IN DEPTH: From Depression to Recession
Asian Pacific American survivor stories have new significance in today's bad economy.

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Letters to the Editor

I found myself shocked after reading Melissa Chua’s article in the May 15-June 4 issue of the Pacific Citizen. The article was about how casting in the upcoming “Last Airbender” movie is “whitewashing.”

I think that casting of main characters (in any movie) should rely solely on talent. I have seen no evidence that people of Asian descent were not allowed to audition for the major roles of “The Last Airbender.” We have also seen no evidence that the Caucasians cast were not chosen for their exceptional acting abilities.

I would have thought the intention of an organization such as the JACL to be to dissolve race barriers. From what I have seen here, however, it seems that we are more focused on “getting our share” of what we deserve. Many people are throwing around the term “racebending,” and I would like to do so as well. I would argue that we have become the racebenders.

I fail to see how casting white people to act as fantasy characters in a fantasy world is heinous. Sure, the world of “Avatar” has its roots in Asian culture. But since when has earthbending, waterbending, firebending, or airbending had any place outside of fantasy worlds?

PATRICK KITO MONARI

No Racism in ‘Last Airbender’

Katie and Justin Davis were allegedly targeted for their ethnicity.

NCWNP Applauds P.C.’s Coverage

On behalf of the NCWNP District Council, I would like to thank the Pacific Citizen for its full page coverage of the Robert and Linda Davis family from Burney, Calif. whose two children of Japanese American ancestry were subjected to racial slurs and taunts by their fellow students on page 4 of the March 9-19 issue of the Pacific Citizen.

Our district first became concerned over the Davis’ situation when Patty Wada reported at our February District Council meeting that the parents had held a meeting with the superintendent of the school district and were told “let’s forgive and forget.”

The district involvement intensified with Patty sending a letter to the school district, contacting the Asian Law Caucus for legal representation, and contacting the Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights.

It was the unanimous decision of the delegates present at our February district meeting that the district provide as much support as possible for the Davis family to protect the civil rights of the family, especially their children.

We believe JACL has a role in protecting the civil and human rights of all Americans, especially those of Japanese ancestry. Thanks again for working with the NCWNP district in getting the Davis family’s story out to the membership.

ALAN NISHI
NCWNP District Governor

Letters/Commentary/Spring Campaign

COMMMUNITY COMMENTARY

Women Leaders of California

By EMILY MURASE

What is the future of California? What are the key issues that will shape this future? Who will be there to lead these issues? I was privileged to find myself among 60 exceptional women leaders from across the state as part of Leadership California, a year-long professional development training for senior-level women.

In the Class of 2009, I am joined by two other Japanese American women: Lynn Matsuda and Kimberly Oka. With over 30 years of experience in the banking industry, Lynn currently serves as senior vice president and director of Customer Experience and Loyalty for California Business Banking at Wells Fargo and is based in Sacramento. Formerly a board member of the annual Pacific Rim Street Fest in Sacramento, Lynn now dedicates her volunteer time to the Big Brothers and Big Sisters board in Sacramento, serving as chair of the organization’s annual fundraiser in November that raises $80,000 to support the mentoring of disadvantaged youth by successful professionals.

Kimberly Oka, a native of Salinas who now lives in San Francisco, serves as the Community Benefits Reporting and Compliance Group Leader of Kaiser Permanente’s Northern California region. She began her career with a BA in Dietetics from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and received a Master’s in Public Health from Harvard University. An avid cyclist, Kim is also a triathlete and skier.

In March, I met my classmates for the first time in Sacramento, where we were briefed by Assemblymembers, Senators, Agency directors, and members of the Governor’s staff about the state budget and key legislative issues. As part of the three-day convening, we also traveled to Gallo Wineries in Modesto to hear Stephanie Gallo highlight issues critical to the Central Valley such as the need for quality public education and training for a changing workforce.

Next we gathered in Los Angeles to identify our leadership styles, review California history we were never taught in school, grapple with healthcare, generational differences, and demographic trends.

In Los Angeles, we engaged with Leadership California Board Member Kay Iwata, a nationally-recognized diversity consultant since 1987 and author of “The Power of Diversity: 5 Essential Competencies for Leading a Diverse Workforce” who led us in a exercise that forced us to reflect on our own attitudes about ethnic and economic diversity.

The session also featured a women’s leadership panel with Hiroko Tatebe, the first and only woman on the board of directors of the Daiichi Kango Bank of California. She recently retired as executive vice president and is currently focused on her work as the founding president of the Global Organization for Leadership and Diversity for high potential women leaders.

The remaining two sessions will be held in San Francisco and San Diego. For more information about Leadership California, go to www.leadershipcalifornia.org.

Emily Murase, PhD, serves as executive director of the San Francisco Department on the Status of Women. A candidate for school board in 2008, Emily is active in the public schools community and is planning a second run in 2010. She is a member of the San Francisco JACL.
From Depression to Recessions: APA Survivor Stories Have New Significance

Victims of today's bad economy can look to their grandparents for tips on how to get by in hard times. They were the original 'frugalists' and 'recessionistas.'

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Lately, the world outside Aya Mediud's windows seem to be unfolding like an old memory. At 84, the Boulder, Colorado resident has seen many trends from her youth regain new life including now, growing joblessness, high foreclosure rates, and the inevitable human despair that goes along with a global economic recession.

Aya, who went from a toddler to a teenager in the Great Depression, knows this plight all too well. Growing up in Seattle, Aya and her family survived the decade-long period of epic hardship by living off of what they could catch and grow. All the while, people would come to their door begging for scraps of food.

"We're not doing that badly now as of yet," said Aya, a retired schoolteacher and Mile-Hi JACL member. But grim economic indicators in 2009 continue drawing comparisons to 1929 making Aya a witness, in one lifetime, to two of the worst economic crises in U.S. history.

"It's incredible that it's all happening again."

For Asian Pacific American survivors of the Great Depression, memories of hope amidst despair and lessons from those trying times have gained new significance in the depths of the current recession.

"They were the original recyclers," said Marlene Shigekawa, 54, about the older generation that included her mother, Misako Shigekawa.

They knew how to stretch every dollar and reuse everyday household goods year after year. They were the so-called "frugalists" and "recessionistas" before how-to articles and lifestyle magazines popularized the monikers. And while Americans today are scouring these resources for new ideas to save money, Misako has been dishing out free advice for years.

"Money doesn't grow on trees," she would tell her children.

"Save everything."

In January, the Santa Ana, Calif. resident turned 100, and impressions of the Great Depression remain deeply set.

"It was a disaster for everyone," said Misako, an Orange County JACL member.

From this single life experience, she learned things she would remember for the rest of her life. She still insists on saving wrapping paper from opened birthday presents and shakes her head disparagingly when her grandchildren waste even a drop of soda.

These are good lessons that have taken on new meaning in today's consumer-oriented society, said Marlene, a Bay Area writer.

"But watching our 401k diminish is motivation enough to follow mom's advice."

Children of the Great Depression

When the stock market crashed in 1929, Misako was attending the University of Southern California to become a pharmacist. News of the economic turmoil soon made its way on campus through newspaper headlines that announced the stark end to the "Roaring Twenties," an era of excess that led up to the Great Depression.

Misako got a job working in a drugstore after school in order to make ends meet.

"Everyone was in the same situation, so it didn't feel too bad." But the effects of the era can perhaps be best measured by what's missing. There aren't many photos of Aya's family from the Depression days.

"Not surprisingly people did not have cameras or money for luxuries like photos," she said.

One of the few images captured during this time is a 1930 black and white photo of five-year-old Aya with her younger sister Hope and cousin Tamotsu each clutching a toy of some sort.

