Los Angeles-based Ryman Arts empowers youth.
A Core American Value

Young people can be a pretty screwy bunch, but sometimes they represent the very best in us. I recently saw a short documentary entitled “Leap of Faith” which tells the true story of a group of Caucasian teenagers who risked some danger in order to help protect the Enmanji Buddhist Temple during WWII in Sepastopol, Calif. In early 1942, vandals and religious bigots shot bullets into the temple and even fire bombed the wooden building. The youth group of a local Christian church decided they would maintain a vigil. The beautiful Enmanji Temple still stands today. I marvel at the courage of these young people who night-after-night stood vigil, not knowing what kind of craziness they might encounter. This is an example of the “very best in us” — to be loyal to our friends, and to take bold action for one of the great values that America really stands for: religious freedom and tolerance.

Bill Watanabe
Los Angeles

Changing JACL’s Name is an Insult

I am appalled at the suggestion to change the name of JACL. I believe that changing the name of JACL would be an insult to its founders who established the organization in 1929 and, today, is the oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. Do not be too quick to destroy valuable institutional history.

Take, for example, the NAACP, founded in 1909, and has not changed its name even though being identified as “colored people” is outdated. Remember that membership in JACL, like the NAACP, is open to anyone wishing to join.

Perhaps JACL should focus on meeting the needs or the interests of a diverse Asian American community, young and old, and to remember what was and is in the hearts and minds of the people, as does the NAACP, instead of contemplating a name change for JACL.

Helen Kawagoe
Former National JACL President

Let’s Get Involved

I read with amazement National President David Kawamoto’s efforts to increase JACL membership. In 1958, when I got involved in JACL, membership was also an issue. Evidently, it is still an issue. In 1965, NCWWPND approved a health insurance program and today it is going strong after about 45 years.

Today, I would challenge the younger JACLers, such as the various JACL national scholarship winners. Let’s start something like our JACL Health Plan and really get involved.

John Yasumoto
San Francisco JACL

COMMENTS

Pete Hironaka Leaves Lasting Legacy Upon Retirement

By Ron Katsuyama

Pete Hironaka’s cartoons have resonated with Pacific Citizen readers for more than 53 years. On May 24, 1957, Pete’s initial publication was prompted by Mike Masaoka’s “Washington Newsletter” column that raised concern about an apparent decline in public recognition of the supreme sacrifices of Nisei soldiers during WWII. Since then, other themes are identifiable: the value of compassion and a need for advocacy on behalf of the “underdog” or “outsider” due to cultural insensitivity or bigotry.

Born to Issei parents who eked out a sharecroppers’ living near Sacramento, Pete was the second oldest of six children. When Pete was six, the family moved to Salinas to take advantage of better farming opportunities. Pete fondly recalls one of his earliest experiences in the Salinas schools. His first grade teacher gathered her colleagues to marvel at a sketch he had made of a pretty, blonde-haired classmate.

However, with a growing interest in sports, farm chores, and dedication to schoolwork, Pete temporarily abandoned his drawing activities. Perhaps recognizing Pete’s latent abilities, his father talked him into taking a college-prep curriculum at Salinas High School.

However, Pete’s life path suddenly took an unexpected turn. Following Pearl Harbor, E.O. 9066, and a temporary stay in squalid conditions at Pinedale, Pete’s father accompanied him, his older sister, and his four younger siblings (including an infant) on a train headed toward the Poston concentration camp. Pete’s mother was unable to return from a visit to Japan, and she died before any opportunity for family reunification.

Beginning his sophomore year at Poston, Pete enrolled in whatever “electives” he needed to keep his full-time student status. Life was as easy as it was aimless at this time in Pete’s life, and he often meandered from the mess hall to the baseball field and back.

Then came Joan Smith (later Joan Smith Bodein). She promptly implemented a policy of beginning-of-year interviews with each of her students. A life-changing meeting ensued. “Pete, this is ridiculous,” she began. More pointedly, “You’re just drifting through school … You CAN go (to college) if you try hard enough and set your mind to it!” The rest is history. Pete became valedictorian and was accepted to Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, sometimes referred to as “the Ivy League” school of the Midwest. Now, returning to the discussion of Pete’s more than five decades of P.C. cartoons, wherein lies his motivation? Perhaps it springs from his deep appreciation and loyalty to those people and institutions that reflect the best in our sometimes flawed human nature and the desire to celebrate these values with others.

When Pete heard that Mrs. Joan Smith Bodein would be vacationing with her husband in California, he went out of his way to arrange a meeting so that he could finally tell her that she was the best, most caring teacher he ever had. And his loyalty to Miami University and pride in his alma mater status remains unwavering in innumerable ways.

JACL’s core values are also very dear to Pete, and his artistic talents permit their expression with unparalleled eloquence. His cartoons resonate through his powerful use of irony, subtle sarcasm, delightful exaggeration, and classic satire.

Pete leaves a lasting legacy through his art, which conveys JACL’s values of democratic processes and social justice. These penetrate deeply into our consciousness, reminding us of all that has been right with efforts on behalf of our organization.

Ron Katsuyama is the national JACL vice president of public affairs.
Since a judge OKed a large dairy permit, community groups are taking the next steps to preserving the WWII internment camp.

By Christine McFadden Correspondent

High school sophomore Rachel Seeman steps off the greyhound bus and onto what she expects to be barren land. Following a day-long bus ride through the flatlands of Idaho, she is shocked to be met with the landscape outside of Twin Falls, Idaho: lush, green fields.

"I was expecting to see a desert," the now 18-year-old Stanford University freshman reflects. "I just remember looking out at those fields and seeing that green and knowing that it was our ancestors that made it what it is."

Seeman, a Portland JACL member, had just taken the initial, surprising steps of her first Minidoka pilgrimage to the remnants of the World War II concentration camp. With two uncles and a great aunt incarcerated at Minidoka, the site holds a special significance for Seeman.

"After walking around for a while I realized the Japanese Americans were there; they made this land. In that moment, it turned it from a desert into beautiful scenery. They were placed there for the wrong reasons, but they still managed to do something positive with this land."

However, a recent ruling by an Idaho court may result in what many consider to be a negative impact on the land and a step backward in preservation for the historic site.

On Aug. 3, Fifth District Judge Robert Elgee ruled in favor of a previously issued county permit to build a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) for South View Dairy approximately 1.2 miles east of the camp. The feedlot would hold approximately 13,000 cows just east of the remnants of the site where during WWII, about 13,000 Japanese and JA citizens were incarcerated.

"If the environmental effect from the pollution of the feedlot would cause those lush, green fields to die and the landscape. She remembers the presence of large trucks, increased traffic, and cattle feces on the ground, potentially leading to further contamination."

