Asian Americans and organic food.

Rave drug ecstasy is on the rise.
SPRING CAMPAIGN
United We Stand

By Cindi Kishiyama-Harbottle

"...For united we stand
Divided we fall
And if our backs should ever be against the wall
We'll be together, together, you and I..."

"And if the world about you falls
apart my love
Then I'll still be here
And if the going gets too hard along the way
Just you call, I'll hear..."

I think I can almost hear some of you singing the song. Whether you first heard this sung by The Brotherhood of Man in the 70s or Elton John in the early 2000s, these words have never been spoken. I have never really understood the strength in the message of these words, until now.

The Japan earthquake and tsunami crisis of just a few weeks ago sent our APA community into crisis mode. We were and still are taken aback by the enormity of what has happened in Japan.

Some of us have families that were directly affected and others have family in Japan that are worried for their country's future. While watching NHK with my mom and dad, I was horrified by the footage, first the tsunami and then the devastation that was left in the aftermath. My first reaction was, 'for the survivors of this tragedy it must feel as if their world is falling apart.'

I immediately started receiving text messages, emails and phone calls from friends, APA leaders and all kinds of different members of the community. All these correspondences had to do with support and wanting to help in any way or direction the JACL/Arizona chapter deemed necessary, to help Japan.

I was taken aback by the amount of support that was offered by the Arizona community at large. A new website was launched: www.azjapanrelief.com. Fundraising events were planned and attended, myriad of people came to help and then to plan for future events. Watching the news reports was heart wrenching, but to experience the support of the community was so very heart warming.

Then the anti-Japanese rhetoric started on Twitter and YouTube and there were insensitive jokes by comedians. All these words that were condemning the Japanese for past events. What could be done to stop the downward turn of events?

In the mail came my vindication, the answer to my question: the Pacific Citizen. I read the last two editions as soon as they arrived in the mail. Some articles seem to be extremely poignant and relevant to all the current events of the past few weeks. Some articles were thought provoking and informative; these articles answered many questions but also presented new ones. Some articles were just entertaining.

I guess you could summarize by the last few sentences that I think the P.C. is a newspaper that is very important to all Asian Americans. The P.C. newspaper is important to us because it covers stories that are relevant and directly affect us. The P.C. staff continues to report on news and stories that defend and educate, but mostly promotes the APA community.

If you are a subscriber to the P.C. you should have received information about the annual Spring Campaign fundraiser. The Spring Campaign is the paper's biggest fundraiser. The national JACL funds less than half the paper's budget and the rest is raised by the P.C. staff through advertising, non-member subscriptions and the Spring Campaign fundraiser. If you enjoy reading about the APA community and value the P.C. I hope you will donate generously.

Cindi Kishiyama-Harbottle is the Pacific Southwest District representative on the Pacific Citizen editorial board.

Correction
In the March 18-31 issue of the Pacific Citizen, in the National Director's Report, it should have stated that the Bridging Communities program of the national JACL is sponsored by the National Park Service, not AT&T.

Chapters Should Select Youth as Voting Delegates

By Devin Yoshikawa

The JACL's National Youth/Student Council (NY/SC) recently unveiled its 2011 Convention Youth Delegate Campaign. This campaign works with JACL chapters to not only recruit and retain young Nikkei members, but to ultimately name youth chapter members as voting convention delegates.

JACL youth are undoubtedly the future of our organization. As you read, many see JACL participation as a perfect avenue for gaining valuable and unique leadership experience. The organization also serves as an important, yet often underutilized, resource.

Our veteran members are quite possibly the greatest untapped resource the JACL can offer our youth. One critical aspect of leadership development for young people is mentorship. The wealth of experience that our members possess is what makes the JACL so unique. Sharing these experiences with our youth will only solidify sustainability for our organization.

"Infusing youth in the decision-making process will enhance JACL's youth outreach efforts by helping the organization become more connected and responsive to the needs of youth in the greater community," said Mariako Newton, Pacific Northwest District youth representative.

Newton is involved with the Portland JACL youth group, Unite
Japanese American Youth Answer World War II’s Allegiance Question

Katie Nakano, a freshman at the University of California, Santa Barbara, says if she were forced to answer the allegiance question she would be ‘extremely rebellious.’

What would you do if you were forced to declare your allegiance to a country that betrays your constitutional rights?

By Christine McFadden Correspondent

When faced with the government’s loyalty questionnaire while incarcerated in Jerome, Arkansas during World War II, Roy Nakano’s parents took a bold stand.

Asked about their willingness to serve the United States and swear “unqualified allegiance” to America in question No. 28 of the infamous loyalty questionnaire, Nakano’s parents both answered that they were “undeclared.” Both U.S. citizens born in Hawaii, they cited the “existing racial discrimination and prejudice” of the “unconstitutional compulsory evacuation,” as their reason, stating: “As long as I have citizenship, I wish to remain neutral.”

As a result, Nakano’s parents and their family were transferred to Tule Lake. Once there, they took their protest a step further and both renounced their U.S. citizenship.

“I would not have had the guts to do what they did,” said Nakano, an attorney in Southern California, and one of the founders of the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR).

“It’s a question many younger Japanese Americans may not want to think about. What would you do if you were in your grandparents’ or your parents’ shoes during WWII and were asked to declare allegiance to the country that incarcerated you?”

While many teenage Yonsei say they would have asserted their rebellious intentions, under the same circumstances, they say they would ultimately stay subdued in the face of war hysteria and mass incarceration.

After Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, JAs were looked upon with suspicion and forced in many ways to prove their loyalty to the U.S. Some joined a segregated unit of the U.S. Army to prove their allegiance, others took a stand, while still others renounced their American citizenship in disgust.

“Alliance,” a new musical play about “love, loss and heroism in the backdrop of the Japanese American internment” has sparked controversy by trying to address the question of allegiance.

The musical by Jay Kuo, which aims to open in New York City next year, features a scene with an actor playing WWII JAACL National Secretary Mike Masaoka, who called for JAs to be calm and cooperative with the president’s order for a mass evacuation. In a stage reading performed before an audience, which was recorded and placed on YouTube, actor Paolo Montalban said it’s “a little known fact that Masaoka worked with the U.S. government to implement the Japanese American internment.”

The scars of the allegiance question during WWII still affect the JA community today. And many say that if faced with the same circumstances, they would have done nothing different.

Joan Coe, whose mother Mary Haru was incarcerated as a young teenager at Minidoka near Twin Falls, Idaho, would not have rebelled.

“You have to go with the flow,” said Coe, a Nisei. “You had to do it — you’re a minor. You’re a kid, and you’re going to do what your mom and dad say and you’re going to be sad about it and you’re going to be embarrassed, too. It’s humiliating.”

Hara was the youngest of seven children, born in Great Falls, Montana, to Issei parents. No matter how confused, scared or angry, Coe said she would not have violated Executive Order 9066, the curfew that incarcerated you?

“During WWII, Korematsu defied evacuation orders and took his battle all the way to the Supreme Court. Mitsuye Endo similarly hired a lawyer to represent her legal protest against the forced evacuation.”

In spite of these statements of rebellion, Hayase points out that if she were forced to answer the allegiance question at the age she is now — 18 — she would be “extremely rebellious.”

Coe, who was born in the 1950s, noted the generational differences between her generation and the youth of today.

Kids were more compliant then, and that’s the way I am,” she said. “That’s my generation. We did as we were told.”

Today’s generational differences notwithstanding, many Yonsei would have admitted they would have faced the same if they were placed in their grandparents’ shoes during the incarceration.

Looking back at the way my grandparents responded to the camps, I’m extremely grateful to them,” Hayase said. “They persevered through the hardship, and they didn’t let it break their spirit.”

“Their suffering was their motivation to work harder to give their grandchildren the opportunities that were taken away from them, and today I use that knowledge as my own motivation.”

The majority of JAs did, which was a reaction of stoic endurance and survival,” he added.

Rachel Seeman, a 19-year-old student in California, says she would have rebelled against being incarcerated in the internment camps, although she would have been torn between wanting to show her allegiance to the U.S. and defending her Constitutional rights. She would have been very angry fighting for my rights ... I can’t see myself having any other choice,” she said.

Katie Nakano, a freshman at the University of California, Santa Barbara, said although she is sympathetic of her grandparents’ plight during WWII, if she were forced to answer the allegiance question at the age she is now — 18 — she would be “extremely rebellious.”

