With 'Buy American' Back, is Anti-Asian Sentiment Around the Corner?

Remember Vincent Chin? Economic recovery at what cost?

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NATIONAL DIRECTOR'S REPORT

A Memorable Tri-District

By FLOYD MORI

The JACL held its CCDC/PSWDC/NCWNPDC Tri-District Conference and a Day of Remembrance celebration Feb. 14 to 16 in Clovis, Calif. Hosted by the CCDC, the conference was held in conjunction with the dedication of the Pinedale Remembrance Plaza to commemorate the Pinedale Assembly Center where Japanese Americans were held during World War II before being shipped to the camps.

Although some JACLers from PSW were unable to attend the conference because of the closure of the Grapevine due to snow, driving to the Fresno/Clovis area from Los Angeles on Saturday morning was a pleasant drive with clear roads and good weather all the way. For those returning to Southern California on Monday after the conference, snow was still falling on the Grapevine and some took alternate routes. Those who attended the conference were well repaid with excellent learning experiences, which were very moving, along with outstanding and enjoyable social functions.

Fourteen people had signed up for the golf tournament on Saturday afternoon following the Friday night conference dinner. Dale Ikeda, an attorney and the former publisher, was the chairman of the golf committee. Additional fees paid to enter the tournament will be used for scholarships. Dale was pleased to report that the golfers had a great time.

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In the view of this writer, the JACL leaders have missed the opportunity to address the economic problems of the American Nikkei. Young, educated Nikkei, like other segments of American society, are no longer sure of their futures. The situation is getting better as the American Nikkei continue to return to the West Coast. The challenges of the future are obvious. The future is bright and I am hopeful that JACLers will be able to address these challenges in the future.

Letter to the Editor

JACL Fails to Address Economic Problems

I was disappointed with the writers and articles in the New Year’s Issue. Each writer seems to miss what I am trying to say. The status of the American Nikkei and the goals for the future are clear. The writer, who is the head of JACL, seems to misses the point.

As of this year, the United States and the world are experiencing serious economic woes. The problems include the loss of jobs, rising unemployment, and a reduction in the number of people employed. These problems are affecting people in all parts of the United States.

Today we are living in an era of economic uncertainty. The problems are real and we must address them. In 2009, it is high time for us to accept the responsibility to pass and ask if our community can properly be charged with the tasks.

TAKASUMI KOJIMA
Berkeley, Calif.

COMMENTARY

The Last Full Measure of Devotion

A recent visit to Italy, where my granduncle died during WWII fighting for his country, made me proud to be part of his legacy of military service.

By LT. JANELLE KURODA

Forty meters below the streets of Naples, Italy, I turn a corner and stumble upon World War II-era graffiti illustrating an aerial attack and the infamous trio of those days: Adolf Hitler, Emperor Hirohito and Benito Mussolini.

I am on an underground tour of Naples, making my way through the narrow passages that betray a secret world unknown to many modern day Neapolitans. During the heavy aerial bombardments of WWII, up to 30,000 Neapolitans fled underground to these ancient caves once used by the Greeks and Romans. They lived in these caves and labyrinths for months, often carving pictures depicting their lives into the walls.

Looking at the graffiti, I couldn’t help but think of my granduncle, Jack Tanaka.

Growing up on a dairy farm in Pahala, Hawaii, my granduncle was a house painter by trade. He enlisted in the U.S. Army when the call came out for Japanese American volunteers to form the 100th Battalion. Jack was a gunner in Bravo Company, and he was 27 years old when he made the ultimate sacrifice during the Battle of Monte Cassino in Central Italy on Jan. 25, 1944. He was awarded a Purple Heart — one of many that earned his unit the nickname, “Purple Heart Battalion.”

My grandparents instilled in me a sense of pride for what my uncle and other Nisei did during WWII despite challenges at home and abroad. These brave men paved the way for the advancement of all JAs. They inspired patriotism in all who followed, including my father, who served in the Army during the Vietnam War and my uncles, who fought in Vietnam and Korea.

From the early age of seven, I knew that I wanted to serve my country as well. This devotion to public service continued throughout high school and college, and it motivated me to obtain my law degree. However, I never considered joining the armed forces until my first year of law school at Boston College.

While serving as an intern at the Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, I met a Navy JAG officer who discussed a career in the Judge Advocate General’s (JAG) Corps. I didn’t feel that I could be of much service to the military because of my diminutive 4-foot-11 stature. As the discussion continued, I learned that I could serve my country by offering legal assistance to sailors and marines, defending sailors in courts-martial and providing legal counsel to commanding officers on rules of engagement and military justice. Despite my initial reservations, I was up to the challenge.

In the three years since I joined the Navy JAG Corp, I have served in three foreign countries and experienced more than I could ever have imagined. When the call came out asking for volunteers to relieve Army JAGs in Iraq, many of whom were on their second deployment, I was one of the first to raise my hand. I served with Multi-National Force-Iraq Task Force 134 — Detainee Operations in Baghdad. Working with Iraqi attorneys and our JAGs to achieve justice in a budding democracy was a great experience.

Following my tour in Iraq, I returned to Norfolk as a defense attorney, but I longed to return to the Middle East. Luckily, I secured a post in Bahrain. My duties as a staff judge advocate allowed me to experience

See KURODA/page 13
With ‘Buy American’ Back, is Anti-Asian Sentiment Around the Corner?

In bad economic times, history has shown that the ‘us’ in the ‘us versus them’ does not include Asian Americans.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

On Sundays when the weather permits, Cincinnati resident Jim Berns likes to take American flags and handmade signs to busy street corners. There, he waves at passing cars while holding up signs that say, “Honk if you love the USA” and “Buy made in the USA.”

“Motorists go crazy with the signs,” says Berns. “Truckers blare their horns, Chevys toot and BMWs go silently by.”

The troubled economy has driven him to launch this one-man campaign. Like many Americans, the threat of unemployment looms large for the longtime employee of the budget-strapped University of Cincinnati.

Berns, 60, hopes a renewed commitment to buy American-made products will boost the economy and keep Americans working. It’s calling on people’s patriotism, he says. But some Asian Pacific Americans worry the resurgence of populist rhetoric like “Buy American” will lead to increased anti-Asian sentiment and worse — Americans violently turning against other Americans.

“I think it’s a slippery slope,” says Roland Hwang, president of American Citizens Justice, a Michigan-based APA civil rights organization. The “Buy American” slogan, which is embedded in the $787 billion stimulus package signed by President Barack Obama, creates an underlying “us versus them” mentality.

“Such a mentality might get transferred to some zealot’s self-justified violence against APAs, Latins or other people of color in these bad economic times,” adds Hwang.

You don’t have to go too far back into U.S. history for an example either. Once upon another economic recession, two out-of-work autoworkers in 1982 Detroit misidentified 27-year-old Vincent Chin to be of Japanese descent and said, “because of you mother—s we are out of work,” before beating him to death with a baseball bat.

Now and Then: Us Versus Them

Until now, economists called the time between 1979-1982 the worst recession after World War II. “It was a time of crises,” said Frank Wu, a professor of law and history at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. “From World War II, there was a great sense that the U.S. could do anything. That was no longer true.”

Americans — who were still grappling with the aftermath of the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal — faced among other things an oil crisis, high unemployment and inflation rates. Competition from Japanese cars led to mass layoffs in the automobile industry and increased anti-Japan sentiment.

Members of the United Auto Workers famously smashed Toyota cars with sledgehammers at union picnics and distributed “Buy American” flyers with frequent references to Pearl Harbor.

With Chin’s murder in 1982, it became clear that in the “us versus them” mentality, APAs were counted as “them.”

“I fear it’s coming back again,” said Wu, who is writing a book on the Chin case.

Back then the scapegoat was Japan, now China is being blamed for running up the U.S. trade deficit and putting Americans out of jobs.

“But we all know that whether it’s Chinese or Japanese. They think we all look the same,” said Wu.

The rhetoric is also making a comeback.

In December, O.C. Welch, the owner of a Hardeeville, South Carolina car dealership blasted consumers who bought Japanese cars in a controversial radio ad. Welch, who called the cars “nice ready, not road ready,” has since apologized for his comments. That same month, Detroit’s WDIV-TV reported that a man was caught on a security camera in a Woodhaven, Mich., strip mall slashing the tires of four parked cars and writing “Buy USA” on them.

“Buy American [is] just an excuse to be racist,” said Lixiao Xu, a freshman from the State University of New York (SUNY) Buffalo.

A few months ago, Xu came across a Facebook.com “Jap Crap” group where members weighed in on the value of American cars versus imports. Many used patriotic and often racist language to prove their point, so Xu decided to join the debate.

“You don’t hate imports, you only hate Asian imports because they are not made by a white man,” Xu wrote on the group’s wall.

