days were numbered," said Jennifer, 42.

On a Saturday evening in 2006, Erin Choe, 5, died in a pool drowning accident at a friend's house.

The grief of losing a family member has a way of seizing you tight, said Jennifer. "You put together all these dreams. And then it's gone."

Twelve hours after Erin was pronounced dead at the hospital, Jennifer and her husband Victor got a call from hospital staff asking for a tissue donation. They looked at each other and said, "We should, shouldn't we?"

"This is what God wanted us to do. He gave us the strength to give."

They agreed to donate some of Erin's tissue and went on with life with a void in their hearts. Then in 2007 they received a letter saying Erin's cornea tissue helped restore sight to two visually impaired individuals.

"I have been praying for them off and on. Whoever they are, I want to thank them because it's a reminder," said Jennifer. "Her eyes are giving life to these two people. They need to pursue as much as possible.

"Those are not ordinary eyes."
2009 Day of Remembrance Events

CHICAGO

DENVER
Sun., Feb. 22—Amarre Archeology 2009 Day of Remembrance Program; 2 p.m.; Sturm Hall, Room 281, Denver University; tentatively, Professor Bonnie Clark and her graduate students plan to present their research finding at Amache Camp. Info: Mark Shimoda, 303/933-4095.

LOS ANGELES
Sat., Feb. 21— "Forging Alliances: Connecting Nikkei to Current Immigration"; 2 p.m.; Japanese American National Museum, 269 E. First St.; Roger Daniels will be the keynote speaker; he was a consultant to the Presidential Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians; free; sponsored by JACL PSW, JANM and NCRR. Info: NCRR, 213/680-3484, JACL PSW, 213/626-4471 or JANM, 213/625-0414.

MEDFORD, Mass.
Thu., Feb. 19—American Pastime: Baseball Behind Barbed Wire; 5:30-7 p.m.; Pearson 104, Tufts University; Kerry Yo Nakagawa is the keynote speaker; Nakagawa is the founder of the Nisei Baseball Research Project and was an associate producer in the "American Pastime." Info: 617/627-3056 or asianamcenter@tufts.edu.

MERCED, Calif.
Sat., Feb. 21—Day of Remembrance Banquet; 5 p.m.; Merced County Fairgrounds, Junior Building; keynote speakers include Dennis Cardoza and Congressman Mike Honda; $40. For tickets: Bob Taniguchi, 209/383-5161 or taniguchi.r@mccd.edu, Steve Taniyama, 209/393-6577, Grace Kimoto, 209/394-2456.

PHILADELPHIA
Sat., Feb. 21—Day of Remembrance 2009; 1:30-4:30 p.m.; program honors Goyco Uyeharo who successfully lobbied for Redress; free. Info: Martha Fujimoto, 610/544-5449.

PORTLAND
Thu., Feb. 19—"The History of Racism in Oregon"; 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Smith Memorial Center, Room 294, 1825 SW Broadway; program explores Oregon's complicated historical relationship to racial and cultural differences; featuring Patti Sakurai, Darrell Millner and Randy Blazak; sponsored by Portland JACL and Lake Oswego Library. For a full listing of DOR events visit: www.ci.oswego.or.us/library.

SACRAMENTO
Sat., Feb. 21—2009 Time of Remembrance; 1-3 p.m.; Secretary of State Building Complex, 1500 11th St.; featuring Hiroshi Kishiwagi's "The Betrayed," a two-act play about a young Nisei man and woman's experience which brings out the tough issues and relationships between people in the internment camps during WWII; $10 donation, students under 18 are free; sponsored by the Florin, Lodi, Placer County and Sacramento JACL chapters. Info: Sacramento, 916/427-2841 or 916/447-0231, Lodi, 209/478-2499 or Placer County, 916/508-6587.

STORRS, Conn.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Calendar

East
WASHINGTON, D.C.
Mar. 6-10—2009 JACL-OCAC D.C. Leadership Conference; Doubletree Hotel, 1515 Rhode Island NW.

Intermountain
DENVER

Sun., April 5—Mile-Hi Chapter Installation; noon; Renaissance Hotel, 3801 Colorado; featuring Adam Schragger, author of "The Principled Politician: The Ralph Carr Story." Info: Charmaine Palmer, 303/449-8526.

ONTARIO, Ore.
Fri., Feb. 27—Snake River Valley JACL Crab Feed and Auction; 6-7:30 p.m., auction begins at 7:30 p.m.; $30/adults, $25/seniors (70+), $15/youth (13-18), $10/youth (6-12). Info: Mike or Mary Ant, 541/839-8691.

Pacific Northwest
PORTLAND
Wed., Feb. 18—The Consitution in a time of War: The Trial of Minoru Yasui; 7 p.m.; Lakewood Center for the Arts, 368 State St.; a readers' theater group will re-enact portions of the Yasui trial.