Their expressions tell the entire story: a far-off gaze, a young face crumpled. These were the children of the Great Depression. In those days, the definition of "luxury" extended from milk and eggs to doctor's visits.

"We never went to the doctor for preventive reasons," said Aya. "The money wasn't there."

Her father Joseph Kozo Taniuchi and grandfather Baro Taniuchi had helped build the Great Northern Railroad across the northern tier states, but the stock market crash forced the family, in 1930, to move to Seattle in search of more opportunities. There, Aya, her parents and two younger siblings lived under one roof with her grandparents. Joseph took odd jobs to try to make ends meet, including selling encyclopedia sets.

"If you could imagine getting a job trying to sell encyclopedias during the Great Depression," Aya said wryly.

With unemployment at all time high, desperation hung heavily in the air. Across the nation, suicide rates spiked and APAs — who, historians say, were blamed for taking away jobs — increasingly became victims of violence. In the summer of 1930, a mob of 400 attacked members of the Northern Monterey Filipino Club, killing two, according to the anthology, "Asian American Studies: A Reader."

In Aya's family, the effects of economic hardship seeped into everyday life.

Her grandmother, Tamae, suffered from constant migraine headaches and tended to the vegetable garden outside of their Seattle house, a pre-war "victory garden" with daikon and lettuce. And like other trends that have come around again, in March, first lady Michelle Obama broke ground on the White House's very own organic victory garden.

What was once old is becoming new again.

Recession Victims

There are some definite parallels between the Great Depression and today, said Marlene. "People are starting to feel helpless."

In April, Michigan reported the highest jobless rate, 12.9 percent, according to the latest report from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Joanna Takahashi, 26, is a part of that statistic. The single mother from Detroit was looking forward to a new beginning after her divorce was finalized in December. But two months later, she found out she was being laid off from the automotive supply company where she had worked for a year.

"It was a big slap in the face."

To get by, she's pulled her three-year-old out of daycare and collects unemployment benefits.

"It's very stressful. Why me? I haven't done anything to deserve this."

In April, the national unemployment rate for APAs was 6.6 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This doesn't include involuntarily part-time workers and those on the verge of unemployment like 38-year-old Tim Chang.

Tim, who has a Master's degree from Columbia University in higher education administration, has worked for the Pasadena-based California Institute of Technology for 13 years, most recently as the senior director of institute housing.

On Jan. 26, he became another victim of the bad economy. It was "the day," a Monday that was long rumored to be the day of layoffs. What can you do? said Chang, who is fourth generation Chinese American. "You go to work and wait to see if you get called." Then the phone rings.

"Ah, there you go. Dead man walking."

For the father of two, the path to his next career started at fear and panic, followed by anger and finally acceptance and motivation.

"I take each day as it comes."

He's applied to 40 jobs so far and has heard back from 10. They're the same responses: they've closed their search because of a lack of funding or they've decided to hire from within.

"It's tough. There is a glut of people out there. At the same time the pool of jobs is shrinking," he said. "A lot of people have Master's degrees. A lot of people have 13 years of experience."

Tim's last day at Cal Tech is July 31. It's a day he and his wife have spent years preparing for — building a safety net like his parents and grandparents have always told him to do.

It's sound advice now and always. Even as President Barack Obama has said that the economy has "stepped back from the brink" of calamity and the Labor Department has reported that mass layoffs were down in April compared to the previous month, evidence that some economists say point to an economy that's still grim, but at least not freefalling at a rate that it was just a few months ago.

"It doesn't compare at all," said Aya about the current recession compared to the Great Depression of her childhood. "It was much worse then. But if this continues for a few more years, who knows?"

The other day, a department store representative called to offer her a 50 percent discount.

"I don't need anymore clothing. We don't buy a lot of things," she told the dejected representative. ■
The California Supreme Court has created two classes: the gay couples that are married and those unable to get married.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

SOUTH PASADENA, Calif.—In the battle for marriage equality, it’s come down to the have and the have-nots.

Eileen Ma and Suyapa Portillo, her partner of nearly 11 years, have found themselves a part of the latter group, the have-nots, whose members are now barred from legally using the word “marriage.”

“It’s an interesting contradiction,” said Ma, 37, about the state Supreme Court’s May 26 decision to outlaw same-sex marriage, except for the 18,000 couples who said their “I dos” in the five months that it was legal.

Ma and Portillo share a home across the street from a golf course with their two cats and a fish. They are not married. It’s a life decision they wanted to make for themselves, not simply when the laws and courts say it’s okay.

But in November when voters passed Proposition 8 to ban same-sex marriage, the couple signed up to become a part of the legal challenge. They’re not married, but someday, they would like to have the right to be. Such is the plight of California’s have-nots.

“The awkwardness about it is that somehow we’re expected to accept that contradiction, that 18,000 people that are exactly like us are married, but we are not,” said Ma.

What a difference a year makes. This time last year, the same high court ruled in favor of gay marriage. It was all love and wedding cake; now it’s heartbeat.

Moments after the California Supreme Court announced its 6-1 decision to uphold Proposition 8, Portillo, 34, fought back tears.

“I didn’t expect to get so emotional, but I did. I felt like something fell inside of me.”

The court’s decision came within weeks of the 42nd anniversary of Loving v. Virginia, the case that struck down laws banning interracial marriage.

The irony isn’t lost on Ma, who is second generation Chinese American. “The world has a way of working out that way.”

Gay marriage advocates have often drawn comparisons to this legal landmark. Back then, the have-nots were mixed race couples. The struggle to ensure justice, they say, is separated by half a century.

And it isn’t nearly over.

“It is a setback. It’s a bump,” said Karin Wang, vice president of programs at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center. “We’re on the road to equality. We’re going to get there.”

California is home to the nation’s largest population of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Asian Pacific Americans, according to the University of California, Los Angeles’ Williams Institute. Many are descendents of other have-nots, like the “ineligible aliens” who were denied citizenship.

“How can there now be two separate classes of people, 18,000 couples who ‘have’ the right and potentially thousands of others who do not? It just doesn’t make sense,” said June Lagmay in an e-mail to the Pacific Citizen after the court announced its decision.

Just days earlier, Lagmay — Los Angeles’ new city clerk — sat across from longtime love, Rita Romero, in her city hall office beaming as she talked about the October day they became lawful spouses.

The couple, both 55, met in high school when detention-prone Romero was called “Bandita” and June was known as the teacher’s pet. In a small, faded photo of the couple as teenagers embracing, they almost melt into each other.

So when the opportunity came to gain legal status, they took it. In an October backyard ceremony with Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky as the officiant, Rita Bandita married June The Teacher’s Pet.

The event was a highlight of their 40-year relationship, said Lagmay in an interview with Los Angeles County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky as the officiant.

“It’s an interesting contradiction,” said Lagmay, who is of Japanese and Filipina descent. “At the same time we are devastated that the door has slammed shut for others to access the same right.”

The justices’ decision, experts say, has essentially created two classes of people.

“All things considered, Lagmay and Romero are the lucky ones — the 18,000 whose marriages were upheld.

“Of course we are relieved that we are still married and that the court is not coming after us to try and invalidate us,” said Lagmay, who is of Japanese and Filipina descent. “At the same time we are devastated that the door has slammed shut for others to access the same right.”

The justices’ decision, experts say, has essentially created two classes of people.

“We now have two groups that are otherwise exactly the same except one, by virtue of timing, have certain legal protections,” said Wang.

The fact that there are married gay couples and gay couples that cannot get married show that the rule is “arbitrary and does not defend the California Constitution,” said Jenny Pizer, Lambda Legal senior counsel.

“It’s an issue of same-sex couples being denied marriage for no good reasons,” she said.