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Asian Americans Plant Seeds in Organic Food Movement

On farms and in backyards, more Asian Americans are sowing chemicals and pesticides in favor of going green.

By Lynda H in Assistant Editor

Peaches from the Masumoto Family Farm awaken the worst kind of food lust, especially the beardless peach: a yellow fruit variant that’s sweet juice and fuzzier than the kind often found in supermarkets.

“They’re not the trophy wives of peaches,” said David Masumoto of the deceptive appearance of the beardless peaches grown in his orchard near Fresno, Calif. “When you pick your peaches, you can still eat them.”

Masumoto, a third-generation farmer and former JACL member who specializes in environmentally responsible farming, is part of a growing wave of Asian Pacific American organic farmers — for both large-scale and backyard productions — who are changing the use of chemicals and pesticides in favor of more “green” techniques.

The Masumoto Family Farm has been farming organically since the 1960s, well before the organic movement became trendy.

“Prior to that, farming was all about controlling and dominating the environment,” said Masumoto, 57.

Masumoto’s parents and grandparents were farm workers on the land until they purchased it after World War II, finally returning from their incarceration at the Chiricahua internment camp in Arizona. Like many other Japanese Americans, the Masumoto family was forced to abandon their crops just months away from harvest.

Masumoto returned to the 80-acre farm after studying at the University of California, Berkeley, where he “learned to look at farming through an environmental lens,” to work side-by-side with his father Tad

Masumoto and start planting the seeds of change. Today the Masumoto Family Farm is certified organic.

“My parents were crazy in the most wonderful way to follow their ethical beliefs and to follow their hearts,” said Nichole Masumoto, 25, about her parents’ pioneering effort to farm organically.

It is of course, not just about being kind to the earth, organic food is a booming business. What started out as a specialty food store has become mainstream with AIP consumers leading the demand. Retail sales for organic foods have increased from $3.5 billion in 1993 to $211 billion in 2003, according to a 2009 report from the United States Department of Agriculture.

Organic farmers are more likely to purchase organic products.

“Organic foods are the choice of many ethnic groups,” said Beatrice Hsu, senior editor with the Organic Trade Association. “We’re seeing a membership-based business association for the organic industry in the United States.”

As (Asian Americans) are an emerging market.

To be classified as organic, among other requirements, fruits and vegetables must be grown on land that has no prohibited substances or chemicals applied to it for at least three years prior to harvest.

“Organic produce is different than conventional produce,” said Beatrice Hsu. “The taste is different and the flavor is different.”

The organic food movement has been slower to catch on in Hawaii than in the mainland, said Olimoto in part because of the high cost. He hopes his experiment will create a sustainable model to help make organic food more accessible to all consumers.

The feeds female moth attracts males when trying to mate is infused on strips and hung from fruit trees. Attracted by the scent, male moths fly around the orchard looking for the females to mate with, which leads to more exfoliation.

“It’s called the confusion method. Yes, you’re a specie,” said Masumoto with a laugh.

Picked by demand, more farmers are getting into organic farming. Organic farmland acreage more than doubled from 1997 to 2005, according to the USDA.

But change, no matter how small, the demand takes time.

In Hawaii, Dean Olimoto, the owner of Mak Farms, is experimenting with organically growing the Japanese food vegetable globe made three-inch polyvinyl chloride tubes. On his globe farm, Olimoto is famous locally for producing fresh baby greens. Olimoto has dedicated two fields growing organic tomatoes, eggplants and okra and experimenting with fertilizer made from natural products like veggie.

“Do so for good,” said Olimoto, 56. “The legs are growing really well.”

He sees growth in the future for organic farming especially with the skyrocketing price of fertilizer.

“For me it’s about the land. I don’t want to be poisoning the land,” said Dean Olimoto, globe farmer.

“Of course it’s about the land. I don’t want to be poisoning the land. I want to pass it on in good shape for the next generation,” said the Seiwa farmer.

The organic food movement has been slower to catch on in Hawaii than in the mainland, said Olimoto in part because of the high cost. He hopes his experiment will create a sustainable model to help make organic food more accessible to all consumers.

The concept is simple. Olimoto sells his organic produce to hotels and other businesses at a higher price in order to make the same food more accessible at a lower price for schools and other income communities.

“We need to get real,” he said. “[The organic movement] is here to stay.”

Beyond farmers, a new generation of AIP leaders is also trying to spur change in the agricultural industry.

After graduating from the University of Southern California last year, Akemi Yano, 23, took an internship at the Catall, Mountain Foundation National Natural AFarm in New York, growing crops, planting seeds and harvesting produce on the 400-acre farm.

Yano was not sure what he wanted to do career-wise and this was an opportunity to try something different — I had never tried farming or anything related to agriculture before,” said Yano, who is from Los Angeles (post-WWII first generation Japanese American).

The farm is a small town called Elk Grove, California.

Olimoto, who will be returning to the farm in June to run the internship program.

Organic food movement does have its detractors and sleepers. A 2008 survey conducted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and published in the American Journal of Public Nutrition revealed that the nutritional content of organic foods was no more nutritious than that produced with the use of synthetic chemicals.

Vince Triss, 35, does not buy organic food. The Los Angeles resident says he really doesn’t think about the origin of the food he eats.

“I don’t really believe in it,” he said.

But with its increasing popularity the organic food movement has seen a new generation of young AIP farmers who are growing fruits and vegetables for personal consumption.

At his mom’s house in San Gabriel, Calif., Andy Huynh, 29, surveys the many edible Asian fruits and ground thrashing in an otherwise typical suburban backyard.

“There’s a long tree that grows grass and chili plant,” he says, “that’s a pepper, and it’s called, “My mom calls it a typical Asian American yard.”

Beans, mustard and radishes are among other prized plants he grows. They are all grown without pesticides or chemicals, he says. His family tradition that spans across generations handed down from Huynh’s grandmother, who grew in her own backyard garden, to his mom and eventually to him one day.

From the backyard to the dinner table, it doesn’t get any more local and organic than that.

“It’s beneficial,” said Huynh, who is a third generation Vietnamese American.

“You don’t have to go to the supermarket, you can raise some money. But it’s also beneficial for the health too because there are no pesticides.”

— In-Depth
Asian Americans Rolling With the Changes to Raves

News of the increase in ecstasy use among teens comes as the rave community in California rolls out new changes.

By Nalea J. Ko
Reporter

The electronic music beats of drum and bass first called Danny Ho to the rave scene some 10 years ago. Ho says he usually makes it a tradition to attend certain large-scale raves, or “massives,” each year.

Last year the 30-year-old was one of about 185,000 who attended the two-day long Electric Daisy Carnival (EDC), a rave that was held in Los Angeles, Calif. with carnival rides and five stages for performers. Musicians like Moby, Will.I.Am, and Lil Jon energized the psychedelically-dressed, costumed and scantily-clad bodies that writhed in the crowd.

But months after the event, people were mostly talking about what went on off stage.

“If it was a 30-year-old guy and nothing happened at EDC, like with all the fence-jumping, I can almost guarantee you that none of this would have happened,” Ho explained, who is Hapa. “EDC would be at the coliseum this year like nothing ever happened.”

The rave, which is put on by promoters Insomniac Events, was moved from its previous location at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum following negative attention from the 2010 event. Video footage of revelers jumping a barrier fence during DJ Laidback Luke’s performance made the evening news. And the death of a 15-year-old attendee made headlines for months.

Sasha Rodriguez died June 29 as a result of complications from ecstasy use, according to L.A. Coroner Office spokesman Ed Winter. She attended the rave with her friends who later claimed the teen was slipped the drug. The autopsy report said she died from complications of ischemic encephalopathy as a result of methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) intoxication.

A year after the tragedy, new research is shining the spotlight on the rave scene again.

A new report released March 24 shows a 75 percent increase in emergency room visits involving ecstasy. Visits increased from 10,220 in 2004 to 17,865 in 2008, according to a report released by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration.

The research shows about 70 percent of the patients seeking treatment were between the ages of 18 to 29. The majority of the visits occurred in the southern region of the country.

Long-time ravers say they are not shocked by the statistics showing a rise in ecstasy use.

“Raving is about drugs,” Ho said, who says he often uses drugs at raves.

