IN DEPTH

A Friendship With Heroes

Three years ago, two sisters wanted to find the 442nd soldiers who saved their father. Now they count these men as their friends.

>> page 3

I AM PROUD THAT I AM AN AMERICAN
OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY
I BELIEVE IN THIS NATION'S
INSTITUTIONS, IDEALS AND TRADITIONS
I GLORY IN HER HERITAGE
I BOAST OF HER HISTORY
I TRUST IN HER FUTURE
P.C. Receives $15,000 to Preserve Its History

The Pacific Citizen has been awarded a $15,000 grant from The California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) to preserve and digitize a portion of its unique history.

This newspaper has been chronicling Japanese American and Asian Pacific American issues from the Great Depression to the election of our first minority U.S. president. The P.C. is the oldest continuously published English language chronicle of the Japanese experience in America.

And until now, the P.C. archives have faced the threat of disintegration, and with it, its rich history.

The CCLPEP grant will fund the effort to digitize the P.C. between 1936-1943, a tumultuous period in the lives of JAs. Issues of the P.C. during that time period will be digitized and placed online at www.pacificcitizen.org for readers like you to read and research.

Befriending Heroes

APA lawmakers, groups push for immigration reform. >> Page 10

SAVING ANGEL ISLAND

APA groups fight to keep the state park open and its history alive. >> Page 4

NEW MEDIA FILMMAKERS

More APAs are making high quality films for the Web. >> Page 8

PHOTO: ELIZABETH KIM

Praying for Laura and Euna

JACLers respond to the news of the APA journalists' fate.

A Belated Honor

Taky Kimura, a friend of Bruce Lee, finally gets his diploma. >> Page 11

Honoring Alaka

JACL will honor the Hawaii lawmaker at its September gala. >> Page 11

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Support the Spring Campaign

By NAOMI OREN

Recently, I was watching correspondent Jason Jones on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" visiting the New York Times offices and his interview with executive editor Bill Keller and assistant managing editor, Richard L. Berke. Although "The Daily Show" is not a "real" news show, Jones ridiculed the Times as if the highly respected newspaper headquarters were a relic from the past. He labeled Keller as "the last of a dying breed." He even blurted that only his grandmother would enjoy newspapers.

Many of us have heard it and others have seen it. The Los Angeles Times cut roughly 300 jobs and reduced its news coverage to cut costs. N.Y. Times plans to eliminate about 100 newsroom jobs this year. With ad revenues for newspapers replaced by free online listing sites like Craigslist, not only have mainstream newspapers been forced to go smaller in size but its content has downsized as well.

Newsprint may be a disappearing form of receiving news but the Pacific Citizen doesn't have to go that way. Personally, I love feeling the newsprint doesn't have to go that way. Personally, I love feeling the newsprint doesn't have to go that way. Personally, I love feeling the newsprint doesn't have to go that way. Personally, I love feeling the newsprint doesn't have to go that way. Personally, I love feeling the newsprint doesn't have to go that way. Personally, I love feeling the newsprint doesn't have to go that way.

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P.C.: Support the Spring Campaign

By NAOMI OREN

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Three years ago the Hardwick sisters set out on a journey to find the 442nd soldiers who saved their father during WWII. Now they count many of these men as their closest friends.

By CAROLINE AOYAGI-STOM
Executive Editor

Editor’s Note: In February 2007 the Pacific Citizen ran a story about the Hardwicks and their quest to find the 442nd veterans. We recently revisited the sisters to see where their journey has taken them.

Penny Webster, 44, had been trying to call her mother all day but she knew she rarely carried her cell phone around with her. By the time she reached her at 4 p.m. that day last March, her mother Janet Hardwick Brown and her aunt Susan were passing on that message.

It was over two and a half years ago that the Hardwick sisters left a note of thanks to the 442nd soldiers at the National Japanese American Memorial in Washington, D.C. At the time, the sisters did not have any other way of contacting them.

Susan 64, from Indiana. "When Janet and I walk the Vosges we will walk with Susan. "When Janet and I walk the Vosges we will walk with their families, their children and grandchildren, that there are those who know what they did, who still care, and who want others to care and know as well.”

Sgt. Hardwick passed away in 1972 at the age of 51 before he was able to personally thank the 442nd. He had always wanted to let them know that because of their heroics he was able to return to Indiana to see his two daughters grow up and enjoy 28 more years of marriage with his love Pat. Now, Janet and Susan are passing on that message.

A Note of Heartfelt Thanks:

California Budget Crisis Threatens ‘Ellis Island of the West’

Community leaders say Asian Pacific American history is at risk if Angel Island is closed.

By LESLIE K. TAMURA
Special to the Pacific Citizen

The immigrant story is familiar to almost every American: they came in boats, enduring long, crowded voyages with nothing except for the clothes on their back and the dream of a better life that only the land of the free could offer.

Between the years 1910 and 1940, millions of immigrants entered the United States via Ellis Island. The Statue of Liberty welcomed the tired, the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. The day they arrived was the day they became Americans.

Across the country, however, it was a much different story. The immigrants attempting to gain access to America’s western edge had to penetrate the Angel Island Immigration Station, the “Ellis Island of the West.”

In contrast to the three-hour health exams at Ellis Island, Asian immigrants were greeted at California's coast with intense weeklong interrogations, cramped quarters, and countless days of waiting on an island in the middle of the San Francisco Bay.

“The whole process of Angel Island was one of testing you to see if you were a legitimate person to enter,” said Eddie Wong, director of the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. “[The park is] a living testament to the struggle of many Asian people who tried to immigrate here during the time of racial exclusion acts.”

In February, Angel Island — now a California State Park — celebrated its grand reopening after a three and a half year, $15 million project to preserve the walls of the Immigration Station, on which former inhabitants carved poems.

These stories are in danger of being lost yet again. Angel Island is one of 220 state parks scheduled to close by summer’s end in an effort to resolve the state’s $24.3 billion deficit.

One of Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger’s proposals is to eliminate all general fund contributions, which is about $143 million, to California state parks within the next two years. This means the public would not be able to visit 80 percent of the state-owned parks. If the state legislature does not amend or rescind Schwarzenegger’s plans, the cuts would go into effect July 1.

Regardless of what the legislature decides, however, park activities will continue until after the Labor Day holiday said Dave Matthews, Angel Island State Park supervisor. Still, Angel Island would have to shutter its doors before it is able to celebrate its 100th anniversary in January 2010.

The California Budget Conference Committee met at the State Capitol to review Schwarzenegger’s proposals on June 2, but tabled discussions so members could review all of the cuts and make final recommendations later in the month.

Closing Angel Island, a National Historic Landmark, would halt future renovations, stop research and may actually hurt one of the state’s revenue streams.

Despite the tough economy, state parks have seen a rise in attendance and have had a record number of campground reservations. During the most recent fiscal year, Angel Island produced $730,000 in state revenue according to park officials.

“Yes, you do save some money by closing down the parks,” Wong added, “but you also lose.”

For every dollar invested from the general fund, the state sees $7.50 in return, according to Wong. State parks fuel local economies, providing state revenue and jobs. Moreover, closing the parks may have other unforeseen costs to the state.