In the decision written by Chief Justice Ron George, the court rejected arguments that the voter-passed Proposition 8 was such a fundamental change in the California Constitution that it first needed the Legislature’s approval.

APA community leaders say the decision sets up a dangerous precedent when it comes to minority rights.

“The argument has always been, that by upholding Proposition 8, the court is allowing discrimination against a minority group on the basis of a suspect classification,” said Larry Oda, JACL national president. “This is in opposition to the promise of equality that underlies our California Constitution. Upholding Proposition 8 places at risk the state constitutional rights of all disfavored minorities.”

The JACL, in 1994, was one of the first civil rights groups in the nation to affirm its support for marriage equality. It was a continuation of the organization’s long fight for equal rights — in 1967, William Manutani argued the case for the JACL by special leave of the court in Loving v. Virginia.

“We cannot stand by while the rights of others are being eroded,” said Oda.

After the passage of Proposition 8 last November, JACL submitted an amicus brief in support of the Petition for Writ Mandate, in the case of Strouse et al v. Horton, et al.

“The JACL is disappointed in the ruling, but we are ready to take the next step in creating equity for all regardless of sexual preference,” said Floyd Mori, JACL national director.

Ma and Portillo were part of the “et al” in the Strouse case, plaintiffs in search of the right to marry. They met at work over a decade ago when they worked as union organizers. These days, Ma, the campaign director at the Koreatown Immigrant Workers Alliance, juggles meetings and a constantly ringing cell phone. Portillo is hoping to earn her PhD next year. But someday; marriage.

Gay marriage supporters are already talking about a pro-equality ballot initiative in 2010 and a federal marriage challenge. But for Ma and Portillo, it’s now about living their life together despite the laws and court decisions.

“For communities of color I think that’s particularly important because I think we’ll never be the majority,” said Ma about the LGBT community. “In that sense, it requires that we really just live our lives and figure out how to build as powerful a community around what our lives really are ... and what we would like them to be on paper.”

Online social networks like Facebook and Twitter are usually the place to keep tabs on your latest favorite celebrity or join like-minded socially conscious groups. But Jessica Lum, 21, is using Facebook to talk about her life-threatening cancer and how she’s dealing with her pending death.

Since diagnosed with stage four pheochromocytoma, a rare cancer that forms in the adrenal gland, in December of 2008, Jessica has turned to online forums and a personal blog to update friends about her condition. It’s also helping her deal with the roller coaster of emotions that come with battling cancer.

“I write to my audience of peers, of my friends, in order to help them and myself understand the situation I’m in,” says Jessica from a hospital bed at UCSF Medical Center. “When I write, whether it’s about my cancer condition or silly pop-culture trends, I really just try to write in a way that my peers can relate to and understand.”

Sadly, things look dire for the Sacramento native. The average survival rate for pheochromocytoma cancer is about four and a half years and clinical professor of medicine at UCSF, Jessica, an English major and geography and environmental sciences minor, was a full-time senior at UCLA juggling three jobs: photo editor at the Daily Bruin, an English tutor for athletes, and a student photographer and designer for UCLA Recreation, the campus’s leisure center. She was your average college student — going to bars and relaxing at house parties on the weekends. Little did she know a series of events would soon change her life completely.

**Diagnosis**

It started with a severe cough that wouldn’t go away in November of 2008. After multiple visits to the doctor, Jessica’s pulmonologist finally discovered a tumor about the size of a grapefruit on her abdomen as well as masses on different parts of her body. After various tests, more CAT scans and prolonged waiting, Jessica’s primary doctor determined she had an aggressive form of pheochromocytoma cancer.

Jessica had no symptoms at first. But by the middle of last February, she was confined at home due to high fevers and aching bones. Since the cancer spread to her bones, lungs and liver, Jessica has trouble doing many of the things she loves to do.

“I can’t do most of the things I like to do like snowboarding,” says Jessica, who has been a seasonal snowboarder since seventh grade.

She soon moved back home to Sacramento with her retired parents who have become her caretakers.

After seeing Jessica go through a series of extensive chemotherapy last March, her father Bob retired from his teaching job at Sacramento City College saying it was a “hard decision, but necessary.”

“This is not the life I expected post retirement,” says Jessica’s mother Anna, who retired from her community care licensing job with the state of California. “We’re here for her and support her to help her in any way we can, and of course we wanted her to graduate and be on her own, but she was forced by this cancer to depend on us.”

Jessica, 21, was diagnosed with stage four pheochromocytoma, a cancer of the adrenal gland.

**Talking Cancer**

Jessica describes her family as a non-traditional Asian family and says she was always encouraged to be open about her feelings. So it’s no surprise she’s broadcasting her cancer experience to a wide audience. In a May 20 blog entry Jessica writes: “In spite of the silence, the boredom, the bad food, the hospital smell, the lack of direct sunlight, the painful IV needles, and the harsh reality that I have a crappy life-threatening rare disease that Dr. Gregory House would make snide yet brilliant remarks about, this is my life — the life I get to live, rather than watch.”

“She’s a writer who expresses her emotions through writing [which] I think is therapeutic for her,” says Anna.

With celebrities like Christina Applegate and Kris Carr, who came forward with their diagnosis and found empowerment through talking about their cancer, cancer patients of this generation are more inclined to expose their illnesses, says Naomi Hoffer, program director at Ida and Joseph Friend Cancer Resource Center at University of California, San Francisco Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.

“Younger cancer patients now are more open to talking about it and letting other people know what’s going on with them ... it’s not as much as a stigma as it used to be.”

“It’s not entirely an Asian thing to not want to share news like this,” says Jessica. “It’s a human thing to not be able to talk about cancer.”

**Hope**

Although the cancer was initially a surprise, Jessica had her suspicions.

“After taking a biology of cancer class my freshman year, I knew it was cancer [because] it was everywhere cancer would be and should be,” she said.

Cancer also runs in her family. Jessica’s sister Bethany Ayres, 27 was diagnosed with thyroid cancer at age 19. After several surgeries and radiation treatments, the cancer is under control but still being monitored.

Then in 2007, Jessica’s mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She underwent chemotherapy treatments and is currently in remission.

“I’ve been on both sides of this cancer thing — seeing my sister and my mom go through diagnosis and treatment with emotions and physical difficulties involved, and now, I’m on the patient side as well,” says Jessica. “As a young person especially, it’s really tough to know what to say to people who have cancer.”

Jessica now faces chemotherapy treatments and currently, a radioactive isotope procedure that has her sequestered in a room for over a week now at the UCSF Medical Center. This radiation treatment is another attempt to shrink Jessica’s tumors by targeting and hopefully absorbing them.

“They’re not looking to cure it but to stall it from growing and buy me time,” says Jessica.

“We’re hoping she’ll have a good reaction to the radiation,” says Dr. Fitzgerald. “If we can keep her feeling healthy, Jessica will be able to live a healthy and productive life [because] people can live with cancer for many years.”

**A Normal Life**

After continuous chemotherapy treatments in March, Jessica’s symptoms have subsided for now.

“It’s not hard to lead a normal life right now,” she says.

In a May 16 blog entry Jessica writes: “I’m finding that this whole isolation thing isn’t so bad. Lucky for me, as a mostly obedient Asian kid, I’ve been trained to lead a quiet, content life in front of a computer or television monitor.”

Through her writing, Jessica has touched the lives of her readers — family, friends, peers and the larger cyberspace audience who just so happen to stumble across her blogs.

“Reading all her blogs, you’re able to get more in her head than just talking to her ... you feel like you’re going through it with her,” says Jonathan Chau, a close friend. “It’s a lot harder to say something than write it.”

“We’re reading to help support her and to see what’s going on, [but] at the same time, it helps everyone appreciate life a little bit more.”