“People can think what they want. If people think it’s like a drug den, you’re definitely going to find that for sure. You’re definitely going to find some fool rolling way too hard or some dude tripping on something that you’ve never imagined.”

Another study shows that ecstasy use among teens increased from 6 percent in 2008 to 10 percent in 2010, according to a study released April 6 by the Partnership at Drugfree.org and the McLean Foundation.

Those who work in treating addiction say the lure of the club and rave scenes have attracted youth for years.

“See the thing about the teens with marijuana and ecstasy use is that it’s been on a rise since several years ago, ever since raves have gotten so exposed.” Fred Payo said, a community organizer with the Asian American Drug Abuse Program, or AADAP. “There’s such a great glamour in going ... to parties in general that once a youth actually hears about, ‘Oh there’s something that’s really popping.’ They would like to check it out.”

The recently released statistics on ecstasy use comes nearly one year after the EDC rave was held in Los Angeles. This year ravers like Ho are planning on traveling to the EDC rave that will be held in Las Vegas, Nev.

Some say the relocation of EDC to another state might signal greater changes to the overall rave community.

“The original Electric Daisy Carnival has moved outside of California. I think that’s a major change,” said filmmaker Le Shen Liu, a Chinese American who started going to raves in 1999. “So the rave scene is going to change one way or another. It’s all a matter of how it’s going to change.”

Liu, 31, is making the documentary “After EDC,” which will be released later this year. His film, which was partially funded by DanceSafe, highlights the changes to raves following recent events and newly released drug statistics. The filmmaker went to the popular EDC rave for years before the controversial 2010 party.

He said ravers told him on camera that the party was a life-changing experience.

“Just being there with thousands of people, hearing the music, the stage and the lighting. I think that’s something I wanted to highlight is that this is a very important experience for a lot of people,” Liu said. “But with that said I don’t want to let the rave scene off the hook. There are clearly a lot of problems and a lot of irresponsible behavior.”

Following the incidents last year at EDC, public officials formed a task force to address concerns.

“The Asian American Drug Abuse Program, along with other alcohol and drug providers, were invited by County Department of Public Health, Substance Abuse Prevention Control to participate in a task force in order to provide feedback to the coliseum commission on the dangers of ecstasy at local raves, particularly that at the coliseum,” said Jeanne Shimatsu, AADAP prevention coordinator.

Staffers at AADAP made key observations at the coliseum-based rave to address future safety policies.

They noticed, Shimatsu said, many attendees “rolling,” or high, on ecstasy and the air being “thick with marijuana smoke.” Based on these observations recommendations were made to the task force, public officials and rave promoters, Shimatsu said.

In response to incidents like those at EDC and other raves, California lawmakers also drafted the Raves Safety Act, or AB 74. The bill would require a threat assessment and action plan to be conducted if a certain level of attendance is expected at an event and there is a “strong probability that loss of life or harm to the participants” may occur.

“This bill is in direct response to an established pattern of incidents,” said Assemblywoman Fiona Ma, D-San Francisco, who introduced the legislation. “California lacks statewide public safety standards for high-risk events held on state property, yet the state remains liable and accountable when these tragic incidents occur.”

Ma recently attended the Southern California-based rave Beyond Wonderland in March to get a firsthand experience with rave culture.

“I saw an industry that is coming of age and I was pleased to see a promoter taking the risks seriously, addressing problems head on, and working collaboratively with the community,” Ma said.

Some ravers do not dispute the prevalence of drug use at raves, but they say relocating or shutting down raves will not stop the partying.

“The drug use is apparent and obvious. At least from a raver perspective it’s not about trying to stop that, I don’t think you can,” Ho explained. “In two or three years people won’t even remember EDC. At least that’s my perspective.”

What is Ecstasy?

Ecstasy, known by its scientific term as 3, 4-Methylenedioxy-methamphetamine (MDMA), is also known on the street as ‘E’, ‘X’ and ‘XTC’, among other names. Ecstasy, usually taken in a tablet or pill form, produces a euphoric state that can last for about 3 to 5 hours. The drug was legalized in 1985.
Asian American Medical Professionals Going Beyond Borders

Those who work with Doctors Without Borders say they joined the humanitarian organization for different reasons, but most come back for the rewarding work.

By Nala J. Ko

Louise Fang knows firsthand the dangers involved with working overseas as a nurse, but she says the potential hazards are trumped by the rewards of helping patients in need of medical care.

The 63-year-old, who lives in Battle, Wash., has worked as an operating room nurse since 1972. But in 2007 she went on her first medical mission with Doctors Without Borders (MSF), a medical humanitarian organization.

Over the years Fang would go on four medical missions, working in medically underserved areas in Nigeria, South Sudan and Georgia. Patients and staff members endearingly called her grandma.

After decades of working as a nurse, Fang says she never became desensitized to the hard realities associated with her job.

"So they came to me and then they said, 'Oh, that patient passed away. That little baby,'" Fang said about a newborn in South Sudan. "The mom was just holding the baby. That expression was just so sad. So my team just came out. It's just hard. It touches you."

MSF, which was founded in 1971 by doctors and journalists in France, has medical professionals stationed in about 60 countries worldwide.

After the 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami crippled Japan, MSF sent a team of about 12 medical professionals to help the country. They have been working with patients who have chronic diseases, among other ailments.

"In one area around Minamisanriku, in northern Miyagi, we were told by officials there were 9,200 people in 20 evacuation centers who needed water, non-food items and medical attention," said Makiko Dozen, the Japan team's coordinator, in a press release.

Dozen added that medical staff is concerned about elderly and displaced residents.

"Japan is entirely a little different because of the tsunami," Fang explained. "The thing they actually need is materials: water and clothes. And also they need a logistic team to reestablish the roads, so they can deliver all the aid to the most-damaged areas."

Fang says she is eager to go on her next mission, which will most likely not be Japan because of her limited availability. Doctors and nurses like Fang have varying reasons for why they joined MSF, but most say they continue to go overseas for the on-the-job rewards.

"They were always very, very grateful," said 31-year-old Lakha Mathewkutty, a registered nurse, about her work in Nigeria. "They'll feed you. They gave us a chicken. This is a big deal! For them, they don't have a lot and they're giving you a large portion of their income and sustenance. People are very, very appreciative."

Mathewkutty, an Indian American based in Los Angeles, Calif., went on two medical assignments to Sri Lanka and Nigeria.

Working in Northern Nigeria, Mathewkutty managed meningitis vaccination teams. In addition to challenging living conditions — including living with no running water or electricity — her medical team had to fight rumors swirling about their work.

"There were a lot of rumors about the vaccine making women sterile, that it wasn't really for meningitis and that it was a ploy by foreigners to not allow young girls to have children," Mathewkutty explained.

Working in rural areas overseas where high-end medical equipment is sometimes unavailable can present additional challenges for some medical professionals with MSF.

"We have to adapt. I had to adapt to learn what they have," Fang explained. "You just have to be flexible. We did a chest case, we did a thoracotomy case, opened the chest without any chest instruments. We just don't have it. You do what you can to save lives."

Others say the limitations of working with MSF in underdeveloped countries were minimal.

"It seems like work that MSF does and the tasks that's done internationally cater more to specific needs of the patients rather than a much larger infrastructure of a capitalistic money-making endeavor," explained Dr. Aditya Nadimpalli, a general physician based in New Orleans, La.

Now MSF teams are working in the tsunami-ravaged areas of Japan. With the recovery efforts in Japan expected to take years, MSF collaborated on March 11 with the Japanese Society of Certified Clinical Psychologists to support a team of six psychologists, who will treat survivors of the earthquake.

Over 16,000 people are estimated by Japanese officials to be missing and some 11,700 are confirmed dead.

"Many people now are in a phase of acute stress disorder, which is a totally natural response to this level of trauma," explained Ritsuko Nishimae, a clinical psychologist, in a press release. "If they are not able to get proper support psychologically, there is an increased possibility that they could develop post-traumatic stress disorder."

Fang says she is not being stationed in Japan to help with the relief efforts, but she will possibly go on her fifth medical mission as early as May or June.