The National Trust for Historic Preservation included Minidoka on their "Top 11 Most Endangered National Historic Sites" list in 2007. To date, Minidoka is the only concentration camp to have ever been listed.

Seeman equates the CAFO's action as "a slap in the face."

"Minidoka is a historical site that commemorates a place of pain, but also a place that represents our history," she said. "If this feedlot was allowed to be put in, I think it would be an example of our society not respecting the history once again of a people who have already been abused by the system."

"I really can't imagine something like that [the CAFO] going up in that area," said Nisei Mary Coe. Born and raised in Gresham, Oregon, her teenage years were interrupted by a three-year incarceration in Minidoka where she attended and graduated from Minidoka High School.

After Coe and her family were released in 1945, it took another 45 years for her to make a return trip in 1990 with her husband to revisit the landscape. She remembers seeing stretches of farmland, a lone, remaining guardhouse, and a list of all of the people from Minidoka that died in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Coe had two older brothers enlisted in the 442nd; both survived.

"It wasn't really a lot, but it was still something I was interested in," she remembers. "I really would like to preserve an area there where people can visit for generations to know what went on there."

For more information: www.minidoka.org/cafo.php
President Signs Congressional Gold Medal Bill to Honor WWII Nisei Veterans

The medal is being awarded collectively to those who served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

President Barack Obama has signed into law a measure awarding Japanese American veterans the Congressional Gold Medal, more than 65 years after the men fought to defeat America’s enemies abroad while the government and fellow citizens questioned their loyalty to country at home.

Obama hosted six veterans and their supporters at an Oct. 5 Oval Office signing ceremony that was closed to the news media.

The president noted the heroism and exemplary combat record of those who served even as the U.S. government detained their family members in internment camps, said Terry Shima, director of the Japanese American Veterans Association.

The president mentioned the family of his interim chief of staff — Pete Rouse — was among the 120,000 JAs interned.

Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, who lost his right arm in Italy while serving with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and was awarded the Medal of Honor, said those present for the signing appeared happy and jovial. But he said everyone recognized the medal was being awarded as a result of lost lives and bloodshed.

“We were humbled, proud and pleased that the contributions and sacrifices we made in defense of our great nation were recognized,” Inouye said. “I am very grateful to this nation for remembering us.”

The medal is being awarded collectively to those who served in the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service.

The 100th and 442nd soldiers served in Europe while those in MIS translated and interpreted Japanese military communications in the Pacific.

The National Veterans Network (NVN), a coalition of 23 JA veterans and civic organizations formed one year ago to assist in the passage of the Senate Bill, S-1055, is working with Washington officials to plan a two-day program to honor the Nisei veterans, according to Christine Sato Yamazaki, NVN chair.

At the 100th Battalion clubhouse in Honolulu, retired dentist Dr. Dennis Teraoka, 93, said he was glad to be able to go “to the battlefields of Italy and France and fight for liberty and justice and prove our loyalty to the whole country.”

His wife, Joy Teraoka, whose family was forced to leave their Los Angeles home and go to Heart Mountain in Wyoming when she was 15, said the medal was well-deserved.

She attributed the eventual repeal of laws that discriminated against JAs to the bravery and dedication shown by the soldiers.

She recalled how her mother was forced to give up her U.S. citizenship — even though she was born in San Francisco — because she married a man who was born in Japan.

“It’s because they fought so well,” Joy Teraoka said. “If it weren’t for the 442nd, I’d still be in camp.”

But some veterans protested that they were only doing their job during the war and didn’t deserve accolades.

“We didn’t fight for the glory of it. We didn’t even expect to get a medal. We just did what we were supposed to do,” said Robert Takeshige, 94.

The 442nd, which absorbed the 100th Battalion part of the way through the war, became the most highly decorated military unit in U.S. history for its size and length of service. The 100th was nickednamed the “Purple Heart Battalion” because so many of its members were wounded.

“The Japanese American veterans of World War II are absolutely deserving of this recognition with the nation’s highest civilian honor,” said David Kawamoto, JACL national president. “Their patriotism during difficult times is exemplary. This honor is long overdue but welcome. We are very happy that this bill has passed so overwhelmingly.”

The Congressional Gold Medal has been given selectively since 1776, when George Washington was awarded the first. Other historic recipients include the Wright Brothers, Thomas Edison, Rosa Parks and the Dalai Lama. The Tuskegee Airmen, the first group of black fighter pilots, received the medal in 2007.
Little Tokyo Property Owner Files for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy

By Nalea J. Ko Reporter

A Japantown property owner has filed for bankruptcy over three years after its acquisition of Little Tokyo landmarks stirred controversy.

Little Tokyo Partners, the owners of the Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens and Weller Court, filed on July 15 for Chapter 11 bankruptcy reorganization. The filing comes after news broke that the owners, also known as 3D Investments, were in default of a loan.

Retailers of Weller Court say they have heard, through word-of-mouth, about the property owner’s financial woes. But some say they are more concerned about how the downturn in the economy has affected business than listening to rumors.

“We are planning to move. I’m thinking about it at this time,” said Yoshinosuke Kurita, who owns the Vantage Golf and Sport Shop in Weller Court. “The economy is so bad.”

Kurita is one of about 30 tenants in Weller Court, a three-story outdoor mall. He moved to Little Tokyo about 25 years ago lured by the area’s Japanese American culture and events.

His exporting business, he says, is withstanding the bad economy. However his storefront, which he says is about 10 percent of his business, has seen sales drop.

Around the corner at the Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens it is business as usual despite the bankruptcy filing. Officials with the hotel say the bankruptcy filing should not and has not affected the day-to-day operations of the hotel.

“So I mean it’s been in bankruptcy you know for awhile. And I think it’s business as usual,” said Samuel R. Maizel, legal counsel for Crestline Hotels and Resorts, the management company for Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens.

Other Little Tokyo stakeholders say they are not surprised that they have only heard of the bankruptcy filing through hearsay.

“I think it was a different relationship with Kajima,” said Chris Aihara, director of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, about the previous owners East West Development Corp., a subsidiary of Japanese Kajima Corp. “The relationship with 3D was somewhat contractual.”

In 2007, 3D Investments purchased Weller Court and the Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens. A year before they also acquired two hotels and malls in San Francisco’s Japantown.

The purchase, which occurred after another controversial sale of the Japanese Village Plaza, raised concerns in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. Little Tokyo residents and stakeholders were concerned about how the new buyers would maintain the cultural integrity of the properties and what their level of participation would be in the community.

Months after the hotel and outdoor mall purchase in 2007, community members voiced their concerns about the new owners by plastering posters that read “Buying Property Does Not Buy Community” throughout Little Tokyo.

Some long-time retailers in Weller Court say they had hoped that 3D Investments would continue to support community events like the previous owners.