It shows how strong of a person she is by sharing [this] with everyone ... it changes how you look at life and not take life for granted.”
Mixed-race Patients Struggle to Find Marrow Donors

By JULIANA BARBAS
Associated Press Writer

HAYWARD, Calif.—If Nick Glasgow were white, he would have a nearly 90 percent chance of finding a matching bone marrow donor who could cure his leukemia.

But because the 28-year-old bodybuilder is one-quarter Japanese, his doctor warned him the outlook was grim. Glasgow’s background would make it almost impossible to find a match, which usually comes from a patient’s own ethnic group.

The doctor “didn’t say it was slim-to-none. He didn’t say it would be hard. He said ‘zero chance,’”” Glasgow’s mother, Carole Wiegand, recalled with tears in her eyes. “When Nick heard that, it sent him plummeting.”

At a time when the number of multiracial Americans is rising, only a tiny fraction of donors on the national bone marrow registry are of mixed race. The National Marrow Donor Program is trying to change that by seeking more diverse donors for patients suffering from leukemia, lymphoma and other blood diseases.

“The truth is, when people of different backgrounds marry and produce offspring, it creates more types that are harder to match,” said Michelle Setterholm, the program’s director of scientific services. “The probability just gets lower when you have people of mixed ancestral DNA.”

The number of people who identify themselves as multiracial in the United States has grown from 3.9 million in 2000, the first year the census included the category, to 5.2 million in 2008. Mixed-race people account for 1.6 percent of the U.S. population.

The donor program has been pushing for years to recruit more racial minorities and mixed-race donors. So far, multiracial volunteers make up just 3 percent of the 7 million people on the registry.

That is higher than the percentage of mixed-race people in the U.S. But there are so many possible racial and ethnic combinations that finding a match can still be extremely difficult.

The reason that mixed-heritage patients are so hard to match can be found in the immune system.

Populations in different parts of the world developed certain proteins, or markers, that are part of the body’s natural defenses. These markers help the immune system determine which cells are foreign and should be rejected.

A match between two people who share many markers will reduce the risk of the donor and recipient cells attacking each other. Because certain markers tend to cluster in particular ethnic groups, matches are most often found among people of shared backgrounds. Multiracial patients often have uncommon profiles and a much harder time finding a donor.

About 6,000 patients in the U.S. are awaiting a bone marrow match.

Finding compatible organs for transplant is simpler. Organ matches rely essentially on blood type, which is not related to race.

Glasgow’s grandfather, an Army soldier from South Carolina, fell in love while stationed in Japan after World War II and married across racial lines at a time when it was illegal to do so in many states.

From his Japanese grandmother, Glasgow got the almond shape of his eyes and cell markers that set him apart from most other whites. From his white grandparents, he gets markers that set him apart from other Japanese.

Donors fill out forms with their health history and ethnic makeup before swabbing the inside of their cheeks to collect the generic material that will be used to match them to waiting patients.

If a match is found, they will undergo a painful procedure in which doctors withdraw liquid marrow from the back of their pelvic bones.

Among those filling out donor forms was Abe Rindal, a retired engineer who heard through friends about Glasgow.

Rindal was born to a Norwegian-American father and Japanese mother who met in Japan after World War II. They started a family before interracial marriage bans were struck down by the Supreme Court in 1967. Rindal remembers meetings with only two other people with similar ethnicity.

“It was socially unacceptable back then,” he said. “The chance to help someone of similar ethnicity appealed to Rindal. He not only filled out his form and swabbed his cheeks, he also sent test kits to his four siblings and their children in the hope they might be a match for Glasgow.

At the hospital, Wiegand prays for her son. Her niece started a Facebook group that has collected upward of 1,000 members interested in helping. The Asian American Donor Program has been contacting Japanese American organizations, and large corporations such as Cisco have reached out to their employees via e-mail.

If chemotherapy sends Glasgow’s cancer into remission, he might have months to find a match. If not, he might have far less time.

“I just keep thinking, ‘Please, everyone, get into that database,’” his mother said. “I just know there’s a match out there somewhere for him.”

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National Newsbytes

By Pacific Citizen Staff and Associated Press

Teens Reach Goal for Paper Crane Peace Memorial

EAGEN, Minn.—Michelle Reed and Carly Gutzmann have achieved a milestone in their project to remember the treatment of World War II Japanese Americans. Their paper crane collection now includes 120,313 cranes—their desired goal.

Each origami crane symbolizes an internee, and more broadly—peace and tolerance in the world.

The teens got the idea for the project in 2006 when they researched JA history for their National History Day project. They reached their goal for The Paper Crane Peace Memorial, as they called it, due to an outpouring of support from around the world.

Reed and Gutzmann have donated the paper cranes to the Topaz Museum in Utah.

Ceded Lands Lawsuit Still Pending

HONOLULU—One plaintiff says he will continue seeking a permanent ban on the sale of former Hawaiian monarchy lands.

University of Hawaii-Manoa Hawaiian Studies professor Jonathan K. Osorio will not give up his lawsuit, even as the Lingle administration, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and three other plaintiffs are close to a settlement.

The settlement would come as the result of a measure passed by the state lawmakers barring exchanges of ceded lands unless two-thirds of each legislative chamber approves. Osorio says the new law doesn’t go far enough.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in March that the federal government’s apology for the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom didn’t strip the state of its land rights.

The case was sent back to the Hawaii Supreme Court, which hasn’t yet taken further action.

Filipino Vets Get Checks for World War II Service

SAN JOSE, Calif.—Filipino American veterans are receiving $15,000 checks from the federal government as compensation for their military service during World War II.

Seven octogenarians from San Jose are among the first Northern California residents to receive their share of the $198 million Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund.

The fund was set up as part of the federal stimulus package to rectify a congressional snub that stripped away promised veterans’ benefits six decades ago.

Only about 18,000 of the 250,000 Filipinos who fought for the U.S. in WWII are still alive. About one-third of the survivors live in the U.S., including an estimated 200 in Santa Clara County.

Site of the Former Chinatown is Safe For Now

RIVERSIDE, Calif.—An appeals court has denied a request to overturn a judge’s order that halted work at the site of a former Chinatown near downtown Riverside.

The Riverside County office of education filed the request. The office owns 2.3 acres of the 4.2 acres on which developer Doug Jacobs plans to construct a medical office building.

The sale of the 2.3 acres to Jacobs is in escrow, and the March 20 order by Riverside County Superior Court Judge Sharon Waters is preventing escrow from closing.

The Save Our Chinatown Committee has sued the city over its approval of Jacobs’ project and sued the education office over its sale of the land. Trial is set for July 9.

The Chinatown site, at Tequesquite and Brockton avenues, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. It also is a city and county landmark and a state point of historical interest.
Heart Mountain Could be Considered for Historic Site

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

POWELL, Wyo.—A study is being sought to determine whether the Heart Mountain Relocation Camp in northern Wyoming should become a National Historic Site. Historic sites are managed by the National Park Service.

A private, nonprofit foundation has been leading the effort to preserve and commemorate the site where more than 11,000 Japanese Americans were held during World War II.

The foundation is asking the state’s congressional delegation to authorize a special resource study for the site. Among other things, a study would make a recommendation as to whether the site should become a National Historic Site, managed by the National Park Service. The study would have to be authorized by Congress.

Foundation president Dave Reetz said the group isn’t necessarily advocating Park Service management. Instead, it just wants to examine all the options.

A special resource study, he said, would ask for a great deal of public comment, including from former internees and present-day adjoining land owners.

“We would be remiss as an organization in not having this done,” Reetz said.

The Park County Commission, the Powell Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Park County Travel Council, the Cody Country Chamber of Commerce, the Wyoming Business Council, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Neil K. V. Mineta and former U.S. Senator Al Simpson have joined with the foundation in requesting the study.