“We need our parks,” Wong said, “not only to help the economy but also because they really are tremendous recreational, historical, cultural and educational resources.”

Angel Island’s History

Unlike Ellis Island, which deported about one to two percent of its immigrant population, of those who arrived at Angel Island, an estimated 11 to 30 percent were ultimately sent back to their home countries.

Others stayed on the island for as long as two years. “Ellis Island was inclusive,” said Greg Marutani, member of the San Francisco JACL, “Angel Island was restrictive.”

For the Angel Island detainees(35,857),(969,992). “You can actually hear the voices of people who were there because they left their mark visible on the walls.”

About 1 million immigrants passed through Angel Island during its operation. More than 97 percent of the immigrants were Chinese, according to the California State Parks.

“It’s very much part of Asian American history,” said George Wu, executive director of the Organization of Chinese Americans. “It’s where many Asian American communities and ancestors started in their journey to America.”

1940 fire destroyed Angel Island’s administration building, forcing the federal government to abandon the station. During World War II, Angel Island became a war camp for Japanese and German prisoners, and after the war, the island became surplus property of the federal government.

In 1970, Alexander Weiss, a California State Park ranger, discovered the writings and carvings on the walls. The artifacts kick started preservation efforts.

“[Angel Island] is one of the gems of the state park system,” Matthews added. “It’s part of our local, state and national heritage.”

Saving the Island

Since its reopening in February, thousands of schoolchildren and members of the public have visited the Angel Island State Park. A weekly guided tour of the Immigration Station have been booked through the summer.

“There are a lot of lessons to be learned from how [Asian immigrants] were treated,” Wu added, “how they persevered, what they did after their detention on Angel Island.”

The restoration effort, however, is not complete. The next phase is a $16 million project to repair, restore and reopen the island’s hospital as a new space for exhibitions, conferences and a genealogy center.

“The site can be used for contemporary discussions of issues like immigration, migration, trade, relations with Asia,” Wong said. “Angel Island can be a place where new social policies are discussed as well as looking at the past.”

Marutani agrees that there is still much to be learned from Angel Island about the history of U.S. immigration policy.

“There are no more Issei alive that can tell you about the Japanese American experience on [Angel Island],” he said, “but it’s still a California story.”

On June 15, Democratic state lawmakers proposed a $15 car registration hike. In return, state parks stay open and entrance will be free for visitors with a California license plate.

The 220 state parks on the chopping block were chosen based on how they are funded. State parks that will remain open are able to stay afloat through other means (i.e., boat tax, gas tax) or they are able to sustain themselves with nominal fee hikes and lower operating costs.

Angel Island’s operating costs change every year, but last year’s costs totaled about $920,000 from the state, according to Matthews.

“We fully understand the gravity of California’s and the rest of the nation’s budget crisis,” Wu said, “so we understand that some, likely many, cuts will have to be made.”

But advocates fear that if the park shuts down, its priceless collection of poems would be vulnerable to vandalism and neglect and restoration efforts would come to a halt.

The JACL and other non-profit organizations have campaigned against the park closures, writing letters to the legislature and letting the public know the value of the state park that memorializes the immigrant story of the West.

“If [Angel Island] were to close, we’d be losing a chance to understand and interpret those poems,” Wong added, “and more importantly we’d lose the opportunity to be in a place where immigrants actually stood and hear their stories.”

More Cuts in 2009 Budget Reflect JACL's Reality

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Facing a potential shortfall, board members reduce membership goals.

The JACL national board has adopted a revised 2009 budget with additional cuts in revenue and spending, including a reduction in projected membership goals.

The revised budget is more reflective of JACL's reality, said Josh Spyr, national JACL secretary/treasurer.

The 2009-10 budget adopted last July by the national council laid the foundations for aggressive membership goals to fund JACL programs. That was, board members say, before the economic recession gripped the nation.

At its June 12-13 meeting in San Francisco, national board members trimmed expenses and approved a $98,849 reduction in projected membership revenue.

"Because of what we have realized in our membership numbers for the first four months [of the year], it's apparent that the goals may have been optimistic," said JACL National President Larry Oda.

The revised budget "is as real as you can get given the state of our economy," said JACL National Director Floyd Mori. "It's closer to what we need to do. The reduced membership goals is more in tune with what the chapters and districts are willing to do."

Budget cuts were also made in some JACL programs, said Mori, but they were not severe enough to affect the programs' performances.

Other larger changes in the 2009 budget include additional cuts in travel expenses for several programs including Planned Giving, Leadership Training and Conference and Fund Development.

Reducations in personnel costs also yielded a total of $51,000. The board approved a hiring freeze on the administrative assistant position. The San Francisco office is "closer to what we need to do."

"The main thing is that we need to maintain the membership objective. We cannot fall short of this reduced membership goal," said Mori.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

Reflecting on JACL's History

Last year, the JACL board voted to adopt a new logo as part of a staff-driven effort to "rebrand" the JACL, according to national director Floyd Mori.

"We need a more modern look that we'll be able to use thematically for everything we do," said Mori. "I think this is needed."

The staff will now work on a plan and guidelines for a possible logo design contest. The goal is to introduce the new logo design at the 2010 Chicago national convention, said Mori.

EDC District Gov. Kristine Minami said she supported the exploration of the redesign.

"I think that the logo has a great history and is a legacy for the organization," said Minami. "But it may be time to rethink what it represents — and if it represents what the organization stands for now," said Minami.

The logo was created during a time when the Issei faced citizenship restrictions and other anti-Asian laws. The motto, "security through design contest. The goal is to introduce the new logo design at the 2010 Chicago national convention, said Mori.

"I voted 'no' again, for the same reason I voted that way in February," said Akagi. "No matter how small, there is still a deficit in the budget, and as my fiduciary responsibility, I don't feel I can vote for it."

Membership is Still Key

There are many positive points in the current numbers, said board members.

As of April 30, JACL had a $1,102 surplus. The organization's investments, which are correlated with the market, were also back up from its "low point" in February, said Spyr.

The Legacy Fund is at $5,116,387, the Life Trust Fund is at $398,553, and the National Endowment sits at $336,956. The Masaoka Endowment Fund is at $231,259. The JACL Reserve Fund sits at $119,998.

The organization is doing better than he expected six months ago when the global financial world was in chaos, said Spyr. "I feel more confident."

In addition, there are revenue elements that are not enumerated in the budget, said Mori, including new and anticipated corporate revenue and grants. Fundraising events are also in the works. He's confident that these elements will help prevent passing future deficit budgets.

"I know there are some promises of money coming in, but it's not written into the budget. Until I see a budget without a deficit, I'll continue to vote 'no,'" said Akagi.

Membership revenue, board members say, is still vital to the organization.

"To keep our heads above water, we need to recruit one new member for every 10 we now have," said Oda.

"A lot goes into generating membership, and what is occurring now is just a continuation of our last 10 years experience. All of our efforts have not yielded the desired results of a membership increase. Whatever we are now doing or saying is not working."

Membership decline is nothing new to the JACL, said Spyr. "The question now is: is that decline going to continue to get worse?"

"The main thing is that we need to maintain the membership objective. We cannot fall short of this reduced objective," said Mori.