“These incidences don’t exist in a cultural vacuum,” said Dana Frank, the author of “Buy American: The Untold Story of Economic Nationalism” and a history professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Often supporters of campaigns like these resort to nationalism and then racial stereotypes that date back to the 1800s when the first wave of Asian immigrants were perceived to “sneak” things in.

“That’s the way U.S. history has unfolded. There’s a long history of Asian racism. Economic nationalism can turn into anti-Asian racism in a minute. It explodes so fast,” said Frank.

“Anytime you’re looking for a scapegoat, things are going to get nasty.”

Economic Nationalism Reemerging

Union members are also leading the charge to renew the commitment to “Buy American.” A Feb. 9 Harris Interactive poll conducted for the Alliance for American Manufacturing found it to be a popular cause — 84 percent favor “Buy American” requirements.

“Every time you turn around you see ‘made in China’ and stuff gets imported here. We’re losing jobs,” United Steelworkers member Gregory Jones, of Lafayette, Indiana, told the Associated Press at a recent union-sponsored rally.

According to the U.S. Labor Department, nearly 600,000 jobs were lost in January as the U.S. unemployment rate rose from 7.2 percent to 7.6 percent.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 contains a “Buy American” government procurement provision with the intent to help jumpstart the economy. Union leaders say it’s a step in the right direction.

“Given these dire straits, including domestic-sourcing requirements (“Buy America”) in the stimulus ensures that the materials used in infrastructure projects are produced by workers and companies in the United States to the maximum extent possible,” said Wayne Ranick, a USW spokesperson. “This is the best and fastest way to get people back to work and create demand in the marketplace.”

The USW is also pushing lawmakers to sign their “Buy American” resolution that promises to ensure federal economic recovery dollars go to cities and tax dollars are kept at home to help create jobs. To date, nearly 300 resolutions have been introduced, with more than 70 already approved, said Ranick.

“Buy American” has a certain amount of logic, said Frank. “It creates a national ‘we’ united under a cause to save American jobs. But who are ‘we’? Most people are not that aware of how transnational these large corporations are.”

Even iconic American consumer products like Ford and Chevvy have foreign-made components. But in this current recession, economic nationalism is making a comeback. When asked if the movement could lead to a rise in anti-Asian sentiment, Ranick points to evidence that we’re in a more egalitarian era.

“Nobody associated with the USW or any other labor organization condones racism, violence and murder. While problems like this exist on a societal level, we like to believe much has changed as evidenced by our country recently electing an African American as president.”

But Wu thinks the threat is very real. Over 25 years ago Chin’s murder and trial caused national outrage. “Up until that moment it occurred did anyone care?”

“The problem is our historical memory is so short. It’s so easy to forget our past,” said Tony Lam, a filmmaker whose 2008 documentary “Vincent Who?” examined Chin’s legacy in the APA community.

Activists like Berns disavow any racism with “Buy American” campaigns. He says he’s simply trying to raise awareness in these bleak economic times. Two years ago, he bought his home at a high and could lose it if things don’t turn around.

“I wish there were more Americans who see that this economy is like a train barreling towards the mountains,” said Berns. “Supporting the home team is not a bad thing. We support our Olympic athletes. It would be a good idea to support our American workers as our home team.”
Bullying of JA Students Shows Need For Change

In school, Katie and Justin Davis were harassed and called racist names until they decided to fight back.

By LESLIE K. TAMURA
Special to the Pacific Citizen

Starting a new school in the middle of the year can be tough, but the new kid, Katie Davis, wanted nothing more than to make friends with her fellow fourth-graders.

She had moved from a small community to Burney, Calif., with her parents and younger brother Justin. Her parents, both state park rangers, were transferred there in 2000.

Katie's black hair, almond-shaped eyes and medium complexion had never drawn much attention. However, when she started school, her peers couldn't help but notice that there was something different about the new girl.

They didn't know what to do with a girl who was a quarter-Japanese mixed with "a little bit of everything."

Within a year, questions about her race became name-calling — "flat-face Jap" — which often deteriorated to being spit on.

Katie wasn't alone in all of this. Her brother Justin, then a second-grader, also dealt with the physical and verbal harassment.

For nine years, they endured the bullying. In January 2009, things intensified, coming to a head when the siblings became victims of alleged racially motivated threats.

Bullying is not a new issue for Burney High, nor is it new for Asian Pacific Americans in schools across the country.

When State Assemblyman Ted Lieu, D-Calif., signed into law a statute providing students with more protection against bullies, the legislation reminded students, parents and schools that bullying has real and negative consequences for all involved.

"Bullying is a euphemism for child abuse — psychological abuse perpetrated upon children by other children," wrote Elizabeth Englander, principal, Thomas Puskarich said, "[Bullying] is not a new issue for Burney High, nor is it new for Asian Pacific Americans in schools across the country.

Growing Tensions

When the Davis family moved to Burney, they faced racism from the locals.

"I expected help," Linda said, "and we got nowhere."

A Community Problem

"For years, I've told my kids, 'Kids are cruel,'" said Bob Davis, Katie and Justin's father, "but now I don't know what to say; we just need to listen to our kids more."

The Davis family's story is not unique. An average of 13 percent of students in the Fall River Joint Unified District have been harassed because of their race, ethnicity or national origin, according to the most recent California Healthy Kids Survey.

"Kids have reported that they're not feeling safe at school," said Stephanie Papas, school health education consultant for the California Department of Education.

"One of my main goals is to see all the students and staff look forward to coming to school," wrote Snelling, who's worked in education for 35 years. "Our job is to try and raise the awareness ... and hopefully in the grand scheme of things make a positive difference."

The Davis family is moving forward. "It's not over," Linda said. "The situation has been handled because we demanded it, and it took a very long time."

The Davis family's complaint to the Sheriff's Department is now with the district attorney. By March, they expect to learn more about the case.

Angela Chan, staff attorney with the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, is monitoring the issue, although she does not represent the family currently.

"Schools have a legal responsibility to address racial harassment and discrimination," Chan wrote in an e-mail. "I am supportive of the family filing a complaint."

As for Katie and Justin, life has improved. Since January, some of the bullies "have laid off completely," according to Justin. He now looks forward to finishing high school with his friends.

Katie is finishing school at home. She will be a high school graduate by March, and from there, she plans to move to spend her summer at a national park away from Burney.

When asked about her future, if college is part of her plan, the girl who tried to find her place in a new town, a new school, says she still yearns for a year without any school would get to chill out a little bit after years of just being so angry and hating [school] so much," Katie said. "I think I just need to relax and do something I want to do, and be respected for who I am."
HONOLULU—Hawaii legislators have stalled a proposal to bring same-sex civil unions to the islands, but Democratic leaders plan a bold move to bring the issue to a vote of the full Senate.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 3-3 Feb. 25, which is short of the majority needed to advance the bill through the normal legislative process.

Senate leaders have said they intend to yank the measure from its committee and force a vote before the 25-member Senate, which is allowed under a rarely used provision of the Hawaii Constitution if more than one-third of senators approve. As many as 18 senators have said they favor civil unions, which has already passed the House.

If it passes and Republican Gov. Linda Lingle doesn't veto it, Hawaii would become the fifth state to have civil unions. Lingle is uncommitted on the issue.

Only Massachusetts and Connecticut allow gay marriage, while Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey and New Hampshire allow civil unions. Californians voted in November to overturn a court ruling that allowed gay marriage, but the state still offers domestic partnerships that guarantee the same rights as marriage.

In 1994, JACL passed a resolution in favor of same-sex marriages—the first national Asian American organization to do so—and continues to support the rights of same-sex couples.

Impassioned crowds swamped the Hawaii Capitol and testified for more than 15 hours before the committee vote at 3 a.m. Feb. 25. Two Democrats joined the one Republican on the committee to vote against it. The Legislature is more than 80 percent Democratic.

Hundreds of gay marriage and civil union opponents, wearing red "We have already made it clear that we oppose same-sex marriage in Hawaii. ... Our mistake was when we assumed our representatives would represent us," said testifier Lisa Poulos. "Do not try and sneak same-sex marriages through the back door by calling them civil unions."

Civil union backers wore gold stickers with the word "Equality" written on them in green.

"Why is the world's most diverse location still discriminating against its homosexual brothers and sisters?" asked Bryan Oran, who identified himself as a 19-year-old service member of the military.

Those opposed to civil unions argued that they're the same thing as marriage, which should be reserved to couples of one male and one female. Nearly 70 percent of Hawaii voters approved a constitutional amendment in 1998 granting the state Legislature the power to reserve marriage for opposite-sex couples.

"We have already made it clear that we oppose same-sex marriage in Hawaii. ... Our mistake was when we assumed our representatives would represent us," said testifier Lisa Poulos. "Do not try and sneak same-sex marriages through the back door by calling them civil unions."