Northern California
TULE LAKE
July 2-5—2009 Tule Lake Pilgrimage; activities include a tour of the campsite, and a memorial service at the cemetery on the camp­grounds, cultural programs and discussions; $395/person, $325 for students and people on fixed incomes, $100 discount, students under 18 and seniors, $7/ JACCC, JANM or Visual Communications members. Info: www.pinedalememorial.org.

Central California
CLOVIS
Feb. 14-16—CC-NCCNP-PSW JACL Tri-District Conference; events include: a golf tournament, local tours, Saturday mixer, youth dance, plenary sessions and dedication of the Pinedale Memorial. Info: www.pinedalememorial.org.

Southern California
LOS ANGELES
Sun., Feb. 15—Screening, "Transcending: The Way Misaka Story"; 2 p.m.; Aratani/Japan America Cultural Center; Misaka helped take the Univ. of Utah to the NCAA and NIT championships and was the first person of color in the NBA; $10/general admission, $6/students and seniors, $7/JACCC, JANM or Visual Communications members. Info: www.jaccc.org.

Mon., Feb. 16—23rd Annual Cultural Night, "Always Welcome, Never for Sale"; 7 p.m.; UCLA's Royce Hall; story is a dramatic and probing look into corporate responsibility in regard to the current development within Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. Info: www.nsuculturenight.com.

SAN DIEGO
Sat., Feb. 28—Film Showing, "Of Civil Wrongs and Rights: The Fred Korematsu Story"; 12:30 p.m.; Serra Mesa - Kearny Mesa Library, 9005 Aero Dr.; Korematsu refused to obey E.O. 9066, which sent 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry into internment camps. RSVP to San Diego JACL, 619/240-0144.

TORRANCE
Mon., Feb. 16—10th Anniversary Showing of "Rabbits in the Moon"; 2 p.m.; Armstrong Theater, Torrance Cultural Arts Center, 3330 Civic Center Dr.; a commentary on the impact of the film by Alan Nishio and a reception with principles from the project. Info: 310/618-6342 or www.TorranceLive.us.

Arizona
PHOENIX
Feb. 21-22—Arizona Matsuri, 25th Anniversary; 10:30-4:30 p.m. each day; Heritage and Science Park (7th St. and Monroe); featuring entertainment, vendors and a special performance by noodle makers from Himeji, Japan. Info: Ted Namba, caseyfolks@aol.com or 602/571-0247.

MITA (Continued from page 2)

ụ smoke. To my dismay, ever since then, the line to place an order has been around the block.

That cold Monday morning, I made it a point to fight the surrounding crowd in the city to go to the Japanese American Memorial by the Capitol Building. I knew that I wasn't going to be at the National Mall to watch the inauguration in person, but I wanted to be close to the scene where America was about to embrace its transformation.

I sat on the benches that lined the outskirts of the dark marble. Across from me was the inscription, which read, "Japanese by blood, hearts and minds American, with honor unbound, bore the sting of injustice for future generations." I stared at the crates covered in barbed wire that emerged in the center of the memorial. It struck me, like never before, how beautiful and symbolic the crates were.

Tears began streaming down my cheeks as I transposed the images of the cranes with the vision of President Obama raising his right hand to become the president of the United States. I saw the barbed wire representing the oppression of people of color in this country and the cranes finally freeing themselves from the barbed wire's death grip.

I began to understand my purpose for coming to the memorial that day. It wasn't just to be close to the scene of the action, but it was a spiritual journey for me. It was one in which I could process that idea that we, as Americans, could stand firm in the belief that the different backgrounds that compose our collective heritage is the strength of our American fabric. That America is the place where we could embrace our shortcomings in order to take that decisive step forward. America is the place where we could exercise our freedom and dreams realized.

As an individual who has trudged along these streets of broken dreams for eight years, I now comprehend that I am not alone in my transformation from despair to hope and excitement. This inauguration has opened the eyes of millions around the world.

Standing in freezing temperatures, the huddled masses braced against the wind and awaited the rising of the sun. A warm glow emanated from the top of the Capitol Building on that Tuesday, Jan. 20 afternoon.

I am truly thankful that I am here in our nation's capital to be a part of it. I'm eager to see the light cast away the darkness that has shrouded this nation for far too long.

Brandon Mita is in his second year at Howard University School of Law in Washington, D.C. He is also the current JACL national youth representative and a member of the Washington, D.C. and Chicago chapters.
In Memoriam - 2008-2009

All the towns are in California except as noted.

Fujii, Tomochi, 79, Kapaaui,
Haw., Dec. 25, 2008; survived by wife, Lillian; daughters, Stacy
Cawell and Heidi Ishida; 5 gc.; brothers, Zen and Isamu; and sister,
Yae Miura.

Fukumoto, Robert "Bobby," 77,
Camarillo, Dec. 20, 2008; survived by son, David; daughter, Amy
(Doug) Wagner; and brother, Joe.