Expenditures also need to be closely monitored, said Oda. "The deeper we go into deficit, the more likely we will need to take more drastic measures."
JACL Establishes Cooperation With Community Groups

The national board has greenlighted a plan for the JACL to work with the U.S. Azerbaijan Network (USAN), a national Azerbaijani American non-profit advocacy and voter education organization.

USAN leaders first contacted Mori and expressed interest in working with the JACL to promote a “greater understanding and links, including trade, between the two communities,” according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) unanimously passed by the national board.

“In general, we are cooperating with the Azerbaijan’s and the MOU is just a way to formalize the effort,” said Oda.

“It’s important to develop strong coalitions like these,” said Mori.

The national board and staff are also looking into expanded collaborations with the Organization for Chinese Americans (OCA), another national APA non-profit that the JACL already works with for their D.C. Leadership Conference.

JACL national board members are looking at the possibility of co-hosting a future convention with OCA.

“The purpose and goals of our convention are very different from OCA’s, so there needs to be some in-depth coordination before there can be any meaningful dialogue,” said Oda.


New JACL Chapter Emerges From California’s Silicon Valley

“The birth of Silicon Valley JACL offers opportunities for new members in the Silicon Valley area to have a choice,” said Mark Kobayashi, former national JACL secretary/treasurer and vice president of the newly adopted Silicon Valley JACL.

The national board passed a resolution to adopt the new chapter, which has recruited 30 new members and fulfilled all of the requirements of becoming a national JACL chapter.

BOARD MEETING

(Continued from page 5)

Changes in the Future

In the face of these new challenges, board members say, it’s essential for the 80-year-old organization to change and evolve to meet the Asian Pacific American community’s new demands.

“Overall, we need to assess who we are and what our mission is. We need to determine if our structure fits the 21st century rather than the 19th century,” said Mori.

The next national board meeting, scheduled for Oct. 31, will mark the beginning of a new budget process. This is the time to think critically about the JACL’s future, said Spry.

“Now we need to think about what’s going to be sustainable in the long term,” he added. “It’s time to recognize that these short, quick fixes are not sustainable for the long term.”

Change is absolutely necessary, said Mori. “We’re in a new era. We face new challenges.”

For JACL’s future, he sees a need to form more partnerships with other community groups and focus on building “business plans and revenue generation at the national board and regional board levels.”

For now, JACL’s reality is grounded in the need to roll out the new logo, but I think we are looking at a longer process,” said Oda. And yes, change is needed.

“We can no longer do business as usual until we can find a suitable replacement of membership revenue.”

IN BRIEF: JACL National Board News

(Continued from page 5)

we can keep it, she added.

“I’m somewhat of a traditionalist,” said Larry Oda, JACL national president, “but to command the attention we can keep it, she added.

(Continued from page 5)

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Join JACL!

It’s now just a mouse click away. Spread the word. Become a JACL member at:

www.jacl.org

Silicon Valley JACLers: (L-r) Gail Sueki, Mark Kobayashi, Pat Nakashima and Jeff Yoshioka.

“This is what we need to focus on, growth in membership,” said Oda. “The ultimate goal of an increase in the number of chapters is to facilitate membership growth, but to the member, it means a choice.”

Tanabata Festival

July 7 at 7 p.m.

Roy’s Station Coffee and Teas in San Jose’s Japantown

Celebrate the launch of the Silicon Valley chapter.

Info:

Silicon Valley JACL@ymail.com

(http://siliconvalleymjc.downtown.com

The Silicon Valley JACL officers are: Gail Sueki, president; Kobayashi; Pat Nakashima, secretary; and Jeff Yoshioka, treasurer.

Chapter members are already off and running. Silicon Valley JACL’s first event will be the Tanabata Festival, a month-long celebration that kicks off July 7.

JACL Signs Onto Two Amicus Briefs

In a continued effort to fight for equal rights for all, the JACL has signed onto two amicus briefs on cases regarding English language learners (ELL) and the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

“Because of our stature and credibility, we are asked to file ‘Friend of the Court’ briefs to support or oppose filings that affect our community,” said Oda. “We sign on to educate the court about the JA experience and its relation to the case at hand.”

In Horne v. Flores, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering whether the state of Arizona must comply with a 1974 federal law that requires public schools to teach children to speak English proficiently.

“Language should not be a barrier to being a full citizen of the U.S.”, said Mori, who also pointed out the parallels in experience with the Issei generation.

JACL also signed onto Northwest Austin Municipal Utility District Number One v. Holder, a case where a small Texas district is challenging the constitutionality of Section 5 of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

At issue is whether Congress can continue to require states with past and current discriminatory voting practices to first receive clearance for changes in voting procedures from the Justice Department or a federal judge.

National Newsbytes

By Pacific Citizen Staff and Associated Press

Wong Way? Not Any More

RIVERSIDE, Calif.—It’s Wong Way no more. Believing a road in this city’s former Chinatown called Wong Way has been sending the wrong message for decades, officials in Riverside have renamed it Wong Street.

In 1961, the short connector street near downtown was named after the late George Wong, the last resident of Riverside’s Chinatown.

But some in the community thought the street name appeared to be more of a joke than an honor and were insulted by it.

City Councilman Mike Gardner, who requested the street name change, said the sign was disparaging to Chinese immigrants with limited English skills.

Chinese Muslims to Resettle in Palau

KOROR, Palau—After years of imprisonment in Guantánamo Bay, 13 Muslims from China will try to resettle on the tiny Pacific nation of Palau.

They have been treated like global untouchables since the U.S. decided to free them, saying they weren’t a danger to the country. No nation agreed to take the men until Palau— a former U.S. trust territory— welcomed them to the tropical tourist getaway, about 500 miles east of the Philippines.

The detainees were captured in Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2001. They were detained in Guantánamo and accused of being militants seeking training in Pakistan and Afghanistan. But the Pentagon determined last year that they were not “enemy combatants.”

Teens Accused of Strangling Newspaper Executive

NEW YORK—An advertising executive for the largest Chinese-language newspaper in the U.S. was robbed and strangled by two teenagers who spotted him sleeping in a luxury sport utility vehicle late at night.

Those two and another teenager charged in connection with the attack on 49-year-old David Kao, who worked for The World Journal, prayed on Asian men to rob, said Queens District Attorney Richard Brown. But the case IS not being prosecuted as a hate crime, he said.

Chris Levy, 17, and Cory Azor, 16, have been charged with second-degree murder. A third teenager, Keran Wiltshire, was accused of driving the stolen Lexus after Kao’s death and was charged with criminal possession of stolen property.

The three were also charged with robbing 42-year-old Jin Tong Yuan as he entered an elevator at a building about a week before Kao was killed, prosecutors said.

Obata Studio Becomes a Landmark

BERKELEY, Calif.—The Landmarks Preservation Commission has designated the former studio of renowned artist Chiura Obata’s former studio on a week before Kao was killed, prosecutors said.

Last year, the building was scheduled to reopen as the Muse Art House and Café, but currently sits empty.

Decision on a Wichita

Vietnamese Memorial Delayed

WICHITA, Kan.—The Wichita City Council has delayed a decision on whether to allow a Vietnamese war memorial in Veterans Memorial Park.