“I wish they’d be supportive with the events that go on in this area,” said Judy, a store manager, who agreed to speak only on partial anonymity. “The New Year’s event is a big one. I heard that the hotel ... they used to let the people that throw the New Year’s event have a room for free but they said they [can’t now].”

Requests for comment from the legal counsel representing Little Tokyo Partners and the creditor, First-Citizens Bank and Trust Company, were not returned.

The bad economy is the reason others believe the property owners have not been able to provide deals for events that they say were offered in the past.

“[To be fair to Kyoto Grand, it’s] a difficult economy,” Aihara said. “Business is not easy. I think that they are primarily a business entity so potentially what they can do for the community is driven by how well they are doing.”

Now community leaders are concerned that the bankruptcy case could result in a change of ownership again. According to the bankruptcy court documents the bank has received an offer from a “secret buyer,” for the Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens and Weller Court.

“I mean it’s an offer that went to the bank allegedly,” said Maizel. “And the bank has declined to reveal at this point who the offer was from. There’s nothing to comment on because we don’t know anything about them.”

The 21-story Kyoto Grand Hotel and Gardens was built in 1977 and has about 434 guest rooms, meeting rooms and a restaurant. About 175 employees, employed by Crestline, are employed at the hotel, according to court documents.

Community leaders like Bill Watanabe say if the hotel and outdoor mall are sold, they hope the buyer is sensitive to the community’s needs. The bank, however, has not disclosed the name of the “secret buyer.”

“If they end up selling the thing, who are they going to sell it to?” said Watanabe. “It is a concern because the Kyoto Grand to me is one of the true attractions of Little Tokyo in downtown. So we’d hate to see it diminish in quality of service and the role that it plays in the community.”
APA Groups File Amicus Brief Opposing Arizona’s Immigration Law

A coalition of Asian Pacific American groups have filed a friend of the court brief urging the court to keep in place an injunction blocking the core provisions of SB 1070, Arizona’s racial profiling law.

The Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) and a coalition of civil rights groups filed the amicus brief Sept. 30 in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit citing the serious harms that the Friendly House plaintiffs and other individuals would suffer if the blocked sections of SB 1070 were to go into effect.

The district court delayed the most contentious provisions of the law, including a section that required officers to check a person’s immigration status while enforcing other laws.

“The injunction helped to stave off copycat legislation in a number of states and we are hopeful that the Ninth Circuit will reinforce the supremacy of federal law regarding immigration and recognize the irreparable harms that communities of color will suffer, not only in Arizona but elsewhere in the country, if laws like SB 1070 are passed and enforced,” said Julie Su, APALC litigation director.

Following Arizona’s lead, a coalition of lawmakers in Mississippi and Utah are saying they would support a measure similar to SB 1070 in their states.

The coalition represents a group of individual and organizational plaintiffs who in May filed a class action lawsuit challenging SB 1070, Friendly House v. Whiting.

In July, the Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a parallel lawsuit, United States v. Arizona. Both the DOJ and the Friendly House plaintiffs requested that the district court block the law pending a final court ruling on its constitutionality, and the court heard back-to-back oral arguments from the DOJ and the Friendly House plaintiffs on July 22.

The district court issued its preliminary injunction only in the DOJ case, and the Friendly House plaintiffs’ request remains pending. The Friendly House plaintiffs are filing the amicus brief in the DOJ case, which is now before the court of appeals.

The coalition’s brief illustrates the serious harms that the Friendly House plaintiffs and other individuals would suffer if the blocked sections of SB 1070 were to go into effect, including improper questioning and detention, racial profiling, and curtailment of lawful activity. The brief also addresses some legal issues that were not fully discussed by the parties in their briefs.

The appeals court will hear oral argument in United States v. Arizona on Nov. 1 in San Francisco.

Peter Rouse Becomes First AA Chief of Staff

Rouse’s grandparents were pioneering Jisei who settled in Alaska.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

Peter M. Rouse, a powerful Sansei White House advisor and longtime Senate aide known as the “101st senator” for his extensive knowledge of Congress, has made history as the first Asian Pacific American White House interim chief of staff.

JACL issued a statement hailng Rouse’s appointment shortly after President Barack Obama’s Oct. 1 press conference announcing his pick to replace chief of staff Rahm Emanuel.

Rouse, 64, has served as chief of staff to members of the U.S. Congress for more than 30 years. Before joining Obama’s Senate office in 2004, he was chief of staff to former Senate Democratic Leader Tom Daschle for 19 years.

His JA heritage took root in Alaska where his grandparents Goro (George) and Mine Mikami eventually settled in Anchorage and opened a tailor shop on 4th Avenue, according to the Cook Inlet Historical Society. During WWII, they were incarcerated at a federal detention camp in Arizona, reported the Anchorage Daily News.

In 1934, Rouse’s mother Mary Mikami Rouse graduated from the Alaska Agricultural College and then moved on to Yale University where she met her husband Irving Rouse, according to the same article.

His family history hasignored the APA blogosphere.

“While Rouse has not emphasized his Asian American roots during his political career, neither has he denied them — and given that his mother grew up speaking only Japanese, and his maternal grandparents were interned during the War, he certainly has critical narratives of the Asian American experience deeply embedded in his personal history,” wrote Jeff Yang on his Original Spin blog.

Rouse received a bachelor’s degree from Colby College in 1968, a master’s degree from the London School of Economics in 1970, and a master’s of public administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University in 1974.

National Newsbytes

By Pacific Citizen Staff and Associated Press

Filipino WWII Veterans Sue Feds Over Benefits

SAN FRANCISCO — A lawsuit claims the federal government is discriminating against Filipino World War II veterans by giving them benefits far below what U.S. veterans receive.

The suit against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs claims lump-sum payments of either $9,000 or $15,000 given to the Filipino soldiers are a pittance compared with the benefits that other veterans receive, including pensions and health care.

The suit demands compensation equal to what other veterans receive. It also wants the federal government to make the widows of Filipino soldiers who died before the benefits were approved eligible to receive their husbands’ share.

About 250,000 Filipinos fought alongside American troops during WWII.

Little Tokyo Theater to Shutter for Repairs

LOS ANGELES — The Aratani Japan America Theatre in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo will close its doors Jan. 31, 2011, for repairs and upgrades, according to a statement from the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC).

The 980-seat theatre, which opened in 1983, is in dire need of repairs, according to Chris Aihara, JACCC executive director.

During its repair, JACCC will present performances in alternate venues including the newly restored James Irvine Japanese Garden adjacent to the theatre.

UC Davis Launches Center to Fight Cancer Disparities

SACRAMENTO — The National Cancer Institute has awarded the University of California, Davis Cancer Center $5.6 million to combat the disparity of cancer rates among Asian Pacific Americans.