"After the first mission I really liked it," Fang explained. "By the time I was ready to go home, all of my national staff were so sad. They didn't want me to go. Then a few of them came to me and said, 'Oh, wow. You really touched my life.' I just did my job. I didn't realize I really did something really good."
JACL and Direct Relief Target Hardest Hit Areas, Most Vulnerable

The total of $1.4 million in cash disbursements represents 56 percent of the total funds received since the JACL-Direct Relief joint effort was formed last month. — Bryan Namba

JACL Chapters in Action

In addition to national JACL’s efforts with Direct Relief International to raise funds to help the Japanese devastated by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, JACL chapters from across the country are doing their part to help in the relief efforts.

OLYMPIA JACL

The Olympia JACL chapter held a benefit in March and has raised $1,900. All proceeds will be forwarded to Direct Relief International.

MARIETTA JACL

The Marietta JACL chapter, in conjunction with JCCNC, held a fundraiser April 2 which featured the documentary, “Of Civil Wrongs and Rights: The Fred Korematsu Story.” The chapter has raised $5,640 and all proceeds will be forwarded to JCCNC.

FRESNO JACL

Fresno JACL held an April 10 fundraiser at Takumi Japanese Restaurant to benefit the relief effort in Japan. Just under $12,000 was raised for Direct Relief on behalf of the JACL. The Islamic Cultural Center of Fresno donated $1,000. Takumi closed their restaurant for the event and donated all of the food.

For more info: www.fresnojacl.org

YOSHIKAWA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

innovative ideas to the table.” Since the beginning of the Ethnic Studies and Asian American Studies Movement, youth have been at the forefront of current events and issues that affect the AA community.

“The Japanese American Citizens League is an organization that represents all people,” said Bryan Namba, Pacific Southwest District youth representative. “However, when attending national convention business sessions, looking around, there is a noticeable shortage of young adult delegates. In order to keep up with the ever-changing society, young voices must be heard to maintain JACL’s demanding and continual fight for civil rights.”

Since she was a child, Tiffany Ikeda has attended JACL conventions along with her family. “Traditionally, JACL youth programming has been segregated from the larger organization,” said Ikeda. “While this created a social environment for peers to interact and connect, it prevented youth from getting involved with the JACL in a capacity outside of the traditional youth roles.”

Ikeda, who serves as the Northern California, Western Nevada, Pacific District youth representative, adds: “After graduating into adulthood, many of these former youth leaders find it difficult to transition into adult leadership roles and become just another face at convention. This is where the JACL needs to rethink the current model of youth leadership.”

By naming youth as delegates, they will be a part of the decision-making process and national JACL will be providing a unique leadership experience and networking opportunities not replicable by on-campus social clubs.

Leading up to the national JACL convention in Los Angeles July 7-10, the NT/SC asks that chapters name a youth member as one of their voting delegates for convention.

“We are a dynamic organization and we’ve spent years cultivating the next generation of leaders,” said Ikeda. “The time has come to give them the opportunity to be heard so that they may become an integral part of the JACL in the years to come.”

Devin Yoshikawa is the national JACL youth representative. He can be reached at: younrep@jacl.org or follow him on Twitter: @jaclyouthrep. You can also communicate with the NT/SC via their Facebook page: JACL Youth.

42nd JACL NATIONAL CONVENTION

Registration Form

A separate form must be completed for each individual registration. Additional registration forms are available online, or by email at 2011convention@jaclpsw.org, or by calling (213) 626-4471.

First Name: Last Name: City/State: Phone Number: Mobile Phone: JACL Year: JACL Chapter:

Vegetarian Meals: Yes ___ No ___
Special Needs: ____________

Payment Method

Check: Please make check or money order payable to “JACL Pacific Southwest District”
Credit Card: ____________ Exp. Date: ___
Name on Card: ____________ Security Code: ____________

Registration Packages

Packages include Welcome Reception, Awards Luncheon, Nikkei Conference, and Cumulation Banquet. *(Y)=Youth/Student

Conventional Package: $250 $300
Convention Package (Y): $200 $250
Nikkei Conference Only: $50 $75
Nikkei Conference Only (Y): $25 $50

Individual Events

Cumulation Banquet: $155 $200
Cumulation Banquet (Y): $130 $150

Awards Luncheon: $70 $85
Nikkei Luncheon: $60 $75

JACL Golf Tournament: $110 $125

GRAND TOTAL $ ______

To send us your fundraising effort updates, email: pc@pacificcitizen.org.
More on that Gorilla

I received some reactions from my column last month about the JACL’s decision to advise cooperation with the government’s WWII exclusion policy and was criticized for trying to justify the JACL’s decision.

For the record, I wasn’t attempting to justify that decision so much as explain it. For much of my life, I’ve been a critic of some of the JACL’s conduct during WWII and still am in some regards, but the difference now is that while I may still look critically at some of the things the JACL did or got involved with, I can better understand them now.

That does not excuse or make better some of those things, but having gone through a host of experiences dealing with the government in D.C. from my redress lobbying years and my tenure as the JACL’s director and all the years in between, I think I have a better understanding of how much naïve, inexperienced young men could end up doing what they did.

It’s important to keep in mind that while the JACL met in an emergency session to consider what actions it should take, these were only a bunch of young guys and a small number of equally young women. The average age of the JACL membership was around 21 years old, and when they debated the issue of the so-called “evacuation,” they had no idea how they were being manipulated by the government.

So I can understand the kind of confusion and despair that came out of that meeting, and I understand the true agreement about what they should do to deal with what confronted the JA community.

It’s also important to remember that while the JACL’s decision was cooperation, the organization was small and without any real authority in the community, which had pretty much ignored them in the past. They were a bunch of political elitists as far as others in the community were concerned (not unlike today), and non-JACLers often scoffed at what the JACL undertook in the years and days before the war.

So suddenly a JACL decision lay heavily on the community that had virtually ignored the organization up to that point! It seems to me that more people in the JA community could have — and maybe should have — told the JACL to go to hell and ignored anything it said. My father was one of those people. He was a Kibei and wasn’t so much opposed to the JACL (in fact, he told me once that he admired the JACL’s guts in taking on local and federal authority) as he was opposed to, and critical of, the organization’s decision in 1942. And still, he went along like everyone else did.

The point is, people didn’t have to listen and didn’t have to do what the JACL recommended. True, there was no other communication link with the feds other than through the JACL, but that’s not the organization’s fault. The government intentionally chose the JACL because of its chapter network and access to the community.

But still, we were — most of us —American citizens and knew our rights, or at least understood them insofar as second class citizens ever understand their rights in this society. We could have told the government we would not be forced from our homes, despite what these young men were advising us. No one had to go along with the JACL’s decision.

This little organization that was less than one percent of the JA population.

If we hadn’t gone along and if we defied the government’s orders from the outset, those who became No-No Boys, those who in anger became ex-patriots, those who defied the draft, all those who rose up in anger in one form or another during the camp years could have truly exercised their rights. Screw the JACL, I would have said and dared the Army and police to force me out of my home and into their concentration camps. It would have been so simple and so clear about right and wrong, and the government would have been the bad guys instead of those young guys who didn’t know their what’s-its from a hole in the ground.

And you wouldn’t today have some foolish young man publicly talking about how Masaoka actually worked with the U.S. government, who was racist and callous and manipulative and uncaring, that ignored our rights and told us we were worthless?

I don’t know where your anger lies, but I know where mine has always been.

John Tateishi is the immediate past JACL national director.

Did the Earthquake Bring JAs Closer to Japan?

A couple of days after the tragic earthquake and tsunami struck the northeast coast of Japan’s main island on March 11, the Newark Star Ledger ran an article with a headline that promised Japanese Americans’ concerns for relatives in Japan: “Japanese-Americans in Fort Lee, Edgewater describe frantic calls to loved ones in quake’s wake.”

I was bemused — and a little disappointed — to find that the story wasn’t about Japanese Americans. The reporter went up to some shoppers in Mitsuwa, a Japanese supermarket in New Jersey, and from their names and their quotes, I could tell immediately that the people quoted were Japanese. You know, Japanese, Japanese, immigrants from Japan. Or more precisely, Shin Isset, or “new first generation” Japanese. Or maybe even just Japanese families of business men (or women) or diplomats assigned for a year or three in the U.S. before rotating back to Japan or to another country somewhere in the world.

There are fewer Japanese Japanese in America than other Asian populations, because fewer Japanese are immigrating to the U.S. than in the past. As of the 2000 Census, about 7,000 new Japanese immigrants came to the U.S. every year. In contrast, 50,000 Chinese and 100,000 Koreans per year came to the U.S.