The issue caused nearly 90 minutes of debate at a June 9 public hearing. More than 30 people spoke before Mayor Carl Brewer asked the two sides to reach a compromise while the city studies the issue.

The memorial would have a sculpture of two soldiers—one American and the other South Vietnamese—from the Vietnam War.

Critics say the park already has a Vietnam War memorial and the park is meant for veterans of the U.S. military. They suggest a different location for the memorial.

Supporters say the memorial would add honor to the park as the South Vietnamese fought alongside the Americans.
Arizona JACL Awards New Scholarship

At its Sara Hutchings Clardy Scholarship Awards and Graduates Luncheon, the Arizona JACL awarded a new scholarship. The first annual Mark Saka Memorial Scholarship was awarded to Alyssa Hinchman, a first year student at the University of Arizona. Her award-winning essay was titled, "What Does It Mean To Be Japanese American in 2009."

Yamanaka is Inducted into Hall of Distinction

Kunitake Morgan Yamanaka was recently inducted into the California Social Work Hall of Distinction. Yamanaka worked as a professional social worker at San Francisco State University from 1962-2006. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, he was elected treasurer of the Golden Gate chapter's National Association of Social Workers. He has been active in many civil, social and professional organizations, including the San Francisco JACL.

Jesse Takamiyama retires from sumo

Hawaiian wrestler and trainer Jesse Takamiyama retired from sumo wrestling recently after a 45-year career in Japan's ancient sport. Takamiyama, also known as Jesse Kuhaulua, became the first foreign-born wrestler to win the top division championship in 1972. He was also the first foreign-born wrestler to take charge of a training stable, having been head coach of the Azumazeki stable he founded in 1986. Takamiyama made his professional debut in March 1964 and quickly moved up the ranks. His highest rank was sekiwake, which is the third highest rank in the elite division behind yokozuna and ozeki.

Go For Broke Names Scholarship Winners

Twelve students who are descendants of World War II Japanese American veterans have won Eiro Yamada Memorial Scholarships, said the Go For Broke National Education Center. The 2009 recipients are: Sean Kenji Bonnell, Richard Randolph Carrillo, Stephan E. Chao, Amy Kristin Choi, Lindsey Mieko Fujinaka, Marisa Kiyomi Fujinaka, Maya Kanani Kohiya, Kimberly Eri Ikuma Naguwa, Lauren Mahina Akemi Sato, Doug Nobutoshi Sekinuma, Wendy Akemi Sekinuma, Garrett Mitsuo Yamamoto. Established by the Yamada-Scott Family Foundation, the program honors the memory of the late Eiro Yamada, a 442nd veteran.

Hatamiya is Chosen as Lead Trombone for Jazz Orchestra

Jon Hatamiya, a junior at Davis High School in Davis, Calif., was selected as lead trombone in the Next Generation Jazz Orchestra and also as a member of the Brubeck Institute Summer Jazz Colony. Hatamiya also plays lead trombone in his high school jazz band and is principal trombone in the symphonic band, as well as a member of the Davis High School Jazz Combo.

Last November, he was selected as a finalist for the Grammy Jazz Ensemble, according to his MySpace profile.

Harsh Sentencing of Two American Journalists Sheds Light On Human Rights Issues in North Korea

Relatives and supporters of imprisoned journalists Laura Ling and Euna Lee attend a vigil recently in Los Angeles. Pictured here are Euna's husband Michael Saldate and Laura's sister Lisa Ling, renowned journalist formerly of "The View."

Last summer, the JACL National Youth/Student Council successfully pushed through a resolution to support human rights in the country notorious for its labor camps. Now, it's gained new significance.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

It was a sentencing heard around the world: 12 years in a North Korean hard labor prison for two American reporters who were convicted of unspecified "hostile acts."

For Brandon Mita, the JACL youth representative, news of the June 8 conviction and sentencing of Laura Ling and Euna Lee further underscored the need for more human rights awareness in North Korea.

"This is an issue that the JACL needs to begin caring about," said Mita. "Human rights is the next logical progression from civil rights and the North Korean people need our support."

It's an issue close to the hearts of the JACL National Youth/Student Council's (NY/SC) mostly Yosei members. Last summer at the JACL national convention in Salt Lake City, they lined up behind a microphone for a chance to urge the national council to pass their resolution supporting human rights in North Korea.

The resolution, which passed with a majority vote, was touted as an important step in building bridges between two nations and communities. In the JACL's fight for human rights, Ling and Lee's plight has brought new significance to the cause.

And, said Mita, it's not just a "youth" issue.

"This issue involves all of us because it speaks to our human dignity and our ability, as humans, to feel compassion and empathize with others that are unjustly wronged. That is why this organization exists," he said about the JACL.

North Korea's jail and gulags, experts say, are rife with human rights violations. Inmates are poorly fed and often do backbreaking work in factories, coal mines and rice paddies. The worst North Korean prisons are part of a network of five large political labor camps where people accused of being spies, defectors and dissidents get locked away. The U.S. State Department estimates the camps hold a total of between 150,000 to 200,000 inmates.

Analysis doubt that Pyongyang wants to send Ling and Lee back to these notorious prisons. Rather, the sentence is a way for the country to maximize its leverage with Washington, said Roh Jeong-ho, the director of the Center for Korean Legal Studies at Columbia Law School.

Asian Pacific American groups have strongly expressed concern over the treatment of these two American journalists. JACL National Director Floyd Mori called Ling and Lee's sentencing "a blatant case of injustice and miscarriage of human rights cloaked in the name of an unspecified crime."

JACL similarly called for the release of another APA journalist imprisoned in Iran, Roxana Saberi, who has returned to the U.S. since her release in May.

For Ling and Lee, the APA community remains vigilant. The Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) has said it would "continue to monitor this situation closely in hopes that tensions will subside."

Ling, 26, and Ling, 32, — who both worked for former Vice President Al Gore's Current TV — were arrested March 17 near the China-North Korea border where they were reporting about the trafficking of women. It's unclear whether they tried to sneak into the North or if aggressive border guards crossed into Chinese territory and grabbed them, as has happened before.

The North accused the reporters of illegally entering the country, but the formal charges against them were unclear. Their trial, which was closed to foreigners, began June 4. A day earlier in the U.S., vigils were held across the country in support of the journalists.

At the Los Angeles vigil, Laura Ling's sister, Lisa Ling of "The View" fame, made an appearance. The purely grassroots-driven events were spearheaded by Brendan Creamer of Philadelphia, who started a Facebook.com group page called, "Detained In North Korea: Journalist[s] Laura Ling and Euna Lee, please help."

He started the group, which now has over 20,000 members, simply to get more information. For some reason, he said, the incarceration of two American journalists wasn't making headlines, so he decided to do something about it.

"If there were something to gain from it, it's that I wanted to know more. I wanted others to know more," said Creamer to the Pacific Citizen.

Since their sentencing, Ling and Lee's families have remained quiet, except to issue a statement urging North Korea for clemency, amid hopes the U.S. government would send an envoy to negotiate their release.