Civil union proponents told lawmakers that equality is a civil rights issue that should be settled based on principles rather than a dated majority vote.

"It is plain old dirty nasty discrimination," said Kapolei resident Michael Goloiach Jr.

The Hawaii Constitution allows a bill to be recalled from a committee 20 days after it was referred to that committee, so it couldn't be pulled to the Senate floor until March 10 at the soonest.

Removal of Display on WWII's End Raises Question on Balance Between Historical Accuracy and Racial Sensitivity

The 1945 headline trumpeted the end of war with a term now seen as derogatory to JAs.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

An Indianapolis VA hospital's decision to remove a framed newspaper headline "Japs Surrender" has sparked a nationwide letter-writing campaign among veterans, who say taking down the display amounts to an effort to whitewash history.

Roudebush Veterans Affairs Medical Center director Tom Mattice said he removed the 1945 Indianapolis Times front page after receiving a complaint from a new employee offended by the term "Japs," a common slur during World War II.

But a group of retired Marines says the VA hospital is allowing the display of propaganda posters, for example, including captions that put the images into context.

"You would never want to put up an object without interpreting it," said Kacey Hill, a spokeswoman for the New Orleans museum. "We are not a museum," he said. "A museum is where people go to understand the history. We are a medical center."

He said he has asked a staff member to find a different front page that carries the news of the war's end in more delicate terms. "Something like 'Victory in the Pacific,'" he said. "Or, 'Japanese Surrender.'"

John Gromosiak, an artist whose paintings of American warships line the VA's hallway near where the newspaper used to hang, says the headline depicts life as it was in 1945.

"The war's over, but if you're going to tell it like it is, then you tell it like it was, and that's the way it was, just like that newspaper said it," said Gromosiak, a Korean War veteran. "You cannot hide history, or you shouldn't."
Washington State House Passes Joint Memorial Calling for a Nisei Veterans Commemorative Stamp

By Pacific Citizen Staff

For Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos, heroism is worth a stamp.

Since her arrival to the Washington State Legislature a decade ago, Santos has hosted an annual Day of Remembrance in the Washington State House of Representatives to honor the Japanese American internees and World War II veterans.

This year, Santos sponsored House Joint Memorial 4005, which calls on President Barack Obama and Congress to issue a stamp commemorating the Nisei veterans.

The measure passed the state House unanimously on Feb. 18.

"Washington needs to be on record prior to the war, we were second — after California — in the population of Japanese Americans on the mainland," said Santos.

The accomplishments of the Nisei WWII veterans are legendary. The 442nd RCT/100th Battalion is the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in U.S. history. Among the numerous awards, there are 9,000 Purple Hearts and 21 Medals of Honor. Many of these men volunteered even though their families were being held in internment camps.

Speaking from the House floor, Santos said that the remaining Nisei veterans are now in their 80s and 90s in their twilight years.

"A commemorative stamp would be a fitting tribute to the Nisei veterans' years of service under the worst of conditions." 

HJM 4005 now goes to the Senate for consideration.

Washington State Senate for consideration.

Other cities and states have also joined the campaign to recognize WWII Nisei veterans.

The stamp committee — comprised of volunteers — makes direct recommendations to the U.S. Postal Service and can either reject a stamp proposal, recommend it, or continue to keep the proposal under consideration.

Many stamp proposals never see the front side of an envelope.

To date, there has never been a stamp honoring the heroic JA WWII soldiers although a stamp honoring Latino soldiers was issued in 1984 and the "Buffalo Soldiers" stamp honoring African Americans in 1994.

A.A. groups, including JACL, call for the swift approval of Locke's nomination.

By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama introduced former Washington Gov. Gary Locke as his nominee for Commerce secretary Feb. 14, trying a third time to fill a key Cabinet post for a country in recession.

"I'm sure it's not lost on anyone that we've tried this a couple of times. But I'm a big believer in keeping at something until you get it right. And Gary is the right man for this job," Obama said, standing with the fellow Democrat in the Indian Treaty Room at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building near the White House.

The president's two top earlier choices for the post dropped out — New Mexico Democratic Gov. Bill Richardson faced questions about a donor and Republican Sen. Judd Gregg of New Hampshire had a change of heart about working for a president from the opposite party.

In turn, Locke said he was committed to making the sprawling agency an "active and integral partner" in advancing Obama's economic agenda, as the agency nurtures innovation, expands global markets, protects ocean fisheries and fosters growth.

"The Department of Commerce can and will help create the jobs and the economic vitality our nation needs," Locke said.

If confirmed by the Senate, Locke would assume control of a large agency with a broad portfolio that includes overseeing many aspects of international trade, oceans policy and the 2010 Census.

Asian American groups, including the JACL, called for swift confirmation of Locke.

"The JACL is very pleased that Gary Locke has been nominated to become the Secretary of Commerce. He is well qualified and will be a great asset to the President's Cabinet," said Larry Oda, JACL national president.

"Gary Locke has been a great example to the Asian Pacific American community. We endorse his candidacy and encourage a swift approval for Gary Locke to fill the important position of the United States Secretary of Commerce," added Floyd Mori, JACL national director.

Locke, 59, was the nation's first Chinese American governor, serving two terms in Washington from 1997 to 2005. He currently works for the Seattle-based law firm Davis Wright Tremaine on issues involving China, energy and governmental relations.

"Over the years, I have traveled extensively with Gary, visiting Asian American communities around the country, and know that he has a nuanced understanding of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity within all our communities," said Rep. Mike Honda, Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus chair.

Obama Choose Locke to Run Commerce Department

APA Communities Get Preservation Grants

LOS ANGELES — Five APA communities will share in a $250,000 grant aimed at preserving their history. The city's Community Redevelopment Agency will nearly match the grant.

The grant, to be shared by neighborhood groups in Little Tokyo Chinatown, Filipinotown, Koreatown, and Thai Town, comes from the National Park Service as part of a White House initiative.

It will be matched by $211,327 in CRA funds, according to the city agency.

Study: Diabetes Risk Higher Among APA Children

HONOLULU — A 10-year diabetes study finds that APA children in the United States have higher rates of diabetes than children in many Asian countries.

The University of Hawaii's Dr. Beatriz Rodriguez says researchers found data indicating higher rates of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes was expected to be more common in American children because the disease is closely linked to obesity. But the causes of type 1 diabetes, an autoimmune disorder involving the pancreas that requires patients to take insulin, are less clear.

Rodriguez suspects a combination of infections at birth, toxins and early cessation of breast-feeding are responsible.

Judge: Top Obama Officials Should Review Hmong Case

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — A federal judge has urged top Obama administration officials to decide whether to continue to pursue the case against 11 Vietnam War veterans accused of trying to overthrow the communist government of Laos.

U.S. District Judge Frank C. Danrell Jr. told prosecutors they should take the case "to the top" of the new administration before deciding whether to keep prosecuting former Lao General Vang Pao, former U.S. Army officer Harrison Jack and nine other members of California's Hmong community.

Jack and the Hmong community leaders were accused in June 2007 of plotting to overthrow the communist Lao government and face charges that include violating the federal Neutrality Act.

It could be another four months before prosecutors decide what charges they could face at trial.
APAs in the News

By Pacific Citizen Staff

French Camp Chapter Awards Scholarship, Installs New Officers

Stephanie Kuwahara (pictured, left), an honors student at Tokay High School in Lodi, was the winner of the French Camp JACL chapter scholarship award. Kuwahara was presented with the award at the chapter’s annual New Year’s and installation luncheon on Feb. 28.

At the same event, JACL NCWNP Gov. Alan Nishi installed the following slate of officers: Dean Komure, president; Kent Higashiyama, 1st vice president; David Morinaka, 2nd vice president; Fumiko Asano, treasurer; Jeannie Matsumoto, corresponding secretary; Katy Komure, recording secretary; Kimi Morinaka, historian; and Hideo Morinaka, membership.

APALC Elects New Board Chair

Attorney John Lim has been elected the new chair of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center’s board of directors, making him the first Korean American in the position.

Lim is a senior partner in the transaction group of Lim, Ruger & Kim LLP and specializes in real estate development and financing, representing developers, financial institutions and investment entities.

The longtime board member began working with APALC in 1992 to help Korean storeowners and families recover from the losses incurred during the Los Angeles riots.

2 APAs Win Engineer of the Year Awards

Northrop Grumman Corporation employees Nora Lin and Harry Chen were recently recognized for their contributions to science and engineering at the 2009 Asian American Engineer of the Year.

The awards, presented by the Chinese Institute of Engineers-USA, are given to APA professionals in academia, public service and corporate entities for their personal achievements. Lin is a manager of supportability engineering for Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems sector in Rolling Meadows, Ill. Chen, an integrated product team manager and technical fellow for the Aerospace Systems sector, has helped the company field some of the nation’s most complex antenna systems for space applications.