So maybe it’s not surprising that a mainstream news organization would mistake Japanese immigrants for JAs. (I should note that West Coast newspapers did better, and when they interviewed JAs they were indeed JAs, and when Japanese they did better, because fewer Japanese are immigrating to the U.S. than in the past.)

But still, it struck me that many JAs are not necessarily connected to Japan.

That’s because many JA families came to the U.S. in the late 19th or early 20th century — before 1924, when Japanese immigration was shut off. That’s why many JA traditions and even language are old-fashioned to modern Japanese. It’s as if our community were collectively frozen in a time warp, like Asian Rip Van Winkles.

So when we yell “I gotta go benjo” to the family before we head out the door, a Japanese person standing nearby will cringe with embarrassment because we’re using such lowbrow, antiquated slang that it’s never used anymore in modern Japan.

When I wrote my book “Being Japanese American” in 2004, I informally surveyed JAs across the country. To my surprise, I discovered that a lot of JAs — especially Sansei, the generation that grew up post-interment with much of their culture suppressed by the Nisei — weren’t particularly interested in visiting Japan. Mostly they’re ashamed of not being Japanese enough, and self-conscious that they can’t speak Japanese except for those words our grandparents yelled at us, like “yakamashii,” “abunai,” “untsai” and of course the classic “baka.” (Loosely translated, “Stop making so much noise,” “that’s dangerous,” “stop being loud” and “dumb.”)

A lot of JAs simply don’t feel that close to Japan. For many, their relatives are very distant relations. Going to a Japanese restaurant for sushi and teriyaki beef, and maybe dancing in an obon dance might be as Japanese as they get.

But if there’s a blessing in the disaster of March 11, it’s that JAs might feel a little more of a bond with their roots than before. For one thing, everyone now knows that they have family or friends who were affected by the tsunami, or those who lost relatives, or those we barely know come up as if at a funeral service and say “I’m so sorry … if there’s anything I can do …”

These awkward interactions remind us that we’re Japanese after all, somewhere deep inside even if we haven’t acknowledged it much in our lives. And, we’ve banded together and “liked” Facebook campaigns for Japan relief, and read the articles about the difficulty of getting aid to the affected towns in Japan. We’ve helped organize fundraising concerts, events, fashion shows, benefit dinners and plain old donation drives. We’ve tested the various relief agencies so part of our phone bills can go overseas.

The quake, tsunami and nuclear threat have awakened our hearts and reminded us that we care about Japan. And we’ve shown it by donating, and by sharing articles and news.

What Japan will really need in the months — and years — to come, is for us to get up our nerve, learn a little more modern Nihongo, and travel to Japan. Because surely, that’s the kind of personal aid they’ll seek the most — reconnecting with our families and the country from which our ancestors emigrated.

Gil Asakawa is a Denver-based journalist and blogger who writes at www.nikkeiview.com and for Huffington Post Denver. He is the author of “Being Japanese American” (Stone Bridge Press, 2004) and a past chair of the Pacific Citizen Editorial Board.

For the RECORD

VOICES
Chi-Lan Lieu on What's 'Fact or Faked'

The Chinese American photographer Chi-Lan Lieu is among a team of paranormal investigators on Syfy's 'Fact or Faked: Paranormal Files.'

By Nala J. Ko

Television personality Chi-Lan Lieu was taught to revere spirits growing up in a traditionally Chinese family in California, but her work on Syfy's 'Fact or Faked' has sent her on the hunt for the paranormal.

The 'Fact or Faked' team - comprised of a former FBI agent, lead scientist, photo expert (Lieu), journalist, stunt expert and tech expert - is challenged with debunking or authenticating paranormal footage.

Over the years Lieu has worked as a TV host for numerous outlets, but it was her photography expertise and curiosity in the paranormal that led her to join the cast of 'Fact or Faked.'

In a search for the truth, Lieu has worked on cases involving Sasquatch, a Bayou beast and ghosts, among other things.

But as Lieu shared with the Pacific Citizen during a recent phone call, some of the most unnerving and humorous moments often occur off camera while cast members conduct investigations in the wilderness.

How did you get involved with Syfy's 'Fact or Faked' team?

Chi-Lan Lieu: The way that I got involved was literally an audition. I saw a posting and I replied to it because it just said: someone that was interested in the paranormal. Ever since I was a kid I always kind of believed in it because I grew up really traditionally Chinese. So I always believed the spirits are around us. So I had an interest in it, applied, went through a couple of rounds, got a really bad haircut in the meantime [laughs] and I somehow got the job.

What interests you about the paranormal?

Lieu: I really just found the idea of just life on other planets besides earth really fascinating and a big possibility.

On the show, though, you seem to be a skeptic.

Lieu: Huge, huge skeptic when it comes to these stories that we do. Because again I mean the way that a lot of the stories that we're chasing after are presented to me, it just seems like a falsehood. It doesn't seem like always so true and always so honest. So it's like I'm always the one that goes [laughs], 'that really looks like CG [computer generated], guys.'

Despite some of the doctored footage, you've had some scary moments during your investigations.

You were startled during the Symphonic Spirits case when you heard a noise in the dark.

Lieu: That was crazy! Honestly, [laughs] I've been doing TV for a couple of years now, so when I heard that noise I thought, 'OK someone dropped something.' Then finally the boys realized that something had happened. When it first happens because we are so in the zone of like thinking, 'What do we do next?' We're talking. We're deep in this conversation. You're not paying attention to that ambient stuff as much.

Growing up in a Chinese home, are your parents supportive of your work in the paranormal?

Lieu: My dad doesn't believe it. But mom - I kind of thought, 'OK someone dropped something.' Then finally the boys realized that something had happened. When it first happens because we are so in the zone of like thinking, 'What do we do next?' We're talking. We're deep in this conversation. You're not paying attention to that ambient stuff as much.

Parents are super supportive of what I do. They'll watch. But they can't get into certain subjects. My dad does believe in spirits, like the Chinese way.

Did you always have your sights set on an entertainment career?

Lieu: I wanted to direct and then I went on 'Wheel of Fortune' during high school. I think I was inspired by some magazine article. Then I went into journalism for my last year of high school. I went to college and got really into art, filmmaking and all that stuff.

You also have been trained in photography, right?

Lieu: I have a degree in it. It's what I studied. It's what I loved. It's what I'm really practiced at. I used to be like a crazy maven in the darkroom. I remember like even though I showered every night after coming home from the darkroom, like eight hours in there, my sheets always still smelled like fixer [laughs].

Using your photography training on the show, you must be able to spot a fake case easily.

Lieu: Not always. CG has kind of gotten pretty hard-core [laughs]. It's really hard to tell now-a-days. Not always. But a lot of times I can or I can guess at the technique they used, especially darkroom techniques.

Some of the 'Fact or Faked' fans have posted comments online saying the team is quick to debunk everything. Do you agree with that?

Lieu: No. Jesus Christ, no. I think it's half and half. Half of the cast believes straight off, 'Oh, my God. This is solid proof that ghosts exist!' This is the smoking gun!' Seriously I am literally the way I appear on the show: a total skeptic. I'm very skeptical about these videos and stuff. You have to be in this world. If you had all believers on the show, what point is that? Boring TV.

It seems very exciting to be a part of the team and get to travel and investigate all these bizarre cases.

Lieu: You would think so, yeah.

It's all hard work and no fun?

Lieu: It's a lot of hard work because it's a lot of doing a lot of these experiments, figuring out what will and won't work at the time. It's also playing with a lot of equipment. Being a tech reporter - I started in technology reporting for TechTV - you know that whenever you're shooting equipment decides to fail. It doesn't matter if your cell phone is working all of a sudden you're going to walk into the Bermuda Triangle of no reception [laughs]. So sometimes you're like constantly working with like equipment problems and stuff. So it can get really grueling. On average is 14 hour-long shoots, 16 hours.

And in some of the episodes you have additional stresses, like wild animals.

Lieu: That is crazy! I'm usually the only chick on the entire crew. So it's like, I pray to God they ordered a Porta-Potty [laughs].

What's the bathroom protocol when you're on assignment in the forest?

Lieu: There's no toilet paper because no one is like, 'I got it.' This is the worst part, sometimes I'll tell the soundman to shut me down because I have to go to the bathroom and we're in the woods and stuff. If the soundman doesn't shut you, you have to hear everybody's business - well all the producers and stuff hear everybody's business.