"We remain hopeful that the governments of the United States and North Korea can come to an agreement that will result in the release of the [women]," said a June 9 joint statement by their families, which also called to light concerns about the women's health. Ling suffers an ulcer, and Lee's 4-year-old daughter is showing "signs of anguish over the absence of her mother."

Plans for another vigil are also in the works for July 9, in many major U.S. cities and in Seoul, South Korea, said Creamer.

Now, said Mita, it's critical to raise awareness on human rights issues "so that we can cherish the rights we already have and fight for those that need them as well."

For a link to Laura Ling and Euna Lee's Facebook group, go to www.pacificcitizen.org.
U.S. Issei Pioneers with a Tokugawa Vintage

Several weeks ago, while attending the funeral of a Nisei centenarian, Ben Fukushima of Los Angeles, I recognized for the first time a tombstone for an Issei (his father Tatsuaburo) born in 1867 — a year before the year 1889. I recognized for the first time the year 1889. They were interned at Poston, Arizona, in the early 1940s. Some will continue in their educational pursuit for additional degrees, specialties, and certifications. Others will return to travel, or in other multitudinous ways, enjoy a well-earned calm after the storm.

My new beginning has taken me from the fast-paced life of New York City to the quieter, slower-pace of the Deep South, (in fact in the first week I was pulled over for doing 53 in a 45), from dental school to dentistry, and from skyscrapers to beaches.

I recently graduated from Columbia University, College of Dental Medicine and will soon begin a one-year dental residency program with the U.S. Air Force here in Mississippi.

I will be meeting new people and co-workers, assuming new roles and responsibilities, and learning the many new rules of serving on active duty in the U.S. Air Force. My wife and I will be buying new furniture, making new friends, trying new restaurants, and searching for new places and activities to pass the time.

Yet all the newness brings back the oldness. When it comes to new and changing circumstances, people often compare the new to the old and subconsciously assign higher value to the old — of which I am guilty. I already miss the restaurants in Manhattan. I detest the crowded parking lots at Wal-Mart. I miss walking everywhere. I hate driving to the grocery store. I can’t help but notice all these differences between my old lifestyle and my soon-to-be new lifestyle.

Reconciling these differences is going to be my new beginning.

Luckily, a wise man of considerable authority recently spoke on a related matter. In his recent speech to the Muslim word of the Middle East, President Obama sought reconciliation between differences more great than the ones between New York and Mississippi. His new beginning involves healing ancient rifts in the Middle East, where years of bloodshed has hardened the ground too much to sow new hope. Yet, as he concluded his speech, he directed these words to the young people of the world: “…if we choose to be bound by the past, we will never move forward. And I want to particularly say this to young people of every faith, in every country, that more than anyone, have the ability to remake this world.

“All of us share this world for but a brief moment in time. The question is whether we spend that time focused on what pushes us apart, or whether we commit ourselves to an effort — a sustained effort — to find common ground, to focus on the future we seek for our children, and to respect the dignity of all human beings.

“It is easier to start wars than to end them. It is easier to blame others than to look inward; to see what is different about someone than to find the things we share. But we should choose the right path, not just the easy path. There is also one rule that lies at the heart of every religion — that we do unto others as we would have them do unto us.

“We have the power to make the world we seek, but only if we have the courage to make a new beginning, keeping in mind what has been written.”

Moving forward does not mean forgetting the past. Loving Mississippi more does not mean that I have to love New York any less. Loving both New York City and Mississippi are not mutually exclusive, no matter what differences exist. It’s much easier to change my perceptions than to change my new surroundings.

My mother consistently reminds me to emulate the virtues of my namesake, Shigeki “Shake” Ushio: namely tolerance, patience and being content. I believe I will need all three as I begin to adapt to my new beginning. I guess the goal will be to move beyond just “tolerating” to truly accepting and enjoying change as it comes to me, in whatever form it may take.

Now, who’s with me? I hope y’all are. Welcome to the Deep South! ■

Peter Shigeki Frandzen will be serving as a U.S. Air Force dentist at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi. He is a Mount Olympus JACL member.
Asian Pacific American filmmakers are looking to the Web as a new way to showcase high quality film projects and APA talent.

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

This summer, Gary San Angel's name isn't going to appear above the title of a big screen blockbuster, but the Philadelphia-based filmmaker can attract viewers from Texas to the United Kingdom with a single mouse click.

He's like the Michael Bay of the online world, except without the explosions and blank checks.

You can be the best director in the world with the greatest film ever made, said San Angel, 37, but it's all a loss if no one watches it.

"No one cares about you unless you go out there and make them care, make them excited about something you believe in." His short film, "The Koaloha Ukulele Story," is an animated documentary about a gregarious ukulele maker named Alvin Okami. And his screening room is in your computer. The price of admission is right too: free for those in the know. Just don't forget to leave your comments when you leave.

Making movies for internet consumption isn't new, but until now the genre has been saddled with an unfattering image of being mostly low quality, home videos of sneezing pandas and lip-synching boy band wannabes.

Not San Angel's "Koaloha," which is shot and presented in high definition for that full cinematic experience. In the art of guerrilla filmmaking, it's now all about high quality. And for filmmakers like San Angel, who is second generation Filipino American, the Web is a new frontier to showcase Asian Pacific American talent.

"On the Web there are different markets and communities that I'm able to tap into that I'd otherwise never be able to access," said San Angel. "And you're free to explore creatively without the hindrance of producers or studios."

The Web is also a haven for competition-killing innovation.

"In our lifetimes we've seen the MP3 destroy the traditional sales model of the music business, it's not out of the question for something to come along and do the same to the film industry," said Ryan Esaki, a 27-year-old co-founder of Ukulele Underground, LLC, which hosted the online world premiere of San Angel's short animated film about Alvin Okami?

By LYNDA LIN
Assistant Editor

With online film releases, you can make and distribute films that appeal to a worldwide audience, said Thym, 34.

"Compare that to traditional theatrical release, which is an expensive distribution method, plus you only have a limited window in which to sell tickets."

In August, Thym plans to launch "Lumina," an original Web series that borrows themes from "Snow White" and the "Twilight" novels. The series, shot in high def with a powerful Red One video camera, features a mostly APA cast, including JuJu Chan as Lumina Wong, a beautiful career woman in love with a man she can only see in mirrors.

If it were any other filmmaker, Chan said, she would've been hesitant to venture onto the Web. But ultimately, it was all about turning traditional industry mechanism on its head and creating a new venue for APA actors.

"We are here to make a change, and we are serious in producing a high quality and professional production to break the tradition," said Chan.

"Lumina" which was written and directed by Thym, explores the fantasy of playing with something or someone that is magical and not of this world, and how that can have severe consequences for everyone involved.

And like most things on the Web, "Lumina" will be free to view.

Thym is in good company. Last year, veteran director Wayne Wang released "The Princess of Nebraska" exclusively on YouTube's screening room.

"It's not just indie filmmakers using the internet — it's just the direction of the industry," said Michael Kang, whose 2007 film "West 32nd" garnered critical success.

"I think right now we are still in the beginning stages with new technology, but in a decade, watching movies off the internet will probably be the norm. That being said, I don't think that the experience of going to a movie theater and sitting in a dark room with a couple hundred people and having that collective experience will ever go away," said Kang.