In asking Wyoming’s congressional delegation to endorse a study, Park County commissioners wrote, “Not only is this place an important part of our history, it has the ability to provide another economic resource and stimulus to our region and state that is so critical.”

At the commission’s May 12 meeting, Commissioner Buckley Hall said he supported the foundation’s effort, but he also asked if it was what the group really wanted.

“Do you want to give up control to the National Park Service?” he asked.

“How long do you think we’re going to live?” asked Pat Wolfe, foundation treasurer, in response.

“You may live to see that nightmare,” said Hall, with a chuckle. “They may close it when you don’t want it closed.”

Freed Journalist Roxana Saberi Says Thanks for Support

North Korea to put U.S. reporters Laura Ling and Euna Lee on trial June 4.

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—Journalist Roxana Saberi, recently freed after four months in an Iranian prison, met May 27 with Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and expressed thanks for the support she received during her confinement.

“When I found that I had this support while I was in prison, I gained a lot of strength and hope and I didn’t feel so alone anymore,” Saberi told reporters as she stood beside Clinton, with her parents seated nearby. Saberi did not take questions.

Clinton said she was relieved that Saberi was set free.

“This was a matter of great concern to our country, certainly to the Obama administration and to me personally — not only as secretary of state but as a mother,” Clinton said.

“My heart went out to Roxana and to her parents every single day.”

The 32-year-old journalist arrived in the United States May 22 from Vienna, where she spent a week recuperating after her release from prison in Iran. Saberi was arrested in late January and convicted of spying for the United States in a closed-door trial that her Iranian-born father said lasted only 15 minutes.

She was freed May 11 and reunited with her parents, who had come from Fargo, N.D., to Iran to seek her release. An Iranian appeals court reduced her sentence to a two-year suspended term.

U.S. officials had said the charges against Saberi were baseless and repeatedly demanded her release. Saberi, who grew up in Fargo and moved to Iran six years ago, has dual citizenship.

Meanwhile North Korea said recently that two U.S. journalists arrested in the communist nation near its border with China two months ago will be put on trial June 4. Pyongyang’s official Korean Central News Agency gave no other details in its brief dispatch, including what charges they face. North Korean media previously have said that the two journalists, Laura Ling and Euna Lee, are accused of illegal entry and unspecified “hostile” acts.

Under North Korea’s criminal code, conviction for illegal entry could mean up to three years in a labor camp. Espionage or “hostility toward North Koreans”— possible crimes that could be considered “hostile acts”— could mean five to 10 years in prison, according to South Korean officials.

The journalists, who work for San Francisco-based Current TV, a media venture founded by former Vice President Al Gore, were detained on March 17 near the border while reporting on refugees living in China.
Gay Marriage: From Tokyo to Los Angeles

If you look at my photo-sticker collection from Japan, many of them will feature a cluster of handsome men — European, Burmese, Japanese — and me, the lone woman in the group.

It was all my friend Jerome’s fault. Jerome was one of my closest friends during my time abroad in Japan. Jerome is gay, good-looking, and the reason why the term “social butterfly” was invented.

He had a plethora of gay friends in Japan from a prior study abroad experience.

By social osmosis, his friends became my friends.

I learned a thing or two about being a gay male in Japan. As with my gay friends back home, many of my gay friends in Japan found prospective dates through online social groups. I learned which districts in Tokyo were the most queer-friendly. In reverse fetishism of what we were used to back home, I heard about Japanese gay men who were competitive over the limited pool of white gay foreigners that came to Tokyo.

In Japan, the idea of a gay marriage — let alone a civil union between two people of the same sex — is unheard of. There are no anti-gay-discrimination laws that protect homosexuals at schools and in the workplace.

In the political and mainstream public sphere, the dialogue on homosexual rights remains deafeningly silent.

In contrast, the gay community is very much an active part of the public and political sphere in California. We have LGBT communities in high schools and universities, annual Pride parades, and accessible resources for friends and advocates of the gay community.

At the time I was living in Japan, we were also one of the two states in the whole country that recognized gay marriage.

These were the things that made me proud to be from California.

And then I came home in time for election season last October.

In my hometown of Orange County, men and women stood in rows on the street holding signs that proudly displayed their support for Proposition 8’s same-sex marriage ban. If you support Proposition 8, the signs said, you are supporting family values and protecting our children’s schools.

Cars passed by and honked in solidarity. On Nov. 4, 2009, Proposition 8 ended up passing by a slim margin.

Just last month, California Supreme Court unanimously decided to uphold Proposition 8. This decision was another heart-wrenching kick in the face.

My disappointment and disgust mirrored the collective reaction of the other Californian friends and colleagues. How could California possibly do this? How could the state of California have possibly failed on this issue?

My limited and biased experience as an Angeleno had become, in my head, a representation for the opinions and viewpoints of the entire state of California. Could it be that having gay-friendly friends in a gay-friendly part of California made me intellectually compliant? I was no better than the Christian fundamentalists from the Bible Belt who assumed that their views represented all of America’s views.

I am reminded of something that I saw before Proposition 8 officially passed in November. My boyfriend had picked me up from my parents’ house in Orange County, and we were driving towards the freeway. As we turned the corner on a busy intersection, we passed by a scrappy group of teenagers. There were maybe five of them, and they proudly held up their handmade “NO ON PROP 8” poster. There were no cars honking. We were the only ones that did.

These teenagers, in my eyes, had already accomplished what I have still yet to do. It’s one thing to surround yourself with people who already agree with you on many social and political issues. It’s something else altogether to publicly stand for your beliefs in a city or a state where your view is the complete minority.

This is what these teenagers were doing on that day in late October. This is what the rest of us need to be doing. In one fleeting moment, I caught eyes with one of the teenagers. I gave them a thumbs up. The teenagers disappeared behind us as we drove onto the freeway ramp towards Los Angeles.
The singer/songwriter had her bags packed to get out of her small town since five. In Los Angeles, she's gained success as part of the new wave of Web savvy musicians.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Meiko is calling from Madison, Wisconsin, where she says it's gorgeous.

"It's a big city with a small town vibe."

Of course, before the 27-year-old singer/songwriter announced her coordinates in the Cheese State — one in over 30 stops in her first ever headlining tour across the United States — the Pacific Citizen, along with her other online devotees, already knew where she was, where she was headed next (Denver) and even what she had been snacking on (string cheese).

"Thank you, Twitter, for allowing up to the minute dispatches from the road. It's the 2.0 version of a musician's life. And when your self-titled debut album has been released through the MySpace Records label, it's safe to say Meiko, who is one-quarter Japanese American, is comfortable enough to lay her soul bare on the World Wide Web.

Google "Meiko" (she pronounces it MEE-ko) and you'll inevitably come across one of the many videos of the songstress puckishly strumming on a guitar and singing about the heartbreak of growing up without a mom and being broke in Los Angeles. She describes her sound as indie, pop rock and folk — in the vein, others say, of Corinne Bailey Rae and Colbie Caillat. Except Meiko is like a siren, a poet who seduces with a catchy hook. Listen to "Reasons to Love You" once and it could be one of your self-titled debut album, it's safe to say Meiko, who is one-quarter Japanese American, is comfortable enough to lay her soul bare on the World Wide Web.

"It sounds like a cliché," says Meiko. "But it's all true."

The Roberta Meiko grew up in had two stoplights and one stop sign. There was a soul food restaurant in the middle of the tiny town and a Piggly Wiggly grocery store where everyone's mom and grandparents went for gossip. "Everyone was in everyone else's business."