I was going to ask if the cast got along. But, you must if you're working in such intense conditions.

Lieu: Yeah. It's really important. If we totally didn't it would really suck.
Warner Bros. Accused of ‘Whitewashing’ in ‘Akira’

Asian Pacific American groups are calling for a meeting with Warner Brothers Pictures executive over accusations of “whitewashing” in the live action version of “Akira.”

“‘Akira,’” originally a Japanese manga series about post-apocalyptic Tokyo, is being scripted for the big screen by Steve Kloves of “Harry Potter” fame and is being shopped to Caucasian actors, according to Racebending.com, a grassroots organization that supports entertainment equality.

Andrew Garfield of “The Social Network” and Rob Pattinson of “Twilight” are rumored to be in the running for roles originally designated for Japanese characters.

In a March 29 letter to Jeff Robinov, Warner Brothers Pictures president, Racebending.com co-founder Marissa Lee called on the film studio to “give Asian American actors fair and equal consideration for first-bill roles” in “Akira” and two other Japanese-themed films.

Warner Brothers is also developing “All You Need is Kill” and “Death Note.”

“Last week, the Asian American community was appalled to see entertainment media outlets report that all of the actors currently being considered for lead roles in ‘Akira’ are white,” said Lee in the same letter.

With support from other APA groups like the Asian American Justice Center and the Asian Pacific American Media Coalition, of which JACL is a member, Racebending.com launched a virtual petition on Facebook.com opposing the “whitewashing” of this popular series. Over 7,000 supporters joined.

The coalition hopes to meet with studio executives in April.

APAs represent over 15 million media consumers, but Warner Brothers has rarely produced films with APAs in first-billed roles, according to the advocacy group.

“Actors like Robert Pattinson and Andrew Garfield have the privilege of playing iconic white characters that Asian American actors would never be considered for,” said Lee. “When white actors are also asked to play iconic Asian characters, Asian American actors lose their shot at starring in anything.”

In 2009, Racebending.com and other APA groups criticized Paramount Pictures for similarly “whitewashing” the cast of “The Last Airbender,” a popular animated series that takes place in an Asian fantasy world inspired by Asian cultures and themes.

U.S. Senators to Consider New Akaka Bill

Sen. Akaka, who plans to retire after his current term, has spent more than a decade trying to pass his signature bill.

By Associated Press

HONOLULU—The U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs is holding a meeting to consider legislation granting federal recognition of a Native Hawaiian government.

Sen. Daniel Akaka of Hawaii said the April 6 business meeting will be used to make minor amendments to the bill and possibly vote on it.

If approved, the measure would advance to the full Senate.


Akaka said it’s his priority to put Native Hawaiians on equal footing with Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Similar legislation failed to get a vote in the Senate last year following 11 years of efforts by Akaka to get it passed.

The legislation, known as the Akaka Bill, comes as state lawmakers are also considering proposals to form a Native Hawaiian governing body themselves.

Akaka has said he won’t seek re-election next year, so this may be his last opportunity to get the legislation passed.

Veteran’s Group Honors Sadao Munemori

LOS ANGELES—Veterans and high school students recently gathered at a Los Angeles cemetery to pay tribute to a Medal of Honor winner.

Members of the American Legion Sadao Munemori Post 321 and the Abraham Lincoln High School color guards met at Evergreen Cemetery April 5 to honor Sadao Munemori’s legacy.

This is the sixth year that the JROTC had held the service.

First Sgt. Clifford Henderson presented a memorial wreath from the JROTC and arranged to have an announcement made about Munemori on the school’s public address system.

Munemori, an Abraham Lincoln High School alumnum and member of the famed 442nd regimental combat team of World War II, was killed in action on April 5, 1945.

APAs Make Their Case at Redistricting Hearing

SPRINGFIELD, III.—Illinois lawmakers who are preparing to redraw the state’s legislative boundaries are hearing from groups about how to do that.

Several interest groups told lawmakers they wanted an area south of downtown Chicago with a 30 percent Asian American population, many of them Chinese, kept intact and no longer split between a variety of legislative districts.

The hearing was the first of five such events being held around the state by the Illinois Senate Redistricting Committee. The next ones will be April 16 in Kankakee and Peoria, and April 19 in Cicero.

Democrats are running the show when it comes to redistricting because they control both legislative chambers and the governor’s office.

Colorado’s Civil Unions Bill Fails

DENVER—A GOP-led committee rejected civil unions for Colorado same-sex couples after an eight-hour hearing.

That hearing included passionate pleas from gay couples who said they were being denied equal rights and religious leaders who argued the proposal would diminish the sanctity of marriage.

The proposal had breezed through the Democratic-controlled Senate and came close to getting on the House committee where it failed on a 6-5 party-line vote.

Under Senate Bill 172, couples in civil unions would have rights similar to married couples, including the ability to be involved in their partner’s medical decisions.

Center for Korean Studies Gets $2M Endowment

HONOLULU—The Center for Korean Studies at the University of Hawaii at Manoa has a new $2 million endowment to ensure the steady growth of Korean studies at the school.

The Korea Foundation contributed $1 million for the endowment, while the center raised the rest from other contributors.

The Center for Korean Studies was established in 1972. It brings together one of the largest concentrations of Korea scholars outside Korea itself.
Nisei Veterans Recreate Historic Palace Photo

The Japanese American WWII soldiers will receive the Congressional Gold Medal later this year.

By Pacific Citizen Staff and Associated Press

HONOLULU—Almost 70 years have passed since Japanese American soldiers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team gathered at the Iolani Palace in Honolulu to pose for a photo before heading for training on the mainland during World War II.

The photo, originally taken in 1943, was recreated on March 28 with 35 of the original soldiers gathering once again to remake the historical image. The first photo had 2,600 soldiers lined up in front of the palace.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported the veterans appeared at the palace this time with canes, walkers and some facing memories. They also spoke with appreciation that Congress and the nation still acknowledge the adversity they overcame on and off the battlefield.

This time the aging Nisei veterans were joined by U.S. Army Reservists from the 9th Mission Support Command’s 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment for the photo op.

Some 13,000 veterans of the 442nd, the 100th Infantry Battalion, and the Military Intelligence Service are due to receive the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian award, later this year.

The ceremony will take place in Washington, D.C. For veterans in Hawaii who won’t be able to attend the D.C. event, a ceremony honoring the WWII veterans will take place in Hawaii Dec. 17.

“We want to honor the veterans with our family, friends, and the community,” said retired Maj. Gen. Robert G. F. Lee, a Hawaii member of the Congressional Gold Medal committee and the former Hawaii Adjutant General. “The veterans came home and lived their lives with the same dignity and dedication they showed in battle. Our community has been inspired by their support.”

The Nisei veterans’ “Go For Broke” spirit still lives on in today’s ranks, said Lee.

“The soldiers serving today are absolutely proud to be a part of the history and tradition of the 100th/442nd. You can be sure that your legacy remains in the U.S. Army today as evident by the soldiers standing behind you.”

Many of the current 100th Battalion soldiers continue to participate in community events to honor the legacy of the Nisei soldiers.

“I only hope that we can continue to honor our predecessors and bring credit upon what they have done and all they have sacrificed,” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Livernois, the senior mechanic with the 740th Combat Support Company, 100th Battalion.

“Every day that we have the opportunity to be with them is a privilege,” said Lt. Col. Kimo Dunn, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment commander.

“They are living legends. We see what these veterans have done for our community, state and country as a whole. The part that really hits home is that legacy of service and patriotism to our country. We’re just so privileged to be a part of it.”

The Congressional Gold Medal Hawaii committee has planned to hold a parade on Dec. 17 in Waikiki which will be followed by a banquet at the Honolulu Convention Center.

Advertisers Drop Minn. Radio Station Over Racist Song

A song parody about Hmong Americans has landed a popular Minnesota radio station in hot water.

Critics say KDWB Radio’s “Dave Ryan in the Morning Show” crossed the line last month when it aired the song, set to the tune of Eric Clapton’s “Tears in Heaven.” The lyrics include comments on how Hmong Americans live like “sardines.”

“That’s unbelievable and I’m just shocked by it,” Lee Pao Xiong, director of the Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia University, told the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

Advertisers have also reacted strongly to the controversy. AT&T and Health Partners have pulled their ads on the popular Twin Cities radio station, citing the offensiveness of the song.