Post Office is Named in Honor of Gordon N. Chan

A North San Jose post office has been named in honor of Gordon N. Chan, a respected community leader and agricultural pioneer who died in 2001. A plaque has been installed at the building on Lundy Avenue.

Chan, the first Chinese American president of the Santa Clara Farm Bureau, was a well-known mentor to many APA community activists and politicians. He was on the board and served as executive director of the Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI), the county’s largest and oldest nonprofit agency serving APAs.

He was a member of the county planning commission and served on the county’s redistricting commission. He was also the founder of the Chinese American Service League (CASL), the county’s redistricting commission.

NYU’s Lee Wins Education Leadership Award

Dr. Vivian S. Lee of New York University Langone Medical Center has received the Asian Pacific Fund’s 2009 Chang-Lin Tien Education Leadership Award, which honors the legacy of the first APA to head a major American research university.

As one of two recipients of this prestigious award, Lee received a $10,000 unrestricted grant in recognition of her exceptional record of accomplishments in higher education.

Lee is the inaugural vice dean for science, senior vice-president and chief scientific officer of NYU Langone Medical Center.

Hawaii Takes Land Dispute to Supreme Court

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—A congressional resolution apologizing for the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii in 1893 does not strip the state of its authority to sell or transfer any of about 1.2 million acres of land, Hawaii Attorney General Mark Bennett told the U.S. Supreme Court Feb. 25.

Bennett and Kamon K. Shannumagam, representing the state’s Office of Hawaiian Affairs, argued against each other in the state’s appeal of a Hawaii state Supreme Court ruling blocking any sale of land conveyed to the state as part of the 1959 act that led to Hawaii becoming the 50th state.

After years of legal wrangling, the state court last year halted sales of the “ceded lands” until Native Hawaiian claims to those lands are put to rest.

The state court’s decision, rested in part on a joint congressional resolution acknowledging and apologizing for the role that the United States played in the overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawaii on Jan. 17, 1893.

Bennett stressed two points. First, the resolution marking the 100th anniversary of the overthrow was an apology that did not change who had proper title to the lands in question.

“It was, as the sponsor said at the time, a simple apology, and no more,” Bennett said.

But he also urged the court to go a step farther and confirm the state’s sovereign authority over the land.

Several justices voiced a reluctance to do so.

“Why is it necessary? Why isn’t it sufficient just to say that this resolution has no substantive effect, period,” asked Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs sued the state to prevent it from selling some of the property in question. Speaking for the office, Shannumagam discounted the apology resolution’s effect on the state court’s decision.

He said that state law created the fiduciary duty ensuring that interests of Native Hawaiians were properly addressed.

The state court made clear that it was relying on the apology resolution only for the acknowledgment that Native Hawaiians had unresolved claims, he said.

Ginsburg didn’t seem to agree.

She said the Hawaii Supreme Court stated that its decision was “dictated by” the apology resolution. Those representing Native Hawaiians in the legal battle were “treating it now as sort of window dressing, icing on the cake, really didn’t matter.”

Shannumagam replied it was more than window dressing. The resolution confirmed the fact that lands were illegally taken away.

But he said the original lawsuit only focused on state law.

Ginsburg said she was concerned that the state court used the federal law as its basis for its decision, and that it used the federal law as a crutch. “What does this do? It removes it from the Hawaii political process.”

Some legal analysts say a ruling against the state of Hawaii could set a precedent for other native populations to make claims to lands they once inhabited. A decision in the case is not expected until June.

Court Reverses Ruling Bringing 17 Chinese Muslim Detainees to U.S.

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—A U.S. appeals court reversed a ruling Feb. 18 that would have transferred 17 Guantánamo Bay detainees, none of whom are labeled enemy combatants, to the United States. The ruling casts further uncertainty on the fate of the Turkic-speaking Muslims from western China.

Because there is no evidence they plotted or fought against the United States, the government has no authority to hold them at Guantánamo Bay, but decides what to do with the men has been a diplomatic problem for years.

The military says the men have ties to a militant group that demands separation from China. The United States will not release the Uighurs to their home for fear they will be tortured. Earlier this month, Beijing warned other countries not to accept the men, creating a potential diplomatic roadblock to President Barack Obama’s plan to close the facility at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, within a year.

U.S. District Judge Ricardo Urbina ruled in October that, since they are not enemy combatants, the Uighurs must be released to the United States. But the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned that ruling.

Only the executive branch, not the courts, can make decisions about immigration, the appeals court said. That fact doesn’t change, the court said, simply because the United States has held the men for years without charge.

"Such sentiments, however high-minded, do not represent a legal basis for upsetting settled law and overriding the prerogatives of the political branches," Judge A. Raymond Randolph wrote.

The decision has ramifications beyond the Uighurs. The Supreme Court has held that Guantánamo Bay detainees can go to court to challenge their imprisonment. The ruling, however, says a judge can hear the case but has no authority to actually free the detainees.

In ordering the Uighurs released last year, Urbina strongly rebuked the Bush administration for holding men who were not enemy combatants indefinitely, without charge.

The appeals court ruled that Urbina lacked the authority to right that wrong.

The court, made up of one Democratic and two Republican appointees, unanimously overturned Urbina’s decision. But Judge Judith Rogers, who was appointed by former President Bill Clinton, wrote a separate opinion saying Urbina had the authority to release the men but only after hearing from U.S. immigration officials.

The U.S. released four Uighurs from Guantánamo Bay in 2006, sending them to Albania because it was the only country that would take them. A Swedish immigration court granted asylum to one of those men on Feb. 18. Adil Hakimjan applied for asylum in Sweden because his sister lives there.
FOR THE RECORD

Honoring Fibber

My wife Carol and I visited Clovis recently to attend the Tri-District conference hosted this year by the CCDCC. It was a Day of Remembrance conference that featured the dedication of the Pinedale Assembly Center Memorial, built on the old fairgrounds site in then-rural Clovis.

After a day of plenary session panels on the experience of being incarcerated at Pinedale, on the coram nobis effort, and Redress, the district hosted a tribute dinner to recognize the achievements of individuals who have contributed to the community.

One of the recipients honored that evening was Satoshi “Fibber” Hirayama, who was given the President’s Medal of Distinction by Dr. John Welty, president of CSU Fresno. Hirayama was being recognized for an extraordinary career in athletics at Fresno State and his post-college career in sports.

Now get this.

A few years after the war, Fibber entered Fresno State on a football scholarship and played halfback, where he averaged five yards per carry throughout his football career at Fresno (the great Jim Brown averaged 5.2 yards over his career). As Welty put it, Fibber also decided to play baseball because the baseball season overlapped the beginning of football practice and Fibber could thus escape the early summer workouts with the football team!

He didn’t just play baseball. He set records all over the place: 76 stolen bases in one season, with 5 stolen in one game. (Neither Rickey Henderson nor Lou Brock ever did that). He was twice All-Conference, and in 1950, led the league with a .420 batting average. For those unfamiliar with batting averages, hitting .400 is so rare that it’s beyond the stratosphere in baseball. He didn’t just play baseball. He set records all over the place: 76 stolen bases in one season, with 5 stolen in one game.

As I listened to Dr. Welty read off Fibber’s many athletic feats and his post-World War II heroics, my heart was filled with pride. My father was a part of the Nisei generation. He was a part of a generation that was recruited into the armed forces and fought together in the Pacific. He was a part of a generation that was segregated and discrimination on American soil and fought for the right to be treated as equals.

Fibber was profiled in the Aug. 10, 1958, issue of Sports Illustrated.

He’s been described as, “pound-for-pound the greatest athlete to ever come out of Fresno State.” And that’s quite an achievement when you consider that Fresno State is often nationally ranked in both its football and baseball programs.

The thing about Fibber is that he’s a small guy. You’d think that the best halfback ever to come out of a really good football program like Fresno State’s would be some big, beefy no-neck guy with tree trunks for thighs. Not Hirayama. He was 5’3” and played at 140 pounds. Okay, granted that guys like Eddie LeBaron and Doak Walker, both also considered small, could play pro football in those days, but they were exceptions.

I grew up with twins Mike and Marlin McKeever, who were both two-year All Americans at USC and played linebacker for the L.A. Rams. Those guys were huge and would pulverize anyone who got in their way, even in sandlot football games. These are the kinds of guys Fibber ran away from. I always tried to make sure I was on Mike and Marlin’s teams when we chose sides at the playground because small but fast isn’t nearly good enough against guys who were as ferocious as they.

I had a chance to talk very briefly with Fibber after the dinner and told him how impressed I was with his many achievements, especially with his .420 batting average. His response was, “Well, you know how they like to exaggerate those things.”