The Center will now be home to the National Center for Reducing Asian American Cancer Health Disparities, the only such national center.

Work there will build on more than a decade of efforts by the Asian American Network for Cancer Awareness Research and Training to increase cancer awareness and build community-centered research to fight cancer issues among APAs.

Native Hawaiians are Being JAiled Disproportionately

HONOLULU — The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) has released a report that shows the criminal justice system incarcerates Native Hawaiians at a disproportionate rate.

The report, “The Disparate Treatment of Native Hawaiians in the Criminal Justice System,” revealed that of the people serving a prison term in Hawaii, approximately 50 percent are housed in facilities on the mainland. Of this population, about 41 percent are Native Hawaiian, the most highly represented group.

“This crucial research shows the need to address the unfair treatment of Native Hawaiians in our state’s criminal justice system,” said Clyde Namuo, OHA’s chief executive officer.

Young Oak Kim Center Opens

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — The Young Oak Kim Center for Korean American Studies at the University of California, Riverside will lead the United States in studying issues related to the Korean diaspora and Korean American identity issues, dignitaries and supporters said at the center’s Sept. 29 grand opening.

The center will be one of only a few in the U.S. to focus its research on the history of Korean Americans, said Edward Chang, center director and professor of ethnic studies.

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Family of Slain Hmong American Taking Wrongful Death Case to Supreme Court

Fong Lee was shot eight times because of a gun his family said he never had.

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

The family of a Hmong American teen shot and killed by a Minneapolis police officer in 2006 will be appealing their wrongful death suit to the Supreme Court.

Fong Lee, 19, was shot eight times by Officer Jason Andersen, who claimed Lee raised his arm to shoot at him.

A 2009 wrongful death trial resulted in Andersen's exoneration, but Lee's family maintains that the teen was unarmed when he was killed.

"I think there's been a lot of information not being looked at thoroughly," said Shoua Lee about her brother's case. "I think that's been going on this whole time. We're fighting for the next step now."

With new legal representation, Lee's family members announced at an Oct. 2 rally that they are taking their case to the Supreme Court.

On July 22, 2006, police officers chased Lee through an elementary school playground where he allegedly raised his arm to shoot at the police. Andersen claimed he shot Lee because he feared for his life.

At the rally, community leaders said Andersen's record of misconduct is a part of a growing lack of accountability.

"Now is the time for national Asian American leadership and activists to step up," said performance poet Bao Post in a Star Tribune blog post.

Andersen was fired in late September for being untruthful about a 2008 incident in which he allegedly kicked a teen in the head. That incident resulted in a criminal charge against Andersen and his lawsuit.

Dept. spokesman Sgt. Jesse Garcia said the firing was "a non-public personnel issue."
At any given moment on any given day, you can go on eBay and find literally thousands of references to the use of the word “Jap.” At this particular moment, as I write this article, there are 3,263 references of the word. I’ve found as many as 5,000 at other times; business must be slow today.

Try “Chinaman” and you get 213 hits; “Nigger,” 197, mostly in book or show titles; “Gook,” 53, but surprisingly almost all are surnames.

So what does this mean? In 2000, I wrote as the JACL’s national director to eBay to complain about the use of “Jap” in its sales listings and received a response from the then-general counsel, who invited me to meet with him at the eBay headquarters in San Jose. He expressed his criticism in my letter and wrote as the JACL’s national director used in the earliest days by Japanese Americans. The problem, a couple of techies explained at length, was that “Jap” was used in the earliest days of the Internet when only government employees—primarily scientists and researchers—had access to the worldwide communication network. Once the general public got access to the Internet, it was too late. The word “Jap” was by then widely used to refer to things Japanese. And once eBay became a popular selling site, it was commonly used as an adjective, as in something like “Jap sword.”

The word had virtually become institutionalized on the Internet as an abbreviation for Japan since so many products in the U.S. consumer market are from Japan.

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The word had virtually become institutionalized on the Internet as an abbreviation for Japan since so many products in the U.S. consumer market are from Japan.

Remembering a conversation I had with Clyde Izumi about the high tech industry and his comment that if you can imagine it, they can find a way to do it. I asked about filters. They claimed that they filtered out the J-word when used as an adjective, in addition to which the general counsel said that they had a department dedicated to randomly checking to ensure offensive use of words didn’t get through.

With that explanation, I used one of eBay’s computers and checked how many times the word showed up in their listings: over 3,000, and a random check of about 100 listings, over a third had uses of the J-word as an adjective, describing swords, kimonos, figurines, dolls, etc.

Of course they had no explanation. Their filtering and so-called checking system had holes a mile wide. Either that or they were handing me a load of you-know-what.

A few years later, the NAACP lodged a complaint with eBay about the N-word appearing on their listings, which prompted eBay’s announcement that they were creating special filters to ensure against this word appearing on their site except in cases where it was used, for example, in titles. Now that was easy! And true to their word, after a while the N-word only appeared in titles of books and shows, and I found no instances where it was used as an adjective or in a pejorative sense by the seller.

After a couple of more meetings, this is what I learned: technically, it would in fact be difficult to completely filter out the use of the J-word but there were other measures that could be used to do a much better job than eBay does. But this would require an order from the CEO because there was a significant cost factor involved. In other words, the person at the top has to care enough to cause the change.

But at eBay no one cared. Not really, because today, there’s still a rampant use of “Jap” as an adjective and occasionally as a blatant racial slur.

The former CEO of eBay is currently a candidate for governor of my state, and I have to wonder if elected, would she show more concern for APAs than she did for JAs at eBay? I hope so because as far as I’m concerned, her record on that account is pretty dismal.

I know the PAC has written at least one article about this issue, and I’ve seen letters to the editor on the subject. Some PAC readers may get tired of hearing the same old thing about eBay, but frankly, that’s tough. I get tired of eBay’s cavalier and uncaring attitude, and it’s time they made some changes.

John Tateishi is the immediate past JACL national director.

Making an Imprint on Hiroshima’s History

By Akemi Dawn Matsumoto Ehrlich

This summer, a few weeks after many local and foreign dignitaries commemorated the 65th anniversary of the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, I arrived in the city with my husband to view two special photographic exhibitions of my ancestral home before the bombing. As part of a larger exhibit, the Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum displayed three wall-size panoramic photos of Hiroshima with the famous domed building and T-shaped bridge. The cityscapes were taken at different times — in 1938, in 1945 just weeks after the bombing, and in 2010 — and offered dramatic contrasts. The other exhibit was at the Hiroshima Municipal Archives, where we saw more than 100 scenes of city life before the atomic bomb destroyed it in 1945.

What made these historical images special to me was the man who took them — my grandfather Wakaji Matsumoto. The black-and-white photos were among several thousand recently discovered images he created between 1927 and 1942. Before the city knew about my grandfather’s pictures, only about 200 pre-war photos existed. This rich, historical record was a great treasure the city of Hiroshima wanted to share with its residents.