In response to complaints, the station posted an apology on its Facebook page.

“While we received positive feedback from many Hmong listeners who let us know that they found the song in question very humorous, we apologize to anyone we may have inadvertently offended, as this was never our intent.”
Goodwin Liu Gets OK from Senate Judiciary Committee — Again

The judicial nominee continues to battle for the Ninth circuit court bench.

Goodwin Liu has received a stamp of approval from the Senate Judiciary Committee clearing the way for another potential battle in Congress over the confirmation of the law professor who was been nominated three times for the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco.

On April 7, the committee voted 10-8 in favor of recommending the University of California, Berkeley assistant dean and law professor for the federal judgeship. Liu, who was first nominated by President Barack Obama in February 2010, has won repeated approval from the Senate Judiciary Committee but has yet to receive a Senate floor vote. The president re-nominated him in September and again in January.

Proponents have labeled the legal scholar as a contender to become the first Asian Pacific American in the Supreme Court — if he gets confirmed for the ninth circuit court.

But his opponents have portrayed him as being too liberal by citing his support for same-sex marriage and his chairmanship of the progressive American Constitution Society.

APA leaders are pressing the full Senate to confirm Liu, a former Rhodes scholar who received the highest rating from the American Bar Association.

“We urge the Senate to move quickly to give Professor Liu the up-or-down vote that every nominee deserves,” said Paul O. Hirose, president of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA). “Professor Liu is eminently qualified to serve as a federal appellate judge, and he is long overdue for a confirmation vote.”

Twin Cities JACL Hosts Speakers Training Workshop

Workshop attendees and organizers: (front row, l-r) Cheryl Hirata-Dulas, Linda Izumi Marek, April Denrisson, Janet Maeda Carlson, Joyce Miyamoto, Lucy Kirihara, and Sally Sudo. (Middle row, l-r) Ken Ushio, Mark Honda, Kim Schiller, Rebecca Federer, Kazusa Yamasita, and Carolyn Nayematsu. (Back row, l-r) Matthew Walters, Hiroki Ikuchi, and James Densley.

The Twin Cities JACL Education Committee hosted a March 26 workshop to train the next generation of speakers to talk about the Japanese American World War II experience.

“There is a critical need to add new members to our speakers bureau,” said Sally Sudo, committee chair. “The number of us Nisei who can fulfill requests to schools and community groups is dwindling.”

Fourteen trainees, including high school and college students, teachers, and chapter members, attended the half-day training session at the International Institute of Minnesota in St. Paul.

Janet Maeda Carlson, a retired Macalester College professor who taught a course on the Asian American experience, discussed the parallels between the World War II incarceration of JAs and the treatment of Muslim Americans since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Bureau members and former internees Sudo and Lucy Kirihara shared firsthand experiences and gave tips on how to give effective presentations.

The Twin Cities chapter has collected 17 oral history testimonies from local Nisei for an educational DVD. An extensive collection of videotapes, DVDs, books, teacher guides, and photographs are also available for loan.

Carolyn Nayematsu and Cheryl Hirata-Dulas were also involved in planning the workshop.

The workshop was funded by a grant from the Ishida Winfred Foundation of Illinois.

Another training session is planned for the fall.

For more information: Education.TCJACL@hotmail.com

East West Players Theater Company to Hold Playwriting Competition

Joyee Lin as Vuthy in Michael Golamco’s ‘Year Zero’, which won the East West Players competition in 2008.

East West Players, a Los Angeles-based Asian Pacific American theater organization, is calling on aspiring playwrights to compete in its “Face of the Future” competition, which seeks to encourage more theater plays with APA themes.

“As we move into a more multicultural and global society, it is important to process the many levels and complexities of stories in our lives,” said Tim Dang, East West Players’ producing artistic director.

Cash prizes will be awarded to the top three plays including $5,000 for the first place winner, $2,500 for second place, and $1,000 for third place.

All winners will be considered for workshop and/or production at East West Players.

This year, the competition will focus on the theme of exploring the reality of multicultural America from an APA perspective. Subject matter may include, but are not limited to, bicultural or multicultural identity, clashes or collaborations between cultures or international/transnational storylines.

Submissions will be accepted May 2 to Aug. 31.

Winners will be notified next February.


‘Face of the Future’

Submissions must be original, unproduced full-length plays or musicals. Translations or adaptations will not be accepted. Submissions must have Asian Pacific American themes and/or characters as the primary focus.

All genres are welcome, but comedies are encouraged. Plays should require no more than 5-7 actors. Musicals should require no more than 10-12 actors. The story should be told in less than two and a half hours including a 15-minute intermission and must be accessible to a primarily English-speaking audience. All submissions must include a $20 entry fee with the ‘Face of the Future’ entry form.

For more info and forms: www.eastwestplayers.org or jliu@eastwestplayers.org
Venice JA Memorial Marker to be Unveiled

The design of a proposed memorial, which will be unveiled during an April 25 ceremony. On April 25, 1942, about 1,000 Japanese Americans from the California cities of Venice, Santa Monica and Malibu gathered at the northwest corner of Venice and Lincoln Boulevards to await their forced evacuation to the Manzanar internment camp.

The Venice Japanese American Memorial Marker Committee has been working support for the memorial marker.

Ichiro Vieira Gets French Camp JACL Scholarship

The chapter holds its 63rd annual installation luunch in Stockton.

The JACL French Camp chapter held its 63rd annual New Year’s and installation luunch recently at King’s House Restaurant in downtown Stockton. Despite the heavy rain fall, more than 60 chapter members attended.

Linda Ogata, Lodi JACL president, installed the following 2011 slate of officers: Dea Komura, president; Kent Nakamura, second vice president; David Matsuura, recording secretary; Jeanie Matsumoto, treasurer; Jeannie Nakamura, corresponding secretary; Helen Honda, historian; and Miki Kagenishi, Membership.

This year’s French Camp chapter scholarship awardee was George Ichiro Vieira, an honors student at McNair High School in Stockton. Vieira plans to attend the University of Pacific this fall to major in business administration.

Veterans to Honor Fallen JA Brethren May 28

A Memorial Day service for all Japanese Americans who died in war will be held May 28 at the Japanese American National Memorial Court in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo.

The memorial court is located adjacent to the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center on 244 South San Pedro Street.

The Japanese American Veterans Memorial Committee (JAVMC) and the Japanese American Veteran’s Memorial Committee (JAVMC) are jointly sponsoring this year’s event.

Memorial Day Service

May 28
Service at 10 a.m.; June 21st, 2011, 10:00 a.m.

For tickets and more information: Darryl Tanaka at dav@tankawattai.com or 310-577-8977 or Thomi Yamamoto 213-387-9033.

Okanomo of the JAVMC and Minoru Tanai of the JAKW.

The keynote speaker will be Scott Takahashi, a Vietnam War veteran whose father was a member of the 109th Battalion during World War II.

The Koyasan Buddhist Temple Boy Scout Troop 379 and the El Rancho High School Marine Corp Jr. ROTC will also participate in the ceremony. Representatives from the Buddhist and Christian faiths will offer prayers to these brave men.

The public and Gold Star mothers and families of the men who are memorialized on the monument are invited to attend.

Ichiro Vieira Gets French Camp JACL Scholarship

The JACL French Camp chapter held its 63rd annual New Year’s and installation luunch in Stockton.

The chapter holds its 63rd annual New Year’s and installation luunch recently at King’s House Restaurant in downtown Stockton. Despite the heavy rain fall, more than 60 chapter members attended.

Linda Ogata, Lodi JACL president, installed the following 2011 slate of officers: Dea Komura, president; Kent Nakamura, second vice president; David Matsuura, treasurer; Jeanie Matsumoto, recording secretary; Helen Honda, historian; and Miki Kagenishi, Membership.

This year’s French Camp chapter scholarship awardee was George Ichiro Vieira, an honors student at McNair High School in Stockton. Vieira plans to attend the University of Pacific this fall to major in business administration.

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Portland Taiko’s ‘Ponta & The Big Drum’
PORTLAND, OR
April 30, May 1 and May 7-8
Portland Center For the Performing Arts, Brunish Hall
1111 SW Broadway
Cost: $18.25/adults; $12.25/children, seniors and students

Asian American drum ensemble, Portland Taiko, opens its 2011 season this spring with ‘Ponta & The Big Drum.’ Taiko performers take the stage to share the original storytelling adventures of Ponta through music, dance and audience interaction.