Hiragu, Benjamin Minoru, 94,
Garrett, Jan. 15; survived by brothers,
Kei (Cathy); George (Flo) and Willy (Helen); sister, Shirley (Roy)
Ito; and brothers-in-law, Frank
Nishioka and Yosh Okura.

Kagawa, Siegfried "Sig," 77,
Santa Monica, Jan. 4; survived by
wife, Betsy; sons, Gordon and
Stephen; and daughter, Kathy.

Don Kaya,
KAGAWA
91, Jun. 3; philan-
thropist; survived by
wife, Hiroko; son,
Siegfried "Sig," 77, Jan. 4; survived by wife, Betsy; sons,
Gordon and Stephen; and daughter, Kathy.

Don Kaya,
KAGAWA
91, Jan. 15; survived by brothers,
Kei (Cathy); George (Flo) and
Willy (Helen); sister, Shirley (Roy)
Ito; and brothers-in-law, Frank
Nishioka and Yosh Okura.

Kawagata, William Keichi, 71,
Dec. 14, 2008; survived by
son, Sanaye; daughter, Elaine
(Michael) Chin; 5 gc.; mother, Kiyoko;
brother, Don (Kiyoko); sister, Mary
(Kei) Shimizu; and sister-in-law,
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Matsunaga, Fred Mitsuhiro,
Kualapuu, Haw., Jan. 29; WWII
veteran, 442nd, 1st Co.

Matsunaga, Takeko, 91, Jan. 6; survived by son, Dennis; daughters,
Jane (George) Iwanaga and Marilyn
(Tobert) Harman; 6 gc.; and 7 ggc.

Mimitani, Margaret Shizuyo,
KAGAWA
91, Feb. 10; survived by
son, Doug; and son-in-law,
Yoshiko Takahashi.

Monica, Jan. 4; survived by
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the two who were killed in the
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Kobu, Teruo "Hum," 81, Seattle,
Wash., Nov. 26, 2008; WWII
veteran, MIS; survived by
wife, Hironaka; and brother-in-law,
Kubota.

Kosaka, Takeshi Joe, 95, Los
Alamitos, Jan. 17; survived by
daughter, Toyomi (Ron) Harrington;
son, Ken (Shelly); 4 gc.; and 1 ggc.

Koyanagi, Hirokun, 87,
Torrance, Jan. 9; survived by
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Kurata, Sakaye Nancy, 90,
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Masako Kobayashi.
American Holiday Travel

2009 Tour Schedule

KOREA DRAMA SPRING HOLIDAY TOUR MAR 27-APR 8
Seoul, Cheju Island, Busan, Daegu, Daegun, Chunchon/Namisom Island.

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE TOUR APR 15-25
Tokyo, Tendo Onsen, Akita, Higashi Onsen, Lake Towada, Morioka, Matsushima.

EASTERN CANADA HOLIDAY TOUR MAY 3-11
Montreal, Quebec City, Ottawa, Toronto, Niagara Falls.

GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR I (SOLD OUT) JUN 28-JUL 7
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Miyajima, Kyoto, Nara.

GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR II WAITLIST JUL 7-16
Kyoto, Nara, Hiroshima, Miyajima, Atami, Hakone, Tokyo.

ALASKA HOLIDAY CRUISE JUL 26-AUG 2
Seattle, Glacier Bay, Juneau, Skagway, Victoria City, HOLLAND AMERICA Westerdam.

JAPAN OBON FESTIVAL TOUR AUG 5-16
Tokyo, Hakone, Obon Festival, Gujo Hachiman, Summer Odori Festival, Kyoto, Hiroshima, Tokyo.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN/GREECE HOLIDAY CRUISE AUG 22-SEPT 4
Venice, Croatia, Athens, Istanbul, Mykonos, Kusadasi, Santorini, Olympia, HOLLAND AMERICA Oostdam.

PANA CONVENTION SOUTH AMERICA TOUR SEPT 24-OCT 5
PANA Convention - Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Option to Peru.

NEW ENGLAND HOLIDAY TOUR OCT 1-8
Boston, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire. Day trips on historic trains: Maine Narrow Gauge Railroad, Conway Scenic Railroad, Maine Central Railroad, Excursion Train.

OKINAWA-KYUSHU HOLIDAY TOUR OCT 11-23
Naha, Kagoshima, Miyazaki, Shinsesoku, Takamatsu, Mt. Aso, Beppu, Kumamoto, Nagasaki, Fukuoka.

CANYONLAND GETAWAY HOLIDAY NOV 8-13
Laughlin, Grand Canyon, Valley of Fire Park, Mesquite, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, Las Vegas.

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Nikkei Senior Gardens is now open! Call (818) 899-1000 to arrange a personal tour, and see our beautiful new community firsthand. Nikkei Senior Gardens is a non-profit community open to all.

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