I remember visiting my ojichan in Japan when I was a child. He lived in a village where the local farmers still used water buffalos to pull their plows. I always thought he was a farmer who dabbled in photography, so the discovery of his body of work was a big surprise to me.

Like many of his countrymen, my grandfather had emigrated from Hiroshima-ken early in the 20th century and took up farming on the outskirts of Los Angeles. He started a family, built up a fairly successful farm and after several years, tried photography. He studied with well-known commercial photographer Toyo Miyatake and acquired some state-of-the-art equipment. My grandmother Tee handled the farm business while my grandfather traveled around taking pictures.

In 1927 after a drought ruined their crops, Wakaji and Tee returned to Japan with their children and settled in Hiroshima where he opened his own photo studio. With his modern equipment, he developed a thriving commercial practice and took photographs of local businesses, special public events, newsworthy happenings, everyday life, and the increasing military buildup in the city (Hiroshima had always been an important military site that rose in importance during the Sino-Russian War and Japan’s push for worldwide conquest).

In 1942, the military restricted photography in the city, and once again Wakaji’s business failed. He packed up all his equipment and moved his family to his home village, Jigozen, not far from the charming island of Miyajima, which at that time was about an hour outside Hiroshima. Early in the morning on Aug. 6, 1945, while my grandmother washed laundry in the small garden court of their home, she saw a brilliant burst of light through the sky coming from the east. At this time she had no idea it was the flash of the atomic bomb that incinerated Hiroshima. Because they were far from the city, the family was uninjured and their home was untouched. After the war, Wakaji never pursued photography again, but he kept all of his work in boxes in his house. Wakaji lived until 1965; Tee passed away in 1995 at the age of 102. Last year, while relatives were cleaning out the house, they found several boxes containing old photographs. My cousin Hitoshi Ohuchi realized the historical value of the photos, which showed Hiroshima in its heyday before it was destroyed. In them, Wakaji preserved the faces of smiling families standing proudly outside their businesses, children playing in the river, men and women shopping on a busy street, and a cafeteria in a boys’ school bustling with activity.

Three small photos were combined into a panoramic vista of the city stretching from the European-style Industrial Promotion Hall to a T-shaped bridge spanning a wide river — reportedly the target for the atomic bomb. These were some of the unforgettable scenes we saw at the exhibitions. I was struck by the variety of subjects that caught Wakaji’s eye and how vibrant Hiroshima was before the war, and is again today. I could tell how much my grandfather had loved living there from the way he captured the essence of the people. And I was moved beyond words knowing how he had left such a treasure for the city. My family had been incredibly lucky during one of the most destructive episodes of history, and once again chance had intervened, allowing my grandfather’s work to survive all these years so that he could leave his imprint on history.
Asian American Teens Paint A Better Future

Every year about 300 high school students throughout Southern California take part in Ryman Arts free courses.

By Nalea J. Ko
Reporter

With each stroke of golden paint applied to his painting, Yi Zhoung explains how he never thought his application to a Southern California art program would be accepted. The 17-year-old Chinese American had doodled in a black sketchbook since the ninth grade, but Zhoung says he was never enrolled in a professional art class outside of school. That changed about three years ago.

Encouraged by his art teacher at the Palisades Charter High School, Zhoung applied for Ryman Arts, a free art program held at the University of Southern California.

To apply for the art courses Zhoung submitted an essay, a teacher’s recommendation and two still life drawings.

“I didn’t really know much about it. But I figured it, I’d just try anyway,” Zhoung said about applying to Ryman Arts. “This is my third year here now. My third semester.”

About 150 high schoolers like Zhoung are enrolled in Ryman Arts this semester, which is 12 weeks long. There are about 10 different classes offered every Saturday, ranging from beginner to advanced courses.

To encourage more Los Angelinos to express themselves through drawing, Ryman Arts is sponsoring “Make Your Mark in the Park,” on Oct. 17. The public event will be held at Exposition Park.

“We’re going to have a huge scrolling paper that will wind its way through the entire park, like 2,000 feet or something,” said Diane Brigham, executive director of Ryman Arts. “We’re going to have our students leading the way and sort of encouraging people to draw what’s going on.”

In an effort to foster a love of art at Ryman Arts, students are given free scholarships to cover the cost of instruction, field trips and art supplies.

This semester students have come from over 100 different communities, Brigham says. Asian Americans make up the majority of the students. About 80 percent come from low-income areas. All come to hone their artistic talents.

But instructors and staff at Ryman Arts say the program focuses on more than just developing teenagers’ artistic techniques.

“This is not just a course, but it’s a way to apply for college,” said art instructor Chuck Huang about the program’s college and career planning components.

Students agree, saying the art program is an opportunity to experience college level courses.

“I’ve been to different, not just one, but different kinds of places. The ones where you kind of pay and then you go learn,” said 16-year-old Leslie Park as she wiped cookie crumbs from her mouth while on break from art class. “They just say, ‘Think of something.’ And if you don’t think of something they just kind of go over and do it for you.”

“I’ve had that experience with other art classes also,” interjected 17-year-old Ashley Tallichet, who stood beside Park, munching on cookies.

Before strolling back to their figure drawing class taught by Huang, the two friends walked past a pile of art toolboxes and drawing boards left by other students who are also on snack break.

While enrolled in Ryman Arts the students build a cache of free art supplies.

“They have watercolors, they have acrylics, they have all kinds of graphite and charcoal, they have a drawing board,” Brigham explained pointing to a student’s stockpile of art supplies. “It’s really expensive. And a lot of the kids say that then they continue to use it.”

The free art supplies are something the students say they do not take for granted.

“They give us, like, all the supplies. Even when we’re done using them for that semester then I keep using them over again,” said 15-year-old Yoo Jung, returning to her figure drawing class with a live nude model.

The free art supplies are something the students say they do not take for granted.

“A fieldtrip with Ryman Arts to an animation studio piqued Park’s interest in pursuing a career as an animator.

Now Park hopes to work at Disney or Pixar one day. Instructors and staff hope other students are inspired by the art courses too.

“After that I was thinking, ‘I could actually make something out of this,’” Park said. “I want to do this. This is what I really want to do.”
They march 'for jobs, justice, and education,' said National Director Mori.

By Associated Press and P.C. Staff

WASHINGTON—Tapping into anger as the tea party movement has done, a coalition of progressive and civil rights groups marched by the thousands Oct. 2 on the Lincoln Memorial and pledged to support Democrats struggling to keep power on Capitol Hill.

"We are together. This march is about the power to the people," said Ed Schultz, host of "The Ed Show" on MSNBC. "It is about the people standing up to the corporations. Are you ready to fight back?"