In March, when San Angel screened "Koaloha" online for the first time, the film shared screen space with an instant message chatterbox filled with "LOLs" (for the new media newbies that's "laugh out loud").

"At first I was kind of disturbed by it but then I realized that this was the internet at its best," said San Angel.

"Two years ago, the theater artist was in the market for a ukulele when he came across the incredible story of Alvin Okami, an inventor, musician and craftsman whose family-owned manufacturing company was rescued from the brink of bankruptcy by the ukulele, a four-string instrument that has become synonymous with Hawaiian culture.

Among other things, Okami invented the spam musubi maker and the toothpaste tube squeezer.

San Angel knew this story had all the makings of a great documentary. He envisioned an oral history style documentary with Okami, a skilled storyteller, leading the way.

"There aren't many documentaries about ukuleles. If there are, they're done in a PBS historical style or concert style."

To make "Koaloha," San Angel spent about $25,000 of his own money on the top of the line camera and audio equipment. Then he headed to Hawaii where he shot over an hour's worth of Okami talking about the birth of his first ukulele.

On the plane back home to Philadelphia, San Angel turned on the camera to review the footage and saw nothing but static.

"I felt like a failure."

He filed the project away until months later when he ran into Rocky Kev, a talented animator, and told him the whole story.

"I laughed," said Kev, a 23-year-old second generation Cambodian American. "I'm a follower of Murphy's Law. 'Anything that can go wrong will go wrong.' But Gary didn't just chuck the footage. He saw the bigger picture and worked it differently."

The audio from the interview was intact, so why not animate?

I don't have any money, San Angel told Kev, but every time we work I'll buy you lunch. For over a year, they met at the restaurant inside the local Ikea furniture store to bring the Alvin Okami story to life.

It's a familiar story for all filmmakers passionate about their art.

"I believe in positive action," said Thym. "I strongly believe that if you want to make change, then don't wait for Hollywood to do it for you."

The next step, she adds, is to snag the attention of the mainstream machine to fund projects like "Lumina" and others. You know, like they do for Michael Bay.

"I want to contribute some alternatives to the traditional mainstream content that is available to viewers. Every view that 'Lumina' gets, I regard as a positive reinforcement that my stories can entertain people and as further validation of our cast's hard work and dedication, she said."

On the Web: www.luminaseries.com

EXCLUSIVE

Watch 'The Koaloha Ukulele Story'

APA Leaders Push for Family Reunification Immigration Reform Bill

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Asian Pacific American lawmakers are pushing for passage of an immigration reform bill that would help Filipino World War II veterans and same-sex couples reunite with their families.


"The Reuniting Families Act should be at the heart of comprehensive immigration reform," said Honda in a statement. "Our family-based immigration system has not been updated in 20 years, separating spouses, children and their parents, who have played by the rules, for years, often decades."

The bill seeks to clear the estimated 5.8 million people backlogged by providing a legal mechanism to streamline the application process. Supporters say the backlog keeps families separate, often for decades.

It also includes a provision to allow same-sex couples to sponsor their foreign partners for residency and exempt the sons and daughters of Filipino WWII veterans from immigration caps.

About 200,000 Filipinos served with American troops during WWII. About 18,000 of them are still alive.

"I have listened to many heartrending stories of sons and daughters of our Filipino World War II veterans waiting patiently in the Philippines with the hope that one day they will be able to come to the United States to care for their aging parents," said Rep. Mazie Hirono.

The report, "A Devastating Wait: Family Unity and the Immigration Backlog," released last year by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center highlighted some important family immigration data and stories of APA foreign partners for residency and exempt the sons and daughters of Filipino WWII veterans from immigration caps.

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According to the report, most family members waiting for reunification are mostly young families, recently married or with young children.

Minority Lawmakers Want Bill to Close Health Gaps

BY BEN EVANS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON—Black, Latino and Asian lawmakers warned Democratic leaders that any health care overhaul that ignores health gaps between whites and minorities will face stiff opposition.

The lawmakers said they would be hard-pressed to support a bill without a new program providing access to health care for all Americans.

"The public health option has to be there," Rep. Mike Honda, a California Democrat who chairs the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, said at a news conference. "If we don’t have a public option, there’s no discussion."

Republicans are resisting a government health insurance program that would compete with private insurance companies, arguing that the companies would be put at a competitive disadvantage.

Members of the Asian Caucus, along with the Congressional Black Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, said they plan to introduce legislation that includes their wish list for broadening health care overhaul beyond various plans floated in the House and Senate. The three minority caucuses have a total of 91 members, most of them Democrats and enough to help shape the final legislation.

Citing federal research showing higher rates of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and infant mortality among minorities, they said they would seek more funds for community health centers that provide care in poor neighborhoods.

The lawmakers also called for expanding a National Institutes of Health center that focuses on minority Americans, not only are more likely to be uninsured, so they don’t have preventative care, don’t have early intervention, but are less likely to have quality care when they come to seek the care that they need," she said.

The White House issued a summary report on minority health care showing that African Americans are seven times more likely as whites to have HIV/AIDS, that blacks and Hispanics have diabetes rates nearly twice as high as whites, and that black men are 50 percent more likely than whites to have prostate cancer.

The report said more than one in three Hispanics and American Indians, and about one in five African Americans, are uninsured. That compares to one in eight whites lacking coverage.

They said the costs of reaching into low-income, minority communities to improve upfront health care would be more than offset in the long run by preventing expensive procedures and hospital stays.

"Believe me, a comprehensive health care reform bill without the aspects that we’re discussing today will be set for failure," said Rep. Nydia Velazquez, a New York Democrat who chairs the Hispanic Caucus.

Later, at a discussion of minority health issues at the White House, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said the Obama administration is committed to addressing the "alarming disparity in the delivery of quality health care."

Doing so, Sebelius told officials, is critical to lowering health care costs.

Sebelius noted that 75 percent of the nation’s $2.2 trillion health care expenses go toward treating chronic diseases, referring to far higher rates of such diseases among minorities. She said the rising rates of HIV/AIDS among African-Americans is among "the most troubling" developments in U.S. health care.

"Minority Americans not only are more likely to be uninsured, so they don’t have preventative care, don’t have early intervention, but are less likely to have quality care when they come to seek the care that they need," she said.

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Enjoy a day of exciting activities including:
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• Fighting for Democracy Exhibition 11 AM–2 PM
• Children’s Storytime 12 PM
• NEW! Family Tour of Common Ground:
  The Heart of Community 1 PM & 2 PM
• Taiko for Families Workshop 1:30 PM
• Performances by Paul Dateh, TAIKO PROJECT and
  Demon Drummer from East LA with CAVA 3:30 PM–5:30 PM
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See the new kaeru frog design with a special t-shirt by Zola Toys and a kaeru naming contest.

Visit janm.org for more information. Call 213.625.0414 for reservations to the Members’ Coffee (ext. 2249).

Upcoming Public Programs

2009 Summer Film Festival*
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Harsh Canvas: The Art & Life of Henry Sugimoto
*Screenings are throughout the day in the Terasaki Orientation Theater.