Info: Call Josephine Kuver at 503/225-5900 or e-mail Josephine@ya-or.org

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The Sushi Spectacular
BOSTON, MA
April 17, 5 to 8 p.m.
Inter-Continenal Boston
510 Atlantic Ave
Cost: $150

The Sushi Spectacular is a gala reception featuring Japanese appetizers, sushi, sashimi, and music. A master sushi chef will prepare a maguro kaisai, preparing a whole tuna for sushi. The event is sponsored by Oga’s Restaurant, the Japan Society of Boston and the Inter-Continental Boston.

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The 37th Annual Sakura Kai Health Fair
EL CERRITO, CA
May 7, 6:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.
El Cerrito Open House Senior Center
6500 Stockton Ave
It’s time for the 37th Annual Sakura Kai Health Fair and we hope you can help us again! Last year there were 64 seniors screened. There will be stations for blood tests, bone density tests, hearing tests, blood pressure tests and more.

The fasting cholesterol test is available for $5. The event is being held thanks in part to the help of the Diablo Valley JACL, among other organizations.

Info: Call Kiki Honda at 650/624-8330 or e-mail kikihko@yahoo.com

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King’s Hawaiian Sukiyaki Fundraiser
TORRANCE, CA
April 20, 6:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.
King’s Hawaiian Bakery & Restaurant
2801 W. Sepulveda Blvd.
Come support the Fukui fundraiser at King’s Hawaiian Bakery and Restaurant. The fundraiser benefits Camp Musubi, a youth day camp. Participants must present a flyer to contribute 20 percent of proceeds to the fundraiser.

Info: To receive a flyer, contact Mariessa Kitazawa at 213/626-4471 or visit www.campmusubi.org

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Community Film Screenings of ‘Dreams Finally Realized’
LOS ANGELES, CA
May 26, 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Pacific Asian community celebrates its 45th anniversary

Support the U.S.-Japan Council Earthquake Relief Fund by attending the 3.11 Japan Relief Concert, featuring 19 musicians with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. The funds was established to collect donations that directly help Japan.

Info: Call 555 Universal Hollywood Dr. to reserve your tickets at 559/434-1662 or e-mail gordon@311relieffund.org

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CcDC
The 26th Annual Shinzen Run and Walk
FRESNO, CA
April 23, 6 a.m.
Woodward Park
The JACL Fresno Chapter is pleased to announce this year’s run and walk. The event is open to runners and walkers of all levels and benefits the Central California Nikkei Foundation, the Shizen Friendship Garden at Woodward Park and the Fresno JACL Scholarship Fund.

Info: www.proracegroup.com or 559/434-1662

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For more information about events in Go-See-Do, contact the Japan Society of Greater Los Angeles at 4471 W. Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027 or call 323/661-2411. Visit www.jsgla.org for more information about our events.

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Pacific Asia Museum’s New Exhibits
PASADENA, CA
March 31 to May 29
Pacific Asia Museum
46 North Los Robles Ave
Cost: $9/general admission; $7/students and seniors
Visit the Pacific American community celebrates its 45th anniversary. This ten-hour mini-series originally aired on the Tokyo Broadcasting System. Proceeds from the gala dinner and silent auction will benefit the Central California Nikkei Foundation and the Shizen Friendship Garden at Woodward Park.

Info: www.pacificasiamuseum.org

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Dine Out For Japan
WASHINGTON, D.C.
May 2 to May 8
Dine Out For Japan is an initiative uniting D.C. Metro restaurants in supporting the relief and rebuilding efforts in Japan after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami. Restaurants will open their doors and their hearts by donating a percentage of sales for the week. One hundred percent of funds donated by participating restaurants will go directly to on-the-ground relief efforts in Japan.

Info: Laura Goldstein at 202/223-6843 or visit www.dineoutforjapan.org

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About Pacific Citzen
PACIFIC CITIZEN is a biweekly community newspaper published in English in the Los Angeles area. Its mission is to enlighten and empower community members, to inform them about their community, and to help them in their efforts to make our community better.

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Events in Go-See-Do are listed based on space availability. Don’t see your event here? Place a “spotlight” ad with photos of your event for maximum exposure.

FOR MORE INFO:
bkymura@pacificcitizen.org
(800) 966-1524
Hawaii Budget Troubles Worsen

The decrease in Japanese visitors could contribute to more than $1 billion shortfall over the next two years.

By Mark Niesse
Associated Press

HONOLULU—A loss of Japanese tourists and declining tax collections have sunk Hawaii’s budget hole to the depths of a $1.3 billion shortfall over the next two years, leaving lawmakers searching for ways to raise money and cut spending.

The Council on Revenues voted to revise its projection following the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, which resulted in a 25 percent drop in Japanese visitors since then.

The decline in Japanese vacations to Hawaii shrinks the amount of their money spent and taxes collected in the state. State legislators are considering how to make up for the loss by raising taxes and reducing government services.

The council’s new estimates add $312 million to its previous prediction of a nearly $1 billion shortfall through June 2013. The council released its last forecast just before the tsunami altered the state’s economic and political landscape.

The tsunami lowered the expected tax income during February also contributed to the worsening outlook.

The effect of the tsunami “turns out is kind of smallish in its consequences,” said Paul Brewbaker, an economist who chairs the Council on Revenues. “The biggest factor at the end of the discussion was the surprisingly low February collections.”

The state’s declining finances also mean Democratic Gov. Neil Abercrombie must find more than $200 million over the next three months to balance this fiscal year’s budget.

Abercrombie said in a statement recently he intends to get that money by raising taxes and reducing spending and departmental expenses by 10 percent.

“We understand the challenges facing the state and we are being conservative as we work with the state Legislature to pass a budget that will get the job done,” Abercrombie said.

Rep. Gene Ward, the leader of minority House Republicans, said legislators should avoid delivering a “bunker punch” to taxpayers by raising the state’s general excise tax to balance the budget. The GET is the state government’s biggest source of income, and it’s levied on most money and cut spending.

The budget bill moving through the legislative process was based on projections following the depths of a $1.3 billion shortfall.

The decrease in Japanese visitors could contribute to more than $1 billion shortfall over the next two years, leaving lawmakers searching for ways to raise money and cut spending.
Hines Ward Teaches Pacific Islander Youth to Get Fit

One in five Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander high school youth is obese.

Pittsburg Steelers wide receiver and “Dancing with the Stars” competitor Hines Ward hosted an April 2 health and fitness fair at the University of California, Los Angeles to stress the importance of physical exercise among Asian Americans and Pacific Islander youth.

Ward, a member of the President’s Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, was joined by Steelers teammate Troy Polamalu at the event.

“I know you guys love the Play Station, the Xbox and stuff like that, but how many of you guys ever want to grow up and be like Troy right here and make it to the NFL?” Ward, who is of Korean and African American descent, asked the young attendees at the event. “Even girls too. You can play football.”

The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders sponsored the event to address the soaring obesity and diabetes rates among high school age Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth.

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander children have the highest rates of any minority group for being overweight or obese. They also hold an elevated risk for developing cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

A reliance on cheap fast food has contributed to unhealthy eating, said Sofe Aina, vice chair of the President’s Advisory Commission.

One in five Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander high school youth is obese, and one in three is likely to be overweight or obese, Aina said.

“Today we’re sending a message that physical fitness and eating properly will lead to healthier living,” he added.

Teaching young Americans to balance nutrition and exercise at an early age is the key to developing a healthy lifestyle, said Ward.

Suit Dismissed After Passage of Hawaii Civil Unions

By Associated Press

HONOLULU—Six gay couples are withdrawing a lawsuit against Hawaii’s government now that same-sex civil unions have become law.

Gay rights advocacy group Lambda Legal and the American Civil Liberties Union of Hawaii said legal action seeking equal rights for gays and lesbians is no longer needed since Gov. Neil Abercrombie signed the civil unions legislation.

The groups need the state last year after then-Gov. Linda Lingle vetoed a similar civil unions measure.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported April 1 that Jennifer Pizer of Lambda Legal said her group will work with the legal and business community to make sure the civil unions law is implemented smoothly.

Civil unions in Hawaii, which are scheduled to begin Jan. 1, offer nearly all the same state rights of marriage to couples regardless of their sexual orientation.