In a fiery speech that opened the "One Nation Working Together" rally on the National Mall, Schultz blamed Republicans for shipping jobs overseas and curtailing freedoms. He borrowed some of conservative commentator Glenn Beck's rhetoric and vowed to "take back our country."

"This is a defining moment in America. Are you American?" Schultz told the raucous crowd. "This is no time to back down. This is time to fight for America."

With a month of campaigning to go and voter unhappiness high, the Democratic-leaning organizers hope the four-hour program of speeches and entertainment energizes activists who are crucial if Democrats are to retain their majorities in the House and Senate. The national mood suggests gains for the GOP, and Republicans are hoping to ride voter anger to gain control of the House and possibly the Senate.

More than 400 organizations — ranging from labor unions to faith, environmental and gay rights groups — partnered for the event, which comes a month after Beck packed the same space with conservatives and tea party-style activists.

Floyd Mori, national JACL director, participated in the march and explained on his facebook page that JACL was joining with other Asian American organizations to march "for jobs, justice, and education!"

Other APA groups included Asian American Justice Center (AAJC), Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), and the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)

"This movement includes human and civil rights organizations, unions and trade associations, nonprofit organization PAVs, youth and student groups, religious and other faith groups, educational, peace, environmental, and ethnic associations, and any other groups and individuals who are committed to pulling our country back together now," said Karen Narasaki, president and executive director of the AAJC, who spoke at the march.

"Coming out of here, we've got to go home and ask our friends to vote, ask our neighbors to vote," NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous said. "Ever forward, never backwards," he led the crowd in a cheer.

Rose Dixon, a health care worker from Pawleys Island, S.C., said she hopes the rally sends a message to lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

"Stop the obstructionism. Work together," Dixon said. "Stop playing politics as usual and to put the American people first. We're tired of the politics and the posturing and the games."

"We've got to go home and we've got to hit the pavement. We've got to knock on doors. We've got to knock those church bells," Sharpton said, urging the crowd to go home and volunteer for candidates.

Organizers insist the rally is not partisan. They say the message is about job creation, quality education and justice. However, the largest organizations, such as the AFL-CIO and the Service Employees International Union, tend to back Democratic candidates.

But the speakers hardly shied from criticizing Republicans.

"If Sarah Palin had a bright idea, it'd be beginners' luck," comedian Charlie Hill joked from the stage about the 2008 vice presidential nominee.

Beck and former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin gathered near the Lincoln Memorial on the anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech to urge a vast crowd to embrace traditional values. Though also billed as nonpolitical, the rally was widely viewed as a protest against the policies of President Barack Obama and congressional Democrats.

One Nation organizers said they began planning their event before learning about Beck's rally, and said the Oct. 2 march is not in reaction to that.

"Our strength is your strength," SEIU President Mary Kay Henry led a chant from the steps where King delivered one of the nation's most famous speeches.

"We are one nation, coming together."

Calif. Rep. 'Did Not Intend to Offend Anyone' With Racial Comments

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

California Rep. Loretta Sanchez says she didn't intend to offend anyone when she told a reporter that "the Vietnamese" and the Vietnamese community fails to recognize the diversity of thought that exists in every community.

Sanchez said she "used a poor choice of words that some people have taken as offensive" in a Spanish-language interview with Jorge Ramos on a Univision show.

She said she apologizes if she offended anyone.

In the same interview, Sanchez also referred to her opponent, Republican Assemblyman Van Tran, as "very anti-immigrant and very anti-Hispanic." Asian Pacific American groups criticized Sanchez for her statements.

In an Oct. 4 statement, the JACL said Sanchez's "use of racial rhetoric has no place in a political campaign. Rep. Sanchez's use of a broad stroke to characterize the intent of the entire Vietnamese community fails to recognize the diversity of thought that exists in every community."

Tran, a five-year California Assembly member, told the Los Angeles Times that Sanchez's comments were "racial rampage."

His campaign manager said Sanchez's comment was an attack against immigrants and the Vietnamese community.

At stake is a district that covers Santa Ana and Garden Grove and parts of Anaheim and Fullerton — 8.5 percent are Vietnamese American.
JACL PSW Honors Dedicated APA Community Leaders

By Pacific Citizen Staff

The JACL Pacific Southwest District staff says its 14th Annual Awards Dinner was a culmination of months of planning to honor community leaders and chapter volunteers. The dinner, themed “Reflecting on Our Legacy, Creating New Milestones,” was held Oct. 9 at the Grand Long Beach Event Center.

For PSW staff, the dinner was a chance to see about six months of planning come to fruition. But more importantly it was an opportunity to honor community leaders and chapter volunteers from different generations, said Andrew Yick, development coordinator.

“The experiences of the older generation are very different from those of the new,” Yick said about the honorees. “So we don’t want to forget the accomplishments and the experiences of the people before us. But we want to, and need to, redefine ourselves in today’s context.”

The three community leaders that were honored included Debra Nakatomi, Iku Kiriyama and Tad Nakamura.

Nakatomi is the president of Nakatomi and Associates, an organization dedicated to helping underserved populations address health, education and environmental issues, among other things. During the campaign for Redress, she began her career in the California legislature and at the national JACL headquarters.

Kiriyama has taught in the Los Angeles Unified School District since 1962. With three other teachers she helped create the Japanese language program in the San Fernando Valley in 1963. She also attended the summer Fulbright program in Japan with 15 other teachers.

Nakamura is a Japanese American filmmaker who has been dedicated to telling community stories to new generations. His third film “A Song For Ourselves” is being screened nationwide and in Canada.

Among the other JACL chapter honorees were: Arizona’s Doris Asano, Downtown Los Angeles’ Kitty Sankey, Greater L.A. Single’s Louise Sakamoto, Orange County’s Betty Oka, Riverside’s Doug Urata, San Fernando Valley’s Nancy Gohata, San Diego’s Susan Hasegawa, SELANOCO’s Evelyn Hanki, Venice-Culver’s Sam Shimoguchi, West Los Angeles’ Jean Shigematsu and Ventura County’s Aiko King.

The honorees’ awards were sponsored by Union Bank.

Southern California Edison Supports JACL PSW District Programs

The JACL PSW district recently announced Southern California Edison (SCE) as a partner in developing young leaders in the community. Through their support, the PSW district is working to effect positive social change through various youth programs.

“SCE is pleased to support the Project: Community! program, which inspires young people by strengthening their cultural roots and encouraging them to become actively involved in their communities,” said Veronica Gutierrez, SCE’s vice president, corporate communications.

Recently, Senior Program Project Analyst Yvette Gonzalez of SCE spoke to the group of students from JACL PSW’s Project: Community! program. This program engages high school students in community preservation issues and advocacy in Little Tokyo. Through their presentation, program participants were shown ways SCE gives back and stays involved in the community through grants, scholarships and educational programs, and money-saving programs.