As I listened to Dr. Welty read off Fibber’s many athletic feats and his other contributions to the Fresno community, I kept thinking of how fearless someone his size had to be against the big bruisers whose only goal was to crush him. For me, it characterized something about the Nisei. I was reminded of the White House ceremony when President Clinton presented Medals of Honor to 21 Nisei vets. Clinton towered over each of the vets, and as their citations were read, I kept thinking about how these Nisei summoned up such enormous courage to do what they did and thinking that stature isn’t measured in how big one is but by the size of one’s courage and heart. The same can be said about Fibber.

This humble and remarkable man has accomplished so much in his life but is clearly self-conscious about being given the recognition he so deserves. Like so many people who truly achieve great things, he doesn’t have to tell you about them.

You have to like that about Fibber.

John Tateishi is the immediate past JACL national director.
Days before the world premiere of "A Song for Ourselves," Tad Nakamura’s cell phone is blowing up.

His short documentary on the late singer and activist Chris Iijima has sold out at Little Tokyo’s Japanese American Cultural & Community Center. And friends who have waited to the last minute to request tickets have been mostly greeted with Tad’s automated voice message.

"I guess it’s a good problem to have."

Something about "A Song for Ourselves," Tad’s third in an impressive trilogy of short films about the Japanese American community, has touched a nerve. You could argue that it’s the film’s larger-than-life subject or the powerful black and white images of Chris’ face twisted with emotions in front of a microphone.

Or you could say it’s all the above factors in the hands of a young filmmaker who’s somehow managing to make history cool.

"That’s been the goal all along," said Tad, 28, whose previous work includes last year’s "Pilgrimage," a critically acclaimed documentary about the JA World War II internment set to the unlikely music of Portishead.

"I can reintroduce these parts of history to a younger audience that [other filmmakers] can’t."

Highlights of the Feb. 28 premiere of "A Song for Ourselves" included live performances from Kiwi and Bambu, independent Asian Pacific American hip-hop artists whose names would likely draw puzzled looks from most Nisei and Sansei.

But a free mix tape of the hip hop artists’ original songs praising Chris’ legacy obviously spoke to the core, new media-savvy audience. Since the mix tape was made available online as an early promotion for the film’s premiere, it has been downloaded over 1,800 times.

And in the historical documentary genre dominated by college professors, Tad’s penchant to be politically conscious songs from their 1973 album "A Grain of Sand." Along with the protests, rallies and the fight for university-level Ethnic Studies programs, Chris was there seemingly every step of the way empowering his people with music.

His activism made him friends with Tad’s parents, Robert Nakamura and Karen Ishizuka, who are both filmmakers and community leaders in their own rights. Tad had listened to "A Grain of Sand" as a kid, but rediscovered it years later when he was going through his own political awakening in college at the University of California, Los Angeles.

"By that time, I was hungry for it. There was a whole new significance behind it." In 2005, Chris, then a law professor at the University of Hawaii, a husband and father, was losing the battle against a rare blood disease. Six months before his death, Tad and his parents boarded an airplane to Hawaii.

"He’d been sick for many years and he wasn’t getting better," said Tad. "We wanted to get his story on tape just in case."

They asked him to talk about the early Asian American movement. Tad was behind the camera and his parents did the interview.

"He gave a three-hour interview while hooked up to an IV [line]. That was what impressed me the most. It was one of the most vibrant interviews I’ve ever done and he was dying."

Footage from the interview was used at Chris’ memorial service — the film grew from there.

"A Song for Ourselves," marks the first time Tad has made a biography. In the film, the lines are blurred between Chris’ life and the Asian American movement, mainly because Chris was so embedded in it.

"It’s Chris’ life you see in the movement."

The film also gives an inside look of Chris as a man, as evident by the people he left behind. Both his young sons are musicians.

"They had never seen some of the old photos of their dad. They knew their dad as the law professor," said Tad. "He showed them the film’s final cut. As soon as he pushed "play," Chris’ voice filled the room."

"They were excited to hear their dad’s voice again," said Tad. "The goal was to provide something for them to help with the healing process."

He pauses to search for the next word. And then makes a statement that seems to signify the exchange of batons from one former youth leader to another up-and-coming one.

"I made these films for the community."

---

See It

A Song for Ourselves
San Francisco Int’l Asian American Film Festival
March 15, 18 & 21
For screening times & venues:
http://festival.asianamericanmedia.org/2009/
For more information:
hpm.arts@kryz.com
http://asongforourselves.blogspot.com/
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Ultrarunner Gloria Takagishi to Celebrate 30-Year Milestone

This April she will become the only runner to compete in each of the 30 American River 50-Mile Runs. At 63, she shows little sign of slowing down.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

Gloria Takagishi, 63, has a way of making others feel really lazy. Her idea of a weekend workout is to run 20 miles. As a challenge, she enters ultramarathons, events with intimidating distances of 50 and 100 miles.

This year Gloria will be celebrating a remarkable milestone. In April, she will become the only ultrarunner to have run in each of the 30 American River 50-Mile Runs (AR50), an event that has been held annually since 1980.

It’s an accomplishment Gloria quietly but proudly acknowledges.

“Ultramarathoning, for people like me, you get a sense of accomplishment that you can do something that is long and hard,” said Gloria who is set to return to the AR50, an ultramarathon that will start in her hometown of Sacramento and take her to Auburn, a distance most of us would consider long while driving in our cars.

“I’m competing against myself, not against everyone else. I’m at peace when I’m out on the trails.”

In addition to her weekend workouts, Gloria works out a few times a week, sometimes waking up at 4 a.m. so she can get her run in before heading off to her full-time job as a state employee with the Department of Technology. Twice a week, her husband Ken rides his bike to join her in her early morning workouts.

“She’s not very athletic but it’s something she could accomplish that not many others can do,” said Ken, 62, who has supported his wife’s interest in ultrarunning from the beginning. “She’s not fast but she has endurance.”

Gloria, a Sansei, first started running in 1978 as a way to get in better shape. She started running the trails mile after mile. Although she has run a 3 hour, 36 minute marathon in the past, nowadays she goes at a slower pace with the goal of finishing, something she almost always manages to do.

“It’s what you set your mind out to do before the race. Your goal is to get it done. You know how far you need to go,” she said. “I see it as a challenge. I wouldn’t go out there if I wasn’t positive about it.”

But as Gloria tries to explain the drive of an ultrarunner, she acknowledges that only her fellow ultramarathoners can truly understand where she is coming from.

So it’s no surprise that many of her closest friends are also ultrarunners and training partners.

“I think Gloria is a very goal oriented person, as most ultrarunners are. I think she takes great pride in her ability to run the ultras and to finish them,” said Nancy March, 62, an ultrarunner who has known Gloria for 30 years. “She is not one of the faster runners, but she certainly has a very dedicated personality which is necessary in order to complete them.”

Gloria Takagishi and her two grandkids, Alexandra, 8, and Sabrina, 6, take in the Disney marathon in Orlando, Florida.

York Marathon in 1998. Two years ago she ran a 15-K run at Disney World in Orlando where her two grandkids, Alexandra, 8, and Sabrina, 6, joined her in her own 1-K kids run.

At 5 feet 2 inches and 119 pounds, Gloria is far from your intimidating muscle bound athlete. But it’s her drive and determination that keeps her going on those seemingly endless trails mile after mile. For more information: www.run100x.com/AR50/

With all her running commitments, Gloria still finds time for volunteering. She’s a treasurer for the Junior League of Sacramento and for the past several years she’s volunteered for The Western States 100-Mile Run helping cook breakfast for 600 runners at 4 a.m. Scrapbooking, knitting and puzzles are some of her hobbies and each year she makes sure she visits her grandkids in Florida a few times.

“I’m a pretty regimented person. I’m a planner so I can usually plan my weeks and days out.”

On April 4, Gloria will wake up before the crack of dawn and place her sneakers on the starting line at 6 a.m. with the goal of finishing the AR50. If successful, she will become the only person to have finished the race in each of the 30 years of the event.

As always, her husband Ken will be cheering her, meeting her at stops along the route to provide water, food and moral support. He’ll also be waiting for her at the finish line to celebrate a notable milestone.

Gloria will continue to run as long as her body allows,” said Bridget Powers, a friend and ultrarunner. “I see that as a very long term investment in health and longevity.”

Although she has run a 3 hour, 36 minute marathon in the past, nowadays she goes at a slower pace with the goal of finishing, something she almost always manages to do.

“She is my inspiration and a hero to me for what she has done.”

For more information: www.run100x.com/AR50/

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PHILADELPHIA—Kristine Minami was in college before she learned that her father, grandmother and uncle had been essentially jailed by the U.S. government for the crime of being Japanese American.

The detention of 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II was not discussed in Minami’s household. She learned about it in the 1980s through the National Day of Remembrance, which was observed around America on Feb. 19.