She loves her hometown, but she always wanted something more. Meiko started singing as early as three and writing her own songs at seven, said her sister Kelly Nishimoto, a Los Angeles-based fashion designer. Young Meiko often performed at the tiny town and a Piggly Wiggly grocery store where everyone's mom and grandparents went for gossip. "It needed to be said. It would've bothered me more if I didn't say anything."

"I'm proud that I'm one-quarter Japanese," said the singer/songwriter who hails from Roberta, Georgia, population 808. In Los Angeles, before she became famous, she served Fabio smoothies. "I didn't know a lot, but I knew I was offended by that."

At the end of the presentation, when they passed around the mike for a question and answer session, Meiko took the opportunity to blast the veterans for their offensive language. For her bravery, she was suspended. "When you're in a small town, people don't always get it," she said. "It needed to be said. It would've bothered me more if I didn't say anything."

She always knew she wanted to get out of town. Even at five, she kept a suitcase packed, a purple "My Little Pony" filled with crayons, coloring books and all the essentials, said Kelly. After graduating from high school, Meiko left Roberta for Miami first, then Los Angeles, where she worked behind the juice bar at a gym making protein shakes for celebrities like Fabio. Then she took a job waiting tables at Hotel Café, a music venue hotspot that allowed the songstress to cut her teeth performing and soak up all aspects of her dream job.

"I've recorded six to seven songs," and she hopes to release them sometime. She always knew she wanted to get out of town. Except Meiko is like a siren, a poet who seduces with a catchy hook. Listen to "Reasons to Love You" once and it could possibly get stuck in your head forever.

"You're never stranded to life on the road. In the past, Meiko has opened for other bands "making small potatoes a night." These days with her music's increasing popularity — thank you also to play on ABC's "Grey's Anatomy" — she's now the main attraction. Now it's her name in lights.

"I always knew she wanted to get out of town. Even at five, she kept a suitcase packed, a purple "My Little Pony" filled with crayons, coloring books and all the essentials, said Kelly. After graduating from high school, Meiko left Roberta for Miami first, then Los Angeles, where she worked behind the juice bar at a gym making protein shakes for celebrities like Fabio. Then she took a job waiting tables at Hotel Café, a music venue hotspot that allowed the songstress to cut her teeth performing and soak up all aspects of her dream job.

Someday, she thought, she would put down her waitress tray forever, and be onstage. Then came her self-titled and self-released album and a major music label knocking at her door. The album includes, "Hawaii," the song about her estranged mother Rina, who Meiko is in the process of reestablishing a relationship with, and Meiko's favorite "How Lucky We Are," an upbeat song inspired by a hard time in life when you're "broke as a joke."

She's still writing while on tour. "I've recorded six to seven songs." And she hopes to release her EP soon. Her sophomore effort will still be based on her life, but she's a little older, a little more mature and still in search of touchstones with her heritage.

Meiko's grandmother, Chikako, died when she was eight. "I've recorded six to seven songs," and she hopes to release her EP soon. For more information and tour dates:

For more information and tour dates:
House Passes Bill to Honor JA Soldiers with Gold Medal

By Pacific Citizen Staff

In a tribute to the Japanese American soldiers who served during World War II, the House recently passed a bill which grants the congressional gold medal to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

HR 347, a bill introduced by Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Pasadena, was passed on May 14, and awards these soldiers Congress’ highest civilian honor.

“The Japanese American veterans who served during World War II deserve this recognition for their bravery, loyalty and patriotism,” said Floyd Mori, JACL national director. “We thank Congress for passing this bill to show appreciation to them as a group.”

The 442nd Regiment became the most decorated unit in U.S. military history for its size and length of service. Together with the 100th Battalion, these soldiers received seven Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses, 560 Silver Stars, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 15 Soldier’s Medals and over 4,000 Purple Hearts.

Many of these JA soldiers also fought discrimination while in service and also fought for a country that was internment their families.

“The JACL offers its appreciation for the leadership of Mr. Schiff, Mr. Skelton, Mr. Honda, Mr. Abercrombie, Ms. Bordallo, Ms. Roybal-Allard, Mr. Inslee, and Mr. McCotter for their work on this bill to recognize the uncommon value of this segregated unit that was recruited out of the American concentration camps,” said JACL National President Larry Oda.

Following the awarding of the gold medal, it will be given to the Smithsonian Institution to be displayed and made available for research. Duplicate medals may be available for sale.

Democrats Stop Texas Voter ID Bill

JACL had opposed the controversial bill.

By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

AUSTIN, Texas—Texas Democrats declared victory in the partisan battle over tightening voter identification laws, but their five-day filibuster left hundreds of bills dead and threatened to spark a special session this summer.

With six days left in the 2009 session, there’s theoretically time to resurrect almost anything. But a midnight deadline May 26 for the voter ID bill came and went in the House, and leaders from both parties said the controversial election reform had gone down in flames.

“I guess it’s dead. I don’t see any way it can be resurrected at this point,” said Rep. Jim Dunnmm of Waco, leader of the House Democrats. Dunnmm, whose delay tactics brought the legislative machinery to a virtual crawl described the demise of the voter ID legislation as a victory for the voting public.

“We successfully stood up for people’s voting rights and have shown that we’re not going to be bullied into suppressing people’s votes,” Dunnmm said.

Rep. Larry Taylor, chairman of the House Republican Caucus, said Democrats would pay a hefty price for killing off the voter ID legislation and inflicting “a lot of other casualties in that process.”

“I think there’s going to be some repercussions,” Taylor said. “I think the average Joe at home isn’t going to be pleased that an issue like voter ID knocked off all those other issues people have been working on.”

The stalling tactics began May 22 as Democrats used up their time privileges to hold an entire slew of bills hostage. The target was the voter ID bill, which Republicans say is necessary to combat ballot box fraud while Democrats say it would diminish voting rights.

The legislation would require Texans to provide a photo ID or two non-photo alternatives before being allowed to cast a ballot. JACL had vocally opposed the voter ID legislation.

“Current Texas election code already contains safeguards against voter fraud,” said Ron Katsuyama, JACL vice president of public affairs.

“As a civil rights organization, the JACL has long supported measures that would enhance voter participation rather than those that would impose barriers to participation,” said JACL National President Larry Oda.

Multiracial People Become Fastest Growing U.S. Group

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON—Multiracial Americans have become the fastest growing demographic group, yielding an impact on minority growth that challenges traditional notions of race.

The number of multiracial people rose 3.4 percent last year to about 5.2 million, according to the latest census estimates. First given the option in 2000, Americans who check more than one box for race on census surveys have jumped by 33 percent and now make up 5 percent of the minority population — with millions more believed to be uncounted.

Demographers attributed the recent population growth to more social acceptance and slowing immigration. They cited in particular the high public profiles of Tiger Woods and President Barack Obama, a self-described “mutt,” who are having an effect on those who might self-identify as multiracial.

Population figures as of July 2008 show that California, Texas, New York and Florida had the most multiracial people, due partly to higher numbers of second- and later-generation immigrants who are more likely to “marry out.” Measured by percentages, Hawaii ranked first with nearly 1 in 5 residents who were multiracial, followed by Alaska and Oklahoma, both at roughly 4 percent.

Utah had the highest growth rate of multiracial people in 2008 compared to the previous year, a reflection of loosening social norms in a mostly white state.

“Multiracial unions have been happening for a very long time, but we are only now really coming to terms with saying it’s OK,” said Carolyn Liebler, a sociology professor at the University of Minnesota who specializes in family, race and ethnicity.

The latest demographic changes come amid a debate on the role of race in America, complicating conventional notions of minority rights.

Under new federal rules, many K-12 schools next year will allow students for the first time to indicate if they are “two or more races.” The move is expected to cause shifts in how test scores are categorized, potentially altering race disparities and funding for education programs.