Gonzalez also shared her personal story of her involvement at SCE and let the Project: Community! participants know of ways they themselves could get involved in the company. They were shown various opportunities for them at SCE, including internships, services and job skills training.

Informed by the history and experience of the Japanese American community, the mission of the JACL PSW district to advocate for civil rights and community preservation through empowerment and activism for Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and other disenfranchised communities.

Through its partnership with SCE, JACL PSW is carrying out programs such as Project: Community! that introduces and engages youth and others in the community.

For more information on JACL PSW programs: Stacy Toyota at stoyota@jaclpsw.org or 213/626-4471.
JA Family Remembers Living in Kersey Boxcar

By MIKE PETERS
The Greeley Tribune

Greeley, Colo.—It's barely holding together now, the old boxcar. Boards are missing, there's dirt on the floor, and 60 years of storage and work and wind and rain are showing now.

It doesn't look as if anyone could have ever lived in this big wooden box, 50 feet long and 15 feet wide, the boxcar on school breaks and in the summer.

But now, 65 years after they lived in this boxcar, Lily Furukawa and her brother, Mas Koga, come back to visit.

The sister and brother today look in wonder at the boxcar where they lived after World War II. "It's hard to believe, now," Koga said.

When they were both in their preteen years, the brother and sister, their siblings and parents were forced from their California home to a Japanese internment camp in Arkansas. They were the Japanese in America during World War II.

And they both remember the end of the war. "Our father's home before he came to America was Nagasaki," Furukawa said.

The war ended when atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

But at the end of the war, the family was released from the Arkansas internment camp and told they could be taken back to California. "There was too much prejudice in California," Furukawa said. "So the family looked for somewhere else to work and live."

That "somewhere else" turned out to be Kersey.

Shortly after the war, the family was traveling across country and were at a gas station named "Sobers," in Kersey when they ran into farmer Victor Klein. He offered jobs but only had the boxcar for a house.

They also had family in the area. The Sameshima family also farmed nearby. Sam Sameshima was their parents' cousin. Lily called him "Uncle Sam."

The family fixed up the boxcar, which was home for the family of seven for several months. They had beds at one end, a kitchen at the other, no water, and an outhouse nearby. There is still a hole in the wall, where the stovepipe from the wood-burning kitchen stove passed through. It was used for cooking, but also for warmth in the winter.

"They invited my grandfather, Victor Klein, out to the boxcar for dinner sometimes," said Kathy Berryman, who still lives in Kersey. "He used to talk about that, and how much he enjoyed it."

Berryman, who with her husband still owns the farm where the boxcar stands, said her grandfather always talked about how nicely the boxcar was fixed up, and how it was always so cozy.

Lily lived in the boxcar off-and-on. "I was almost a teen-aged girl," Lily says today with a smile. "We had splinters in the floor, water outside and an outhouse? You think I would live there?"

So, during the school year, Lily lived in Greeley with a local family and did housekeeping and cooking. She attended junior high in Greeley. She'd come home to the boxcar on school breaks and in the summer.

Her brother Mas, now 82 and three years older than Lily, stayed at the boxcar and worked the fields while attending school in the Kersey area. "It wasn't easy," he says today, "but we managed to make it work."

After a few months, the family made enough money to rent a house in Greeley to rent. They moved into town, and Mas and Lily both graduated from Greeley High School.

The brother and sister went on with their lives, both marrying and eventually moving to California, where they live today. But they never forgot the boxcar.

Lily has written a book for teens, titled "Boxcar Lily," about life for Japanese Americans during World War II, and what it meant to live in a boxcar. She has finished the book, but hasn't found a publisher and is trying to raise the funds to publish it herself.

Victor Klein's son, Jim Klein, is trying to help Lily get the book published, and is also trying to have the boxcar moved to Centennial Village in Greeley.

And, after 65 years, the brother and sister returned recently to visit the worn and tired and dilapidated old box, still standing and full of memories on the farm near Kersey.

Silicon Valley JACL Holds Successful Basketball Tournament

Silicon Valley JACL hosted an Aug. 28-29 basketball tournament to provide Japanese American youth with the opportunity to develop leadership skills and good sportsmanship.

Sports, especially basketball, help bring people together from different areas to form lasting friendships. These same networks provide the JACL resources to continue its mission of protecting civil liberties and preserving Japanese cultural heritage.

Results
Men's Open — Upper: The Sacramento Barons won the championship game over the L.A. Run N Gun. After a tight first half, the Barons pulled away in the second half to win the championship game 73-59. The East Bay Cardinals finished in 3rd place with an 89-83 win over the San Jose Gametime.

Men's Open — Lower: TWSS from the East Bay came away with the championship, going 3-0 in the four-team round-robin tournament. Second place went to the San Jose Blazers 2-1.

Women's Open — Upper: We Want a Black Shirt finished the five-team round-robin tournament 4-0 to take the division and the champions' black t-shirts. Hoopwear ended the tournament 3-1 to finish in second place.

Women's Open — Lower: The Power Rangers took the championship in this four-team division with a 3-0 record. Balanced scoring and solid defense by the Power Rangers led them to a first place finish. The second place Pariahs (2-1) were led by leading scorer Daniela Krouk.

For complete results: SiliconValleyJACL@nysalas.net
V.P. Joe Biden Attends First U.S.-Japan Council Conference

Vice President Joe Biden delivered the keynote speech at the U.S.-Japan Council Inaugural Annual Conference. Looking on are (l-r) U.S.-Japan Council President Irene Hirano Inouye, the Honorable Norman Mineta and Fred Katayama, USJC board member.

Vice President Joe Biden addressed a crowd of U.S., Japanese and Japanese American leaders at the U.S.-Japan Council's (USJC) Sept. 20 inaugural annual conference.

"There is an emerging relationship that we have to get right between the United States and China ... frankly, I don’t know how that relationship can be made right other than going through Tokyo," Biden said, "I don’t know how it works without our partner in that part of the world."

The vice president added that common values, together with Japan’s willingness to be engaged in global issues, make Japan a great ally to the United States.

"All has changed in the last 15 years, circumstances have changed and it requires new thinking. I can think of no better group of folks to sit down and think together through these changes than with our Japanese colleagues," said Biden.

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, Senate president pro tempore, and former Sec. of Transportation Norman Mineta also attended the event. Both are on the USJC board of councilors.

"The government to government relationship is just the tip of the iceberg. It is American and Japanese people who are the base of the relationship," said Mineta.

Led by Irene Hirano Inouye, former CEO of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, USJC is a newly established, non-profit organization that focuses on building strong people-to-people connections to strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship.