The discovery led Minami to greater understanding of her culture — and herself. Many hope the Day of Remembrance will also lead to greater understanding that Americans come in all types of packages.

“It got me more interested in my history and my roots,” said Minami, who grew up in Maryland with a Japanese father and white mother, and says her Asian American heritage is not immediately apparent.

“I learned about being Japanese,” said Minami, 40, who ended up writing her senior thesis about the effects of the internment. “It led me down the path to my identity.”

Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on Feb. 19, 1942, giving the government power to uproot entire innocent communities due to fears of “sabotage and espionage.”

In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed a law that apologized and paid $20,000 to each survivor.

“We have this shared history,” said Bonnie Clark, an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Denver who is excavating materials from a former internment camp. The artifacts were displayed during the university’s remembrance program.

“The internment is very much a Japanese American story, but it’s all of our stories,” Clark said. “It’s about the decisions we have to make as a populace, holding our politicians responsible for their behavior, understanding that we all come to the table with these different traditions and trying to balance out a vision for ourselves.”

The remembrance also serves as a sort of conscience, a reminder of the balance between security and civil rights in the era of global terrorism, Guamatanbo Bay and expanded government wiretapping.

“It shows the fragile nature of our civil and constitutional rights, and the importance of holding people accountable and remaining vigilant,” said Gordon Aoyagi, a board member of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, which held a panel discussion in Washington, D.C. on Feb. 19 to mark the occasion.

The California State Legislature recognized the Day of Remembrance with the passage of Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 21 on Feb. 23, presented by Assemblymembers Mariko Yamada, D-Davis, and Warren Furutani, D-Long Beach.

“By carrying this resolution, we revisit the implications of the suspension of constitutional rights and work towards the goal of a more just society for all,” said Yamada in a statement.

For Mary Murakami, who spent three years in a detention camp, the day represents something simple.

“It shows that it did happen,” said Murakami, now 82.

Murakami was 14 when she saw a notice posted on a telephone pole outside her San Francisco home saying that all Japanese families would be “evacuated” and taken to camps.

Her parents, fearful that they would be separated from their children, took a portrait of themselves and gave a copy to each child.

More than 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were interned at various internment camps during WWII, including Topaz (above).

Murakami still has the photo.

Families were told to take only what they could carry. The Murakamis and other families stored their belongings in their church, but thieves soon broke the door down and ransacked the storage room.

Murakami lived with her family behind barbed wire at a camp on a dry Utah lake bed. Instead of sharing family meals, they ate in a mess hall. Toilet stalls faced each other and had no doors. She slept on an Army cot, the family’s single room warmed by a potbelly stove.

In 1943 the government decided to test the loyalty of the detainees with a questionnaire, Murakami remembers. One of the questions was, “Would you be willing to serve in the U.S. Army?” Her brother answered “yes” and was drafted out of the detention camp.

After three years of confinement, Murakami’s family was released. They were given $25 each to start over.

Today, Murakami shows little bitterness over this history, just a determination that it not be forgotten.

“We don’t want it to happen ever again,” she said. Minami calls the internment saga “a really powerful story about democracy.”

“It’s an ugly part of American history, but it’s important for people to know,” she said. “Because of that ugly chapter, we had a renewal of the American democracy.”

### Commentary

**Plan Now to Take a Bite Out of Your 2009 Tax Bill**

By STEVE OKAMOTO

As many Americans engage in writing big checks for their 2008 tax bills, it may be time to look for ways to avoid the same pain again next April.

One strategy may substantially reduce your income taxes — charitable planned giving.

This approach makes it possible to make a tax-deductible gift to a charity while retaining the right to use the asset or to derive income, or payments, from it. The most popular vehicles are bequests, charitable remainder trusts.

A charitable gift can help taxpayers win in at least three ways in 2009.

1. It can reduce taxes, generate income, and provide crucial support for an important cause.

For those who enjoy giving to charity, you may wish to look at the amount and timing of your gifts in order to maximize tax savings and income production this year.

After all, charitable deductions as a method of reducing taxes are totally within your control.

Did you know that you’re allowed — encouraged — to deduct up to 50 percent of your adjusted gross income to a fully accredited charity with the IRS $101(c)(3) designation? A family with an income of $100,000 would be allowed to deduct $50,000, which means tremendous tax savings.

If more than 50 percent of your adjusted gross income is given to charity this year, you can carry the excess over for five additional years.

In addition to cash, the IRS allows tax deductions for gifts of appreciated property, including real estate and securities (stocks, bonds, and mutual funds). Investments that have decreased in value during the recent economic and stock market downturn can be sold with cash proceeds being donated to charity. This could create a double deduction — the capital loss and the cash donation.

In some situations the combination of deductible loss and charitable deduction may result in a total deduction more than the current value of the investment.

In my experience with charitable planned giving, tax savings and other financial advantages of charitable planning loom especially large for older Americans.

Begin planning now for charitable giving this year so that you can make decisions deliberately and wisely. I urge you to consult with a professional advisor — an accountant, estate attorney, or stockbroker, for example — before finalizing decisions.

Steve Oamoto is the chair of the JACL planned giving committee and the director of estate and asset services with the American Cancer Society, Inc.
“No-nos” and Those Who Renounced Encouraged to Tell Their Stories at Tule Lake Pilgrimage

Attendees will also celebrate the designation of the Tule Lake Segregation Center as a National Monument during the July 2-5 pilgrimage.

“No-nos” and those who renounced their U.S. citizenship during World War II are being encouraged to attend this year’s Tule Lake Pilgrimage so they can share their stories of courage and be heard by those who may still be unfamiliar with their legacy.

This year’s July 2 to 5 pilgrimage will vary with tradition and take place during an odd year. It will also be a time for attendees to celebrate the Tule Lake Segregation Center’s recent designation as a National Monument.

“The people who protested their incarceration and were segregated at Tule Lake are the core of what the Tule Lake Segregation Center was all about,” said pilgrimage chair Hiroshi Shimizu. “We want to know why they took the risk of protesting the loyalty questions, especially because these stories have not been heard or validated much.”

As always, former Tule Lake internees 80 years and older will be offered free registration to the pilgrimage.

Mamoru “Mori” Tanimoto, age 88, plans to be there. Tanimoto hopes to see the Civilian Conservation Corps camp where he was imprisoned, before segregation, with over 100 others who protested the flawed loyalty questions that the Army used to distinguish the “loyal” from the “disloyal.”

“I would do it again. Guess I’m just hardheaded. I’d be more hard-headed next time because I know what the rules are on that,” he said, referring to the fact they were never charged with a crime. “We were protesting because we weren’t being treated like American citizens.”

For the six decades since WWII, Tule Lake has been stigmatized as the camp for “troublemakers” and “bad” and “disloyal” people, a carryover of the government’s loyal/disloyal paradigm forced on Japanese Americans. That stigma contributed to a post-war suppression of stories of protest in the camps, said Shimizu.

“Stories about legitimate and courageous acts of grass-roots civil disobedience were shunned in favor of stories that enhanced an image of Japanese American loyalty and cooperation,” he said. “Sadly, the ‘disloyal’ stigma remains so pervasive that the Nisei who refused to cooperate with the government’s demand to prove loyalty don’t want to talk about it.”

Added Shimizu, “Now that Tule Lake Segregation Center is a National Monument, perhaps it’s time to start talking openly about what happened to the 12,000 courageous Japanese Americans who responded to the injustice of mass incarceration with protest and resistance.”

2009 Tule Lake Pilgrimage

Date: July 2 to 5
Registration: $395 per person; $325 for students and those on fixed incomes (Registration fees waived for former Tule Lake internees 80 and older)
Deadline: May 15; afterwards registration goes up to $450
Registration forms: www.tulelake.org

For more information: Hiroshi Shimizu, hshimizu@pacbell.net, 415/566-2279 (S.F.); Jimi Yamaichi, jyamaichi@att.net, 408/269-9458 (San Jose); Grace Kajita, tulelake@att.net, 916/392-5416 (Sacramento); Stan Shikuma, stakuko1@mac.com, 206/919-1465 (Seattle); Soji Kashiiwagi, soji910@msn.com, 626/351-1073 (Los Angeles); Sachiko Takita, stakita@yokohama-cu.ac.jp, 045/787-2099 (Japan)

Amache Reunion Set For Las Vegas

It could be the last chance to catch up with old friends who lived a few barracks over. The Amache Historical Society is hosting its final large reunion of former camp internees from May 4 to 6 in Las Vegas.

The three-day and two-night reunion will be held at Downtown Las Vegas’ Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino. For $125 each, participants will enjoy buffet dinners and other activities. Room rates are $45 per night.

At the event, a designated hospitality room, filled with exhibits and memorabilia of Amache, will be open for old friends to get together.

When Amache closed its doors in 1945, families moved and resettled all over the country. Over the years, the reunion has provided for many a rare opportunity to share both good and bad memories of their lives behind barbed wire.