Five justices of the Supreme Court have signaled they would like to end racial preferences in voting rights and employment cases — a majority that may not change even if Sonia Sotomayor is confirmed as the first Hispanic justice. Blacks and Hispanics, meanwhile, are touting a growing minority population and past discrimination in pushing for continued legal protections.

Left out of the discussion are multiracial people, who are counted as minorities but can be hard to define politically and sociodemographically.

Currently, census forms allow U.S. residents to check more than one box for their race. But there is no multiracial category, and survey responses can vary widely depending on whether a person considers Hispanic a race or ethnicity.

On the Net:

Census Bureau: www.census.gov

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VisualizAsian.com launches online empowerment series

Call it “e-powering” the Asian Pacific American community. VisualizAsian.com, a new APA empowerment Web site, recently premiered its series of free teleconference interviews with prominent community leaders.

The second conversation, scheduled for June 9, will feature Yul Kwon, winner of “Survivor: Cook Island.” Since winning the $1 million prize in 2006, the Korean American lawyer has continued his work in the community and in the media to dispel negative APA stereotypes.

Future interviews will include activist Tamlyn Tomita, journalist/activist Helen Zia and Phoebe Eng, an award-winning lecturer on race and gender issues.

“We want audiences to learn about the great things AAPls do, and how and why they do them, so that they can follow in their footsteps,” said Asakawa.

For more information: www.visualizasian.com

JACL Announces Inouye and Masaoka Fellows

Two Asian Pacific American recent college graduates have been awarded JACL fellowships and will have an opportunity to work in the area of politics and civil rights.

Scott Sakakihara has been awarded this year’s Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship and will serve in the Washington, D.C. office of Congresswoman Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii.

Meanwhile Shirley Tang was recently named the Daniel K. Inouye Fellow where she will work in the area of health in JACL’s Washington, D.C. office. The fellowship is funded by Eli Lilly.

Sakakihara previously interned in the office of Congressman Pete Stark and is a graduate of Harvard Law School where he graduated cum laude. He also received a B.A. in political science with a minor in law and society at UC San Diego.

Tang recently graduated from the University of California at Davis where she was a double major in communication and sociology. She was on the Dean’s Honor List, and served as secretary of the UC Davis Phi Alpha Delta Pre-law Fraternity, Alpha Zeta Class.

Born and raised in Sacramento, California, Tang speaks three languages. She hopes to eventually obtain a law degree and continue working in public service and civil rights.
The University of Puget Sound honors 36 former internees at a recent graduation ceremony.

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

SEATTLE—Michiko Kiyokawa was a typical freshman in 1942, taking biology and playing field hockey, when she was forced to leave college and enter a World War II internment camp.

On May 17, more than six decades later, Kiyokawa returned to the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma to receive one of 36 honorary degrees being awarded to former JA students who were displaced by Executive Order 9066.

"It's an honor," the 85-year-old woman said in a telephone interview from her Parkdale, Ore. home. "The college is being very broad-minded. It's an effort to make up for something that had been done to us."

Kiyokawa is one of two former WWII internees who attended the graduation ceremony at the university's Baker Stadium. Some family members attended on behalf of former students, who have passed away or couldn't travel.

"Each loyal student removed from campus at that time represented a life and an education suddenly interrupted," said university president Ronald R. Thomas. "By granting these now, we complete a circle."

The university is the latest to award honorary degrees to former Japanese American WWII internees. The University of Washington, University of Oregon and Oregon State University held similar graduation ceremonies last spring.

Evacuation notices were issued the spring after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and drew the U.S. into war. About 120,000 ethnic Japanese were relocated to one of 10 camps in Washington, Idaho, California and other states.

Kiyokawa said her father had to leave the camp in March 1944 to leave Tacoma. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology, and playing field hockey, when she was typical freshman in 1942, taking biology and playing field hockey, when she was forced to leave college and enter a World War II internment camp.

"Life went on with things happening constantly," she said.

She wrote for the internment camp newspaper, covering sporting events and upcoming classes.

Kiyokawa met her future husband when the family was transferred to another relocation center near Tule Lake, Calif., south of the Oregon border.

It wasn't until she left the camp, she said, that she realized how secluded she had been and what she had missed.

"It was wrong in the sense that you uproot people up and down the coast and disrupt their lives," Kiyokawa said. "But it wasn't as though we were herded in and kept as prisoners doing nothing. We were a thriving community in the camps."

Kiyokawa left the camp in March 1944 to attend Hamline College in St. Paul, Minn. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology, and later moved to Oregon to train in medical technology.

She has five children, three of whom attended the recent graduation ceremony. Her niece also accepted a degree on behalf of Kikowaka's late older sister, who was a college senior at the time the family was forced to leave Tacoma.

Kiyokawa said she feels she doesn't deserve a degree from the University of Puget Sound since she already has one. But "it's a gesture that the college is making, and I appreciate it."

"At my age," she joked, "this excitement is a little more than I need."
Group Marks 10th Anniversary of Go For Broke Monument

World War II veterans of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Military Intelligence Service and other heroic units will join local, state and national leaders for the Go For Broke National Education Center’s 10th anniversary tribute to the soldiers’ bravery and sacrifice at the Go For Broke Monument in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo June 6.

The tribute program will be followed by a celebration luncheon at the Japanese American National Museum. The day’s festivities mark both the 10th anniversary of the Monument’s unveiling and 20 years since the Go For Broke National Education Center’s founding.

Film and television star George Takei, emcee for many of the organization’s milestone events, including the Go For Broke Monument unveiling on June 5, 1999, will reprise that role for the anniversary tribute. Among special guests expected to join in the day’s anniversary festivities are Assemblyman Warren Furutani, D-Los Angeles Harbor and gateway communities, former Assemblyman George Nakano, D-Los Angeles South Bay, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Consul General of Japan Junichi Ihara.

10th Anniversary Tribute:
Date: June 6
Cost: Free, public is invited
Time: 10 a.m.
Location: Go For Broke Monument, at Alameda and Temple Streets
Information: www.goforbroke.org

Luncheon:
Cost: $40/person, space limited
Time: 12 noon
Location: Japanese American National Museum, 369 E. First Street

SELANOCO JACL Accepting Applications for Ueha Scholarship

For the second year in a row, the South East Los Angeles North Orange County (SELANOCO) chapter of JACL, working closely with the Ueha family, is offering a Memorial Scholarship in honor of Hiromi Ueha, a former board member, and is currently accepting applications. This scholarship will be awarded to one individual during the academic year 2009-2010.

Hiromi Ueha dedicated her life to the betterment of others. While raising her son Chandler, attending the University of California, Irvine full-time, and working part-time, she became involved in the Japanese American community through her ties to Tomo No Kai, a JA cultural club at UCI, and through the SELANOCO chapter of JACL. After graduating, she continued to actively serve her community through the JACL as a chapter president, district governor and national youth/student chair, all while raising her son.

Hiromi passed away suddenly in April, 2006. The Ueha family, with the assistance of the SELANOCO chapter, is offering a $1,000 scholarship in honor of Hiromi Ueha, a former board member, and is currently accepting applications. This scholarship will be awarded to one individual during the academic year 2009-2010.

JACL, Veterans’ Group Honor the Fallen at Memorial Day Event

It was a tribute to the brave men who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. On May 24, JACL and the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA) held their 61st annual services at the Arlington National Cemetery.

The program included the laying of flowers at the gravesites of 63 Japanese American and Caucasian soldiers assigned to the Japanese American units.

Dr. Emily Ihara, from the JACL Washington, D.C. chapter, participated in a formal wreath presentation ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown.

Major General Thomas Bostick keynoted the event. In his address, he praised the heroics of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service of World War II.