Saturday, June 27
Little Tokyo Walking Tour
10:15 AM–12:15 PM

Craft Class with Ruthie Khagawa:
Origami Sushi Garden Greeting Card and Decorative Balls
1 PM

Film Screening: On Paper Wings
2 PM

Programs are free with admission unless otherwise noted. Visit janm.org for more details, or call 213.625.0414.

Japanese American National Museum
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JACL to Honor Sen. Akaka at Gala Dinner

The national JACL will honor Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, at its Gala Dinner in Washington, D.C. Sept. 17 for his tireless efforts to fight for the good of all veterans. In addition to the Senator, JACL will also honor Japanese American veterans at its third annual gala event.

"Senator Akaka's dedication to the legacy of veterans is legend," said National JACL Director Floyd Mori. "Veterans owe much to the Senator's steadfast efforts to assure good care and keeping for those who gave so much for our liberties, including his support for the Filipino Veterans Equity Act that was recently signed into law."

Sen. Akaka is America's first senator of Native Hawaiian ancestry and the only Chinese American member of the U.S. Senate. Upon graduation from high school, he served as a civilian worker and then on active duty in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from 1943 to 1947. He returned to school after the war, enrolling at the University of Hawaii. He became a teacher and principal in the State of Hawaii. Akaka was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1976 and was appointed to the Senate when Senator Spark Matsunaga passed away. He then won election to the Senate in 1990 and has served in Congress for 32 years.

Besides being a veteran himself, Sen. Akaka has tirelessly served veterans and others for decades. He is chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight of Government Management of the Federal Workforce and the District of Columbia. He also serves on the Armed Services, Indian Affairs, and Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committees.

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The JACL Gala Dinner will also mark the 80th anniversary of the founding of the JACL, which was organized in 1929 by Nisei leaders.

Nisei Taky Kimura Receives Belated High School Degree

Taky Kimura was finally able to receive his high school diploma after missing the ceremonies in 1942 because of his incarceration in a World War II internment camp.

Taky Kimura, 85, was surprised to learn his martial arts students had arranged the whole thing.

By ASSOCIATED PRESS

CLALLAM BAY, Wash.—Sixty-seven years ago, an 18-year-old Taky Kimura was preparing for his high school graduation from Clallam Bay School.

He never made it to the ceremony.

At about noon on that June day in 1942, he and his family of nine were put in old railroad cars with windows boarded up and swept away to Tule Lake Internment Camp in California.

On June 13, Kimura, now 85, received his diploma at last, during a graduation ceremony for the class of 2009 at Clallam Bay High School.

"It is such an honor to be able to do this," he said.

Kimura operates the Jun Fan Gung Fu Institute in Seattle with his son, Andy. When he was 36, Kimura befriended the 18-year-old Bruce Lee who trained him in the martial arts.

Some of Kimura's students heard that he had never received his high school diploma and phoned the school.

"They went behind my back and called," said Kimura, who added he never dreamed of attending the ceremony.

"When I found out, I asked them, 'What the hell did you do that for?'" Kimura said. "We don't make any profit off of this," Kimura said. "What me and my son are trying to do is to teach these young people how to deal with their problems."

Kimura said he holds no bitterness against the government for his internment at Tule Lake during WWII.

"That is water under the bridge now," he said. "You can't live your life being bitter about that, because the only person it hurts is yourself."

His father, Suejiro, had moved to the United States when he was 16; his mother, Hanuyo, when she was 15.

The couple, he said, never would have encouraged or joined an uprising against the country that had become their home.

In Clallam Bay, it was different. The people of Clallam Bay/Sekiu area took them in like family and still remain close to his heart, Kimura said.

He especially remembers Hazel K. Murray, who was principal at the school when he was there.

"She treated me almost like her son or something ... She was a big point in my life out there."

Another local he remembers with great respect is a country doctor he knew only as Dr. Baker.

"When all the stuff with the internment camps started coming up, he called up one of the generals of the Army and said that if they would let us stay here, he knew we were great people," Kimura said.

"Clallam Bay has been a huge part of my life," he said, adding that he returns every so often to visit the "old timers." "It is where I grew up."
**COMMENTARIES**

**Working with JACL for Common Community Causes**

Before my fellowship, I didn’t know how extensively JACL worked on an advocacy level. Now I have firsthand experience.

By CRYSTAL XU

Prior to my work here at the JACL, I worked with Rep. Linda Sanchez, D-Calif., as a congressional aide in the district. I served as the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community liaison among other duties. I’ve always been passionate about working with the AAPI community.

Working in the district office of a Congressional member gave me an opportunity to work with many non-profit and community-based organizations. It also gave me great insight on how beneficial they are to the community and the members they serve. When I saw an opportunity to work in the policy office at JACL, I was immediately interested.

Before I was selected to be the JACL’s Mineta fellow, I was not aware of how extensively JACL worked on an advocacy level. Although the JACL is a community-based organization with members across the nation, it serves a broader community.

**Table Tennis Champion Joins the Millennium Club**

By IRENE MORI

When JACL National Director Floyd Mori met David Sakai at a function, he asked the printing company president & CEO some printing questions and then asked him to join the JACL.

David, a Sansei from Bowie, Maryland, later came to the JACL Washington, D.C. office to discuss printing. He went home a new JACL Millennium Club member.

He said he wanted to get involved with the JACL because besides relatives, he hasn’t had a lot of interaction with other Japanese Americans in the past.

David is also a champion in table tennis who continues to play and compete even in his 60s. He’s played table tennis competitively for over 40 years. He won at the 1964 U.S. Open and became the no. 2 U.S. junior at the U.S. Open in 1965.

He’s competed in every U.S. Open and national table tennis championship in the last 36 years.

“I’ve lost more matches than anyone in history and probably won more matches than anyone as well.”

In 2004, David was inducted into the USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame.

In 1976, David was vice president of a newly formed Players Association and was among a number of players who boycotted and picketed the Philadelphia U.S. Open tournament. They wanted to become professional and play for substantial sums of money in order for the sport to grow. Six months later, much more prize money was offered to the players.

David also met his wife Donna through table tennis. They won the mixed doubles championship at the U.S. Open in 1977. Donna was inducted into the USA Table Tennis Hall of Fame eight years earlier.

He started his own successful printing business, but always kept up with table tennis.

David continues to practice almost everyday to stay in top form and competes in approximately 35 tournaments a year.

For more information on how to become a JACL Millennium Club member, go to www.jacl.org or call JACL national headquarters 415/921-5225.

The work that I did in the Washington, D.C. office focused on policy work as well as advocacy for the AAPI community, addressing issues that face our communities as well as basic human rights issues. I followed legislation that was of concern to the JACL including but not limited to immigration, the Census, service nation and Japanese Latin American issues.

Another position I held during the fellowship was with the National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), a coalition of 27 nationally recognized AAPI organizations that JACL National Director Floyd Mori chairs.

Serving as the NCAPA staff person, I worked very closely with all 27 different organizations to further NCAPA’s agenda for the AAPI community.

This year, NCAPA was especially involved with the new administration. NCAPA played a huge role in writing support letters and recommendations for appointment positions. As a member of the NCAPA staff, I worked closely with the executive committee as well as all the executive directors of NCAPA to compose these letters and send them to Donald Gips, the White House director of presidential personnel.