A charter bus has been contracted to pick up participants from three locations in the Los Angeles area: the Venice Japanese Community Center, the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center, and the San Gabriel Japanese Cultural and Community Center.

Amache was one of 10 camps built by the War Relocation Authority to incarcerate Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants, most from California, during World War II. At its peak, Amache held more than 7,500 internees and was the 10th-largest community in Colorado.

‘09 Amache Reunion

May 4-6
Golden Nugget Hotel and Casino in Downtown Las Vegas
$125 and $45 per night room rate
Space is limited!

For more information: Irene Furuya 626/791-0547 or mfuurya82@gmail.com; Min Tonai 818/591-1269 or tonaim@pacbell.net

Vietnam war veteran Judge Vincent Okamoto (left) and MOH winner Hershey Miyamura catch up with each other at the reunion.

War heroes, their friends, and family members recently rendezvoused at a Holiday Inn. They swapped stories and caught up with old friends during the 59th Annual Nisei Veterans of Foreign Wars Reunion held Feb. 13-15 in Las Vegas, Calif.

Two Medal of Honor recipients George “Joe” Sakato, E Company, 442nd, and Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura, H Company, 7th Regiment, 3rd Division, greeted friends and autographed books.

The Hon. Vincent H. Okamoto, considered the most highly decorated Nisei in the Vietnam War, was on hand to sell and autograph his new book, “Wolfhound Samurai.”

The reunion allowed aging World War II veterans the opportunity to recount stories of heroism.

The general chairman of the reunion was Robert M. Wada of the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670. Others posts which jointly hosted the reunion were: Gardena Nisei Memorial VFW Post 1961, San Fernando Valley VFW Post 4140, East Los Angeles Nisei Memorial VFW Post 9902 and Los Angeles Memorial VFW Post 9938.

JACL National Director Floyd Mori, who is a former U.S. Army reservist during peacetime, said it was an honor to be among heroes.

“The entire Japanese American community owes these brave individuals a debt of gratitude for all they did to make life better for all of us. The courage, sacrifice, and loyalty they exhibited during extremely difficult times of war are exemplary and admirable,” said Mori.

2009 Escorted Tours & Cruises

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May 6-17
Spain & Portugal
May 21- 4th Bikkuri Japan “Hidden Surprises of Japan”
June 2
June 16-18 Las Vegas Getaway Shows: The Blue Man Group & Phantom of the Opera
July 6-16
Summer Japan “Fun for the whole family”
July 20-
Alaska Cruise & Land Tour “Diamond Princess”
Aug. 1
Aug. 18-31
Gems of Malaysia & Singapore
Sept. 7-18
Northern Japan “Hokkaido & Tohoku”
Sept. 15-28
Greek Isles Cruise “Celebrity Solstice” (Almost Sold Out)
Oct. 3-16
Exotic China (New Tour Date)
Oct. 9-22
Korea Highlights & Drama/Movie Tour (New Tour Date)
Oct. 22-
Autumn Japan “Fall Highlights”
Nov. 4
Nov. 3-13
The Best of Kyushu
Nov. 8-16
Train Adventure through Copper Canyon (New Tour)
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Christmas in Las Vegas: Shows: TBA
Dec. 5-14
South America Cruise “Río de Janeiro, Iguaçu Falls, Buenos Aires"

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The Topaz Museum Board has hired the firm Shah Kawasaki Architects of Oakland to design its museum, with Alan Kawasaki as lead designer. Kawasaki will design a museum complex which will be located on Main Street in Delta, Utah, 16 miles from the Topaz site. The construction of the museum will proceed in phases beginning with the preliminary design of the building.

Kawasaki’s mother’s family, the Hayashidas, lived on Topaz Block 7 during the internment. The Topaz site was named a National Historic Landmark in 2007. The Museum Board, which owns 626 acres of the 640 acre site, will begin working with the National Park Service to write a management plan that will guide the board in how to protect and interpret the site.

This coming spring, The Topaz Museum Board plans to sponsor informational meetings to show the museum plans and talk about the three phases of the plan. In addition to the architect, the board will hire another Oakland firm, West Office Exhibition Design, Andy Kramer, principal, as the exhibit interpretive designer. Lisa Ferrier and Julie Min will also be part of the design team.

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Calendar

East
PHILADELPHIA
Sat., Mar. 28—Philadelphia JACL Installation and Graduate Recognition Luncheon; noon; Maggiano’s, 205 Mall Blvd, King of Prussia; speaker is Prof. Eric Muller, author of “American Inquisition: the Hunt for JA Disloyalty in WWII; RSVP by Mar. 22; $40/members, $45/non-members, $20/children. Info: Toshi Abe, 609/683-9489 or Scott Nakamura, 610/878-2237.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
Thu., Apr. 17—JACL Gala Dinner; focus will be on the JA veterans from World War II and beyond. Info: www.jacl.org or 202/223-1240.

Midwest
MINNEAPOLIS

CENTRAL AND WESTERN U.S.
DENVER
Sun., April 5—Mile-Hi Chapter Installation; noon; Renaissance Hotel, 3801 Quebec; featuring Adam Schrager, author of “The Principled Politician: The Ralph Carr Story.” Info: Charmaine Palmer, 303/449-8526.

Pacific Northwest
PORTLAND
Through Mar. 15—Exhibit, “Desert Sands: Photographs by Emily Hanako Momohara”; Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, 121 NW 2nd Ave.; exhibit hours Tues.-Sat., 11-3 p.m. and Sun., noon-3 p.m.; $3 admission, free for center members. Info: www.oregonnikkei.org or 503/224-1459.

SEATTLE
Sat., Mar. 21—64th Annual Nisei Veterans Committee Installation Banquet; 11:30-3 p.m.; Rainier Golf and Country Club, 11133 Des Moines Memorial Dr.; keynote speaker, Judge Vincent Okamoto; $30 early bird registration (Mar. 13), $40 thereafter.

Northern California
EL CERRITO
Sat., Mar. 14—Screening, “Uncommon Courage: Patriotism and Civil Liberties”; 1:30-4 p.m.; East Bay Free Methodist Church, 5395 Potrero Ave.; film tells the story of the MIS during WWII; Marvin Uratsu and filmmaker Gayle Yamada will be on hand for questions. Info: Mary Ann Furutachi, 510/526-8020.

Sacramento
Sacramento;
Sat., Mar. 28—Workshop, “Lost and Found … Connecting with your Japanese Roots”; 2 p.m.; Asian Community Center, 7337 Park City Dr.; speaker Goro has traced his family history back 36 generations; $5 donation. Information: Goro, 916/395-2589 or jgk221@yahoo.com.

San Francisco

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
Los Angeles
See photographer Emily Momohara’s “Desert, Sands” exhibit at the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center.

Orlando
Sat., Mar. 14—Symposium, “Asian American Artists in California”; 9-1 p.m.; Armand Hammer Museum, 10899 Wilshire Blvd.; examines the lives and work of artists past and present and offers insights into issues of cultural hybridity, race, social climate and transnationalism; free. RSVP is requested. Info and RSVP: 310/825-2974.

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Balcony $5,116 – REDUCED TO $3,964

Jun 29 Summer Japan Family Tour - 10 Days
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Inland Sea Cruise - Shodo Island - Miyajima - Hiroshima - Osaka

Aug 1 NCL - Scandinavia/Russia Cruise - 14 Days
Window $3,785 - REDUCED TO $3,485
Balcony $4,133 - Reduction $464 - REDUCED TO $3,669
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Aug 22 NCL - West Mediterranean Cruise - 15 Days
Window $3219 - Reduction $170 - REDUCED TO $3,049
Balcony $3799 - Reduction $170 - REDUCED TO $3,629
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Oct 13 Hokkaido/Tohoku - 11 Days
$4195 - Sapporo-Sakohoro - Atu - Lake Toya – Hakodate Aomori – Hachimanai - Matsumita - Sendai - Tokyo

Oct 19 Uranihou"Otherside of Japan” - 11 Days
$4095 - Tokyo-Japan Sea-Sado Isle-Kazasawa-Amano-hashidate-Kinzaki-Matsusue-Tsum - Daisen-Kyoto

Nov 2 Fall Japan Classic-11 Days
$3985 - Tokyo – Takayama – Nara - Takahashi-Miyajima Hiroshima- inland Sea Cruise - Shodo Island-Kyoto

Nov 12 Okinawa/Kyushu/Shikoku - 12 Days
$4995 - 3-Day Okinawa - Nagasaki - Unzen-Kumamoto Boppu - Cape Ashizuri - Kochi – Tekamatsu - Kyoto