“They help remind us that the freedom we enjoy should never be taken for granted,” said Bostick.

The event chair was Turner Kobayashi, son of Key Kobayashi, a lifelong JACL member and a JAVA founder who started the Arlington Cemetery Memorial Day program in 1948.

Hosoda Family Honored at Idaho Memorial Day Services

A ceremony at Idaho’s Emmett National Guard Armory was held on Memorial Day where the American Legion unveiled a memorial wall honoring the memory of the Hosoda brothers who were killed during WWII. A third Hosoda brother, George, survived the war, graduated from the U of I and now lives in Washington.

Like many of the JA soldiers, the Hosoda brothers fought for their country while their family members were being incarcerated behind barbed wire. The memorial will not only honor the two fallen brothers but acknowledges the contributions and experiences of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Idaho Lt. Governor Brad Little addressed the more than 100 people in attendance and read a letter from Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and Consul General of Japan Junichi Ihara.

JACL Receives APIAHF Health Forum Grant

The JACL instituted the JACL Daniel K. Inouye Fellowship which is focused heavily in health related areas. A Health Fair Tool Kit, which was developed by Naomi Lim, the first Inouye Fellow, is available at the JACL website (www.jacl.org). The current Inouye Fellow is Shirley Jang as policy director.

JACL recently received a $15,000 grant from the Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF/the Health Forum), an advocacy organization whose mission is to enable Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to attain the highest possible level of health and well-being.

The grant was part of the Health Through Action National Civic Engagement Grant funds that are to be used to carry out activities to support national organizations which are working to engage their members, constituents, and communities in health advocacy and health care reform.

“The JACL is very grateful to the Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum for this grant which will help in furthering our work in the important area of health reform and health disparities which are evident among the community of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans,” said JACL National Director Floyd Mori. “The JACL values its partnership with the Health Forum and will continue working with them toward better health for Asian and Pacific Islander Americans.”

The JACL is focused heavily in health related areas. A Health Fair Tool Kit, which was developed by Naomi Lim, the first Inouye Fellow, is available at the JACL website (www.jacl.org). The current Inouye Fellow is Shirley Jang as policy director.
APAC Women Authors Gather to ‘Talk Story’

“Talking Story — An Intimate Conversation with Asian American Authors” on May 16 was a rare afternoon of extraordinary writers in an informal atmosphere.

The event featured: Delphine Hirasuna (“Art of Gaman”); Janice Mirikitani, poet laureate for San Francisco; Marlene Shigekawa (“Blue Jay in the Desert” and “Welcome Home Swallows”) and Gail Tsukiyama (“Women of the Silk” and “Dreaming Water”). The participants gained insights of what inspires and motivates the authors and their experiences with the writing process. The authors represented a variety of writings: fiction, non-fiction, poetry and children’s non-fiction.

The event was held at the Northside Community Center in San Jose Japantown, and was co-hosted by Midori Kai, Inc and Japanese American Museum San Jose (JAMsj).
In Memoriam - 2009

All the towns are in California except as noted.

Chinn, Benjamen, 87, San Francisco, April 25; photographer documented San Francisco's Chinatown during WWII served as an aerial, ground and public relations photographer in the Army Air Forces while stationed in Hawaii; survived by brothers, Martin and Thomas.

Ishio, Col. (ret.) Phil, Silver Spring, Md.; founding president of the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA); drafted into the Army in 1941 and earned the Bronze Star and two unit citations; served as the Army's reserve officer and attained the rank of Colonel.

Lai, Him Mark, 89, Clinton Township, Mich., April 29; internationally noted scholar, writer and "Dean of Chinese American History"; his ten books, more than 100 essays and research in English and Chinese on all aspects of Chinese American life are published and cited in the U.S., the Americas, China, Southeast Asia and Australia.

Miyasako, Tony Tsunehiisa, 83, Homedale, Ida., May 22; 442nd RCT; Boise Valley JACL; survived by daughter, Kaylene (Reid) Salo; sons, Kevin (Jean), Randy (Chris) and Dan (Lynette); 7 gc.; and sisters, Mary Inouye, Yoshie

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Ronald Takaki, a professor emeritus of ethnic studies at the University of California, Berkeley, and prolific scholar of U.S. race relations in Hawai‘i who taught UC’s first black history course, died at his home in Berkeley on May 26. He was 70.

Takaki, after suffering for nearly 20 years with multiple sclerosis, committed suicide, according to his son Troy. “He couldn’t deal with it anymore,” said Troy in an interview with the Los Angeles Times.

During his more than four decades at UC Berkeley, Takaki established the nation’s first ethnic studies Ph.D. program and advised President Clinton in 1997 on his major speech on race. He also received a Pulitzer nomination for his book, “A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America.”

A descendent of Japanese plantation workers in Hawaii, Takaki left the islands in the late 1950s to study at Ohio’s College of Wooster, where he earned a bachelor’s degree. He went on to earn a Ph.D. in American history from UC Berkeley in 1967 and was hired at UCLA, where he taught the campus’s first black history course. He joined Berkeley’s Ethnic Studies department in 1971 and served as chair from 1975-77.

Commenting on Takaki’s passing and the recent death of Chinese American scholar Hir Mark Lai, JACL National Director Floyd Mori said: “They “did much” for the Asian American community with their efforts to have the Asian American stories told in colleges throughout the nation. They leave a wonderful legacy of knowledge. Their teachings and leadership will live on through the lives of the student advocates whom they taught and mentored as they carry forth the work and vision of an inclusive society.”

Takaki was survived by his wife, Carol, his three children and his grandchildren.
American Holiday Travel

2009 Tour Schedule

COMING FOR OKINAWA-KYUSHU HOLIDAY TOUR GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR I: JUN 28-JUL 7 Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Miyajima, Kyoto, Nagoya.
ALASKA HOLIDAY CRUISE: JUL 7-16 Seattle, Glacier Bay, Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Victoria City, HOLLAND AMERICA Westerdam Ship.
JAPAN OBOH FESTIVAL TOUR AUG 5-16 Tokyo (Tsukiji Obon Festival), Gifu Hachiman (Summer Odori Festival), Kyoto, Jozankei Onsen Sapporo, Klam, Tsuchetsu Obon Festival.

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN/GREECE HOLIDAY CRUISE: AUG 22-SEPT 4 Venice, Crete, Athens, Rhodes, Kusadasi, Santorini, Olympia, HOLLAND AMERICA Oosterdam Ship.

OKINAWA-KYUSHU HOLIDAY TOUR: OCT 11-23 Fukuoka, Kagoshima, Kagoshima, Kumamoto, Fukuoka.
CANYONLAND GETAWAY HOLIDAY: OCT 18-23 Laughlin, Grand Canyon, Valley of Fire Park, Mesquite, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, Las Vegas.

COMING FOR 2010: HOKKADO SNOW FESTIVAL TOUR FEB 14-24 Sapporo, Kitami (Tsubetsu Obon Festival), Lake Toya, Hakodate, Aomori, Sapporo, Kitami (Tsubetsu Obon Festival).
GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR II: JUL 7-16 Tokyo (Tsukiji Obon Festival), Gujo Hachiman (Summer Odori Festival), Kyoto, Jozankei Onsen.
HOKKAIDO-TOHOKU HOLIDAY TOUR: AUG 22-29 Lake Akan, Abashiri, Kitami, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Kitami (Tsubetsu Obon Festival), Sapporo, Kitami (Tsubetsu Obon Festival).

HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVAL TOUR: FEB 14-24 Sapporo, Kitami (Tsubetsu Obon Festival), Lake Toya, Hakodate, Aomori, Sapporo, Kitami (Tsubetsu Obon Festival).

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