The council opened its offices in Washington, D.C. last April, launching the first organization newly established, non-profit organization that focuses on building strong people-to-people connections to strengthen the U.S.-Japan relationship.

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All those interested in applying for Aratani C.A.R.E. grants are invited to submit applications through the website: www.aasc.ucla.edu/aratani.

The deadline for this year's applications is Dec. 1 and the first round of grants are expected to be awarded in January, 2011. Grants will be made on a competitive basis.

Angel Island Celebrates 100 Yrs.

By Associated Press

ANGEL ISLAND STATE PARK, Calif.—Angel Island, is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the opening of its immigration station, which was once referred to as the Ellis Island of the West.

To mark the anniversary, 25 immigrants were sworn in as new U.S. citizens recently at a special ceremony on the island. Among them were the Philippines, Kenya, China, India, France and Somalia.

The group was given a tour of the island's detention center, where immigrants were held — sometimes for months — by officials who were charged with upholding federal laws restricting immigration.

Josei Chang, who is from Taiwan, was among the group sworn in. She told the Marin Independent Journal her husband's grandfather was held at Angel Island many years ago.

"I always wanted my children to come here to know the history of immigrants and how hard it was to come to this land," she said.

From 1910 to 1940, about 1 million immigrants from some 90 countries — including an estimated 175,000 from China — were processed at Angel Island.

The station, which is undergoing a $60 million restoration, was built to help enforce the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. Many Chinese immigrants were detained for up to two years while immigration officials questioned their legal status.
Shoji Kameda and June Kuramoto. It is presented as part of the Great Masters and Western music. Joining Hiroshima for the special "Legacy" series. At the heart of "Legacy", is the convergence of Eastern and Western music. Joining Hiroshima for the special "Legacy" series. Hiroshima returns to celebrate its 30th anniversary as part of Its Cerritos Center for 12700 Center Court Dr.

Hiroshima 14 dollars.

ASK THE EXPERT

Dr. Tonii P. Miles, a professor at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, and Robert Phillips, a policy analyst at The California Endowment, address four frequently asked questions about seniors and their benefits under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act signed into law in March 2010.

Question: A lot of seniors are worried that the new law will cut Medicare benefits and make it harder for those in the program to have good health. Is this true?

Answer: No. The law guarantees there will be no reductions in basic Medicare benefits. As we know, Medicare is a health insurance program for those who are 65 or older, some disabled people under 65, and anyone with end-stage kidney disease. In fact, starting on Jan. 1, 2011, seniors enrolled in Medicare or Medicare Advantage won't have to pay any out-of-pocket costs for preventive care such as mammograms, cancer screenings, and annual physical exams.

Question: Many people worry about what they will do if they get a debilitating illness that requires long-term care. Will they be able to stay at home and be cared for instead of ending up in a nursing home?

Answer: Yes. The new health care law creates a new insurance program called the Community Living Assistance Services and Support (CLASS) program. CLASS increases your long-term options to live independently if you have or develop a qualifying disability. For example, this insurance can be used to help pay for assisted living care and home modifications.

Starting in 2012 or 2013, you will first need to enroll in the CLASS program. After paying premiums for at least five years and meeting several eligibility requirements, you will be eligible for benefits.

Question: Many people who are on Medicare Part D end up spending hundreds of dollars each month to pay for their prescription drugs. How will the new law affect them?

Answer: The new law will close the doughnut hole. Starting in January 2011, pharmaceutical companies will provide a discount of 50 percent on brand-name drugs to low- and middle-income beneficiaries who find themselves in the doughnut hole. Over time, the doughnut hole will start shrinking and ultimately disappear entirely in 2020. This year, Medicare beneficiaries who hit the doughnut hole received a $250 rebate check as part of the new law. But you'll still have to pay any remaining costs while in the doughnut hole, potentially hundreds of more dollars.

Question: Will there be any changes to Medicare Advantage for those seniors that have it?

Answer: Yes. The extra payments that privately run insurance plans have been getting from Medicare will phase out over the next several years, starting in 2011. This could change your benefits or your costs for Medicare Advantage. By 2016, all private Medicare Advantage plans will get about the same amount per member as original Medicare spends, however Advantage plans that provide high-quality care and services will get bonus payments.

If you have any questions about the health care reform law for the expert, call: (800)-871-9012 Ext. 712389, or Email your question to asktheexpert@newamericamedia.org or send by regular mail to P.O. Box 410447, San Francisco, CA 94141-0447.

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IN MEMORIAM

Sally Nishiyama Schurr
August 1, 1925 - September 21, 2010

Sally Nishiyama Schurr died on Sept. 21, 2010. Born Aug. 1, 1925 in La Puente, Calif., to Saburo and Seki (Hirakoi) Nishiyama, Mrs. Schurr grew up in California. She and most of her family were interned at the Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming at the beginning of World War II, when she was in high school. She left the camp to attend Cornell College in Iowa and later moved to Stanford, D.C. She worked for decades as the senior assistant to a prominent energy economist, the late Sam Schurr, at the think tanks Resources for the Future and Electric Power Research Institute, in Washington and Palo Alto, Calif.. She received a B.A. in 1952 from the College of Arts and Sciences at American University. Later in life, she married Mr. Schurr. Her survivors include her brother-in-law, Elmer Yoshino of Irvine, Calif., 16 nieces and nephews, and numerous greatnieces and great-nephews. A memorial service was held on Oct. 3 at Columbia Memorial Park in Columbia, Md.

Arizona, Colorado and New Mexico.

Shigooka, Matsuou, 89
Hilo, Hi; Sept. 20; a retired employee of Thermo-Lux Corp.; survived by daughter, Joyce Higa; brother Yoshihaku Mizuguchi; 2 gc; 2 ggc.

Sugii, Tsuneo, 86
North Hollywood, Calif.; Sept. 30; survived by brother Yoshiko, sisters-in-law Toshiye and Mary, and many nieces, greatnieces and great-nephews.

Takahashi, Shizuyo, 91
Santa Barbara, CA; Sept. 12; predeceased by husband, Hitomi Roy Takahashi; survived by daughters Tomoyo Tomokura (Dennis) and Chiyoko Horiguchi (Bruce); many nieces and nephews; 2 gc; 1 ggc.

Uchida, Nobue, 76
Battled pancreatic cancer for 13 months; survived by daughters Kathy Uchida and Teresa Van Foecken, son Nathan Uchida, daughter Kim Nuzum, granddaughter Juliana Van Foecken, and son-in-law Doug Nuzum.

Yukutomo, Patricia Masayo, 60
Aiea, Hi; Sept. 29; she was a judge, clerk; survived by husband, Wayne; sons Garrett and Eric; daughter Jan; brother Russell Hana; sister Colleen Minami; 2 gc.

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