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PACIFIC CITIZEN
PAUL YOSHIO TANI
9/7/25 - 2/19/09
Paul Yoshio Tani, of Ashburn, Va., passed away Feb. 19, 2009. He was born September 7, 1925 in San Francisco, Calif. He and his family were relocated a replacement for the 442nd RCT. The war in Europe ended before he could be deployed and he completed his enlistment with the Military Intelligence Service Language School and the Counter Intelligence Corps School. Paul completed his college education at Stanford University where he earned a BS (1949) and an MS (1951) both in mathematics. He was among the first to write programs for IBM's (and the nation's) first commercially available electronic digital computer.
During the first 12 years of his 41 year professional career in the computing industry, he worked for companies that used IBM equipment; Honeywell, North American Aviation, and Union Carbide. Then, IBM was his employer for 29 years, mostly in technical positions. He interacted with technical and management personnel at IBM as well as at IBM customer sites. For three years, he was the IBM manager of mission programming in support of early Gemini and Apollo space flights from 1963-1966.
Paul retired from IBM in 1991 and moved to Brevard, NC in 1993. He moved to Ashburn, Va. to be closer to his family in 1999. He was an active member of the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA), of JACL (Japanese Americans Citizens’ League). He was a volunteer docent at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism in Washington, DC. He also worked on transcribing interviews with fellow Nisei veterans about their experiences.
Paul was married in 1955 to Sumiko Watanabe, whom he predeceased in 1999. He is survived by two sons and their families; Thomas, his wife Christine and grandson Philip (Morris Plains, NJ), and James, his wife Jaye and grandchildren Julia and Brian (Vienna, Va.). He is also survived by his fiancée, Florence Dobashi (Sandy, Calif., CA) as well as many nieces, nephews and cousins who love and miss him.
A “Celebration of Life” reception was held at the Money & King Funeral Home in Vienna, VA on February 25. Notes can be sent to Thomas Tani, 19 Keene Place, Morris Plains, NJ 07950. Eternal memory and memorial service will take place at the Tani Family Plot in Colma, Calif., at a later date. In lieu of flowers, Paul’s family request that donations in his memory be sent to: The National Japanese American Historical Society (www.njashs.org), 1684 Post St., San Francisco, CA 94115 or (415) 921-5007.

FUMI ITO
February 5, 1932 - December 1, 2008
Peace and Love, Fumi Ito, died on December 1, 2008 from cancer. She was a devoted mother, wife, sister, aunt and friend. Fumi was a 1974 graduate of Toledo College (now Oregon Technical Institute) and was an accomplished seamstress and quilter. She was active in the Quilters of the West and enjoyed making quilts to give as gifts. She is survived by her husband, Thomas; her son, Bryan; her brother, Michael; her sisters, Delores and Janice; and her nieces and nephews. She is loved and will be deeply missed. Services will be announced at a later date.

FURUSHIMA, Roy Takeshi, 72, Pearl City, Haw.
Feb. 14; Korean War veteran; survived by wife, Judy; son, Paul; daughters, Carol Nagamine and Diana Hanaida; 4 gc.; brothers, Thomas and Hail; and sisters, Dawn Pang and Jewel Carmel.

Funai, George Terao, 93, Leland, Wash., Feb. 16; WWII veteran, 442nd; survived by wife, Fusuye; daughter, Gwen Jefferson; son, Keith (Brinm); 4 gc.; brothers, Toshio and Frank; and sisters, Lilly Uyeda, Alice Waterer and May Ohtani.

Kanno, Thomas Kanjiro, 100, Los Angeles, Feb. 5; survived by daughters, Michiko (Shirow) Ogata and Helen Kanno; son, Kiyoshi (Madjuro); 4 gc.; and 4 gc.

Kazunaga, Betty Ayuko, 76, Monterey Park, Feb. 6; survived by husband, Sakai; daughter, Karen Samuelson; sons, Ronald and Jon; 1 gc.; and sisters, Ellen Nakashima, Alice Watanabe and Yoko (Roland) Miyashita.

Masui, Donald Michiaki, 81, Honolulu, Haw.; Feb. 6; survived by wife, Helen; sons, Myles; daughter. Diane Arakawa; and 3 gc.

Matayoshi, Natalie Nobuko, 82, Paramount, Feb. 16; survived by husband, Dave; daughters, Lynette (Bryan) Ishino and Dorene (Neil) LaBarge; son, Duane (Lillian); 3 gc.; brothers, Tani Tamaru (Shizuyi); Kenneth (Jon) and Ronald; sisters, Patsy Souza and Jeanetta Nakata; sisters-in-law. Inez Nakata, Chio Miyatoshli, Pat Ige, Toyo Miyashiro, Yeni and Minnie Matayoshi; and brother-in-law, John Matayoshi.

Mikami, Kiyoto, 87, survived by daughters, Marion (Bud) Stocking, Julie (Tetsuo) Togawa, Pamela (Erie) Tokunaga and Janice (Curtis) Mar; 7 gc.; brother, Tuk (Yoyo); and sisters, Haru (Robert) Hirakota and Yaeo Mikami.

Monji, Tomi, 80, Seal Beach, Feb. 7; survived by husband, James; son, Michael (Evette); step-son, Larry (Elaine); 4 gc.; brothers, Joe and Takeshi Ono; and sister. Taeko Joann Inirian.

Nakamura, Shunya, 82, Lakewod, Co., Dec. 20, 2008; survived by wife, Sande; son, Stanley (Paula); daughter, Randy Hiraki; 2 gc.; and brother, Yosia.

Oita, Katsuyi, 85, Seattle, Wash., Feb. 11; WWII veteran, MIS; survived by daughter, Julie (Bill) McDermott; 4 gc.; and sisters, Naushe (George) Hirozawa and Aileen Oita.

Okita, Sueko, 83, Los Angeles, Feb. 7; survived by daughters, Linda Okita and Barbara (Thomas) Carney; 2 gc.; sister, Mary Shinozaki; and sisters-in-law, Utah.

OKITA, Aileen, 46, Honolulu, Haw.; Feb. 11; survived by husband, Berwyn; son, Bryson; parents, Ben and Karen Mizusaki; brother; James in-laws, Walter and Eva Ito.

In Memoriam - 2009
All the towns are in California except as noted.

Handa a d a a

FURUSHIMA, Roy Takeshi, 72, Pearl City, Haw.
Feb. 14; Korean War veteran; survived by wife, Judy; son, Paul; daughters, Carol Nagamine and Diana Hanaida; 4 gc.; brothers, Thomas and Hail; and sisters, Dawn Pang and Jewel Carmel.

Funai, Jack Yoshikazu, 81, Monterey Park, Feb. 7; survived by wife, Sumiko; daughter, Leslie; brother, Masao (Fumie); and sisters-in-law, Tomiko Dotomi, Chikaye Sande Hashimoto and Masae Akaza.

FURUSHIMA, Frank Roy, 86, Los Angeles, Feb. 14; survived by wife, Fumie; sister, Pearl Akutagawa; and brother, Henry (Chieko).

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This celebration appears on a space-available basis at no cost. Printed obituaries from your newspaper are welcome.

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KOREA DRAMA SPRING HOLIDAY TOUR
WAITLIST
MAR 27-APR 8
Seoul, Cheju Island, Busan, Daegu, Chn, Churchon,Nomishon, Island.

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE TOUR
APR 15-25
Tokyo, Tendo Onsen, Naka, Hiroshma, Lake Towada, Morioka, Matsuhisa, Higashiyama Onsen.

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

GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN: JAPAN TOUR I (SOLD OUT)
JUN 26-JUL 7
Tokyo, Hakone, Asami, Hiroshma, Myoyama, Kyoto, Nara.

GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN: JAPAN TOUR II
WAITLIST
JUL 7-16
Kyoto, Nara, Hiroshma, Miyajima, Asami, Hakone, Tokyo.

ALASKA HOLIDAY CRUISE
JUL 26-AUG 2
Seattle, Glaciar Bay, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Victoria City, HOLLAND AMERICA Westerdam Shp.

JAPAN OBOFESTIVAL TOUR
AUG 5-16
Tokyo (Teikyo Chon Festival), Gyu, Hachiman (Summer Obon Festival), Zako, Jozakari, Okayama.

Sapporo, Kitami, Tsubetsu Obon Festival).

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

PANA CONVENTION SOUTH AMERICA TOUR
SEPT
PANA Convention - Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Optin to Peru.

NEW ENGLAND HOLIDAY TOUR
NEW DATES
OCT 2-9
Boston, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire. Day trips on historic trains: Maine Narrow Gauge
Railroad, Conway Scenic Railroad, Green Mountain Pedal Railroad, Essex Steam Train.

OKINAWA-KYUSHU HOLIDAY TOUR
OCT 11-23
Naha, Kagoehara/Tobusuki, Miyazaki, Tada, Takachiho, Mi. Ami, Nagasaki, Miyazaki, Fukuoka.

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