My experience working with JACL and NCAPA has given me great insight on how hard all these AAPI organizations come together to work for a common cause and I plan to continue to do work with the AAPI community in my future endeavors.

Crystal Xu was the 2008-09 JACL Norman Y. Mineta Fellow.

**‘Nisei Voices’ to be Placed in San Francisco District School Libraries**

The Curriculum and Program Committee of the San Francisco School Board unanimously voted recently to have copies of “Nisei Voices: Japanese American Students of the 1930s — Then and Now” placed in its middle and high school libraries.

Earlier this year author Joyce Hirohata contacted the JACL, San Francisco Chapter expressing her desire to have copies of the book, initially begun by her grandfather Paul Hirohata when he collected nearly 50 valedictory speeches given by Nisei in the 1930s, in the district libraries.

Copies of the book were sent to members of the Program and Curriculum Committee comprised of Sandra Lee Fewer, chair, Jane Kim and Hydra Mendoza. The book was referred to Pete Hammer, history/social studies content specialist for the district, who prepared a review of the book that included possible classroom use of the book and how the book would address the California standards for history. His recommendation to accept the book was then sent to the members of the committee.

“We are grateful to Joyce [Hirohata] for making copies of her book available to the public school libraries in San Francisco” said Hiroshi Shimizu, S.F. chapter president. He added, “Having Greg [Marutani] following through with the district’s formal procedures and kept the project moving forward to this successful conclusion.”

The book will be distributed to the school libraries prior to the start of the fall semester along with a letter that will provide a brief background about the gift of the book to the libraries.

The book is also being distributed to the San Francisco District School Libraries.

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ization that has awarded a grant to the JACL. It was a great and well-attended conference that addressed issues of health disparity and other health issues facing the Asian Pacific American community. JACL was also represented at a recent D.C. summit sponsored by Senate Leader Harry Reid and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for APA community, leaders, many of them from the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) an APA coalition that I chair.

Other members of Congress who attended the summit and addressed participants were: Sens. Daniel Akaka, Daniel Inouye, and Debbie Stabenow, and Reps. Madeleine Bordallo, Abn (Joseph) Cao, Eiki Faleomavaega, Al Green, Bobby Short and David Wu.

I've also been regularly invited to the White House for various policy and personnel meetings. In the meeting to discuss the nomination of Sonia Sotomayor for the Supreme Court, I was one of only two APAs in the discussion.

The JACL is often called upon to represent the APA community. And the JACL continues to have relevance in today's world. It is important for us to keep up our vigilance in the arenas of civil and human rights, education, heritace, fundraising, leadership, senior and youth issues, and other interests of our organization.

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The Last JACL Youth Conference
ST. PAUL, Minn.
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The youth-led conference has been a stand alone JACL tradition for decades. Starting in 2010, the event will become a part of the JACL's new annual national convention tradition. This year's conference, themed 'IMPACT! Your Community, Your Generation, Your JACL' takes place at Macalester College.

For more information:
www.jacl.org/youth/conference-youth.html

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Sandra Otaka 1952-2009

COOK COUNTY'S FIRST APA Judge Was a Community Advocate

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Judge Sandra Otaka, a community advocate who helped overturn the conviction of Fred Korematsu and the first Asian Pacific American to be elected to the Cook County Circuit Court in Illinois, died June 6 of natural causes, according to the Chicago Tribune. She was 57 years old.

"Sandra was a dear friend to the Asian American community," said Bill Yoshino, JACL Midwest regional director. "She instinctively cared about fairness and justice in issues affecting our community."

Otaka, a Sansei and a Chicago JACL member, was elected to the Cook County Circuit Court in 2002. Before that, the California native whose mother was a former Minidoka internee, campaigned against the Vietnam War, worked as a waitress, and enrolled as an undergraduate at the University of California, Berkeley at 28.

Of her election, Otaka said, "I'm very grateful to have been chosen. My mother was an internee and a former fighter against the Vietnam war. I think she's going to be very, very happy." Otaka had been appointed to the JACL's board of directors in 2005.

Kenji Murase 1920-2009

Educator Brought Diversity to the Practice of Social Work

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Dr. Kenji Murase, a professor emeritus of social work at San Francisco State University and long-time advocate for Asian Pacific American mental health and social services, died June 2 at his home in San Francisco. He was 89.

Emily Murase, his daughter, said he died in his sleep.

Murase was known as a prolific writer. At SFSU, he devoted his 23-year tenure to making the practice of social work more inclusive of diverse populations.

His career was greatly influenced by the help he received to continue his college education, said Emily Murase.

During World War II, Murase and his family were ordered to the Poston internment camp in Arizona. With the help of the National Japanese American Relocation Council, formed by a small group of university administrators and championed by Eleanor Roosevelt, Murase was one of about 5,000 Japanese American college students permitted to leave camp and continue his studies in the Midwest and East Coast.

Murase received his bachelor's degree from Temple University. In 1947, he earned a master's degree in social work and a PhD in 1961.

He is survived by his children and grandchildren. He was predeceased in death by Seiko, his wife of 42 years.

IN MEMORIAM

All locations are in California except as noted.

Abe, Masaji, 87
Montebello, June 2; survived by wife, Yuriko; daughters, Geraldine (Tomio) Odama and Frances Tom; son, Roderick (Cindy Yuk); and 6 gc.

Hata, Seiji William, 82
May 9; survived by son, Rick (Dee); daughter, Julie (Brian) Hamilton; 4 gc.; companion, Kathy Suyama; and sister, Miyie (Henry) Kanazawa.

Ichimura, Yoshiho, 91
Honolulu, Haw., May 23; 442nd vet­ eran; survived by son, Ian; 3 gc., 1 ggc.; and sister, Yayeko Nonaka.

Mikami, Takumi "Tuk," 85
Seattle, Wash.; survived by wife, Yoshie; sons, Steve (Becky) and Michael; daughter, Joyce (Russell) Odell; 6 gc.; aif sisters, Yaeko Mikami and Haruko (Robert) Hirakana.

Ozawa, Jane Miyoko, 88
Alhambra, June 2; former Pacific Citizen staffer handling circulation and general finances; East Los Angeles JACLer; survived by sister, Hatsuko Nakatsuka.

Shintaku, Marquerite, 78
Orange County, May 30; served in the Women's Army Corps; survived by sons, Kenji and Toshio (Tori); daughters, Karen (Ken) Brumm; 3 gc.; and sister, Fanny Lou Smith.

Teramoto, James Koichi
San Jose, May 28; Marine veteran; survived by wife, Amy; daughters, Kim (Cyru) Lum and Jennifer (Keith) Womg; 3 gc.; brother, Bob; and sisters, Lili Moriyama, Mary Lau and Sachiko Takek. 8 gc.

This compilation appears on a space-available basis at no cost. Printed obituaries from your newspaper are welcomed. "Tributes," which appear in a timely manner at request of the family or funeral director, are published at the rate of $20 per column inch. Text is reworded as necessary.
JAPANESE HERITAGE NIGHT & FRIDAY NIGHT FIREWORKS
FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2009 @ 7:10PM

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