Fundraising efforts seek land and a new home for Topaz Museum.

JACL national board makes deep cuts to balance budgets.

‘Cheezburger’ icon Ben Huh chats memes and a new reality show.
A WALK DOWN MEMORY LANE

I always enjoy reading the Pacific Citizen and keep a copy in my waiting room here in Denver, Colorado.

In the April 6 issue, the article on the San Francisco redistricting collaboration especially caught my eye. My senior year of high school (’74), I was able to do an independent study project to visit several of the Asian American youth groups in San Francisco. JCYC (Japanese Community Youth Council) served as my base as I met with groups also in Chinatown and the Filipino community. Even then, I learned that the Japanese American and African American communities collaborated for their shared concerns.

So the walk down memory lane reminded me of the continued struggles of our communities.

Jane Kano, MD
Denver, CO

RE: PRISCILLA OUCHIDA, OUR NEW JACL NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Our congratulations and best wishes for being the first woman national director of the JACL. We look forward to making the transition of the organization from “old-timers” to a new forward looking, progressive civil rights organization.

Priscilla Ouchida has done much to promote a greater cultural understanding of JACL in the California State. We should add that we admire her case, I’d like to outline the value of the newspaper as Exhibit A.

John Matsumoto
Past President - Seattle and Lake Washington chapters

SPRING CAMPAIGN IN DEFENSE OF THE P.C.

By Kevin Miyazaki

I’m not a lawyer, and I don’t even play one on television. But I’ll put on a lawyer’s hat today to make this case to you: the Pacific Citizen needs your support! Your newspaper needs financial assistance in the ongoing Spring Campaign, in addition to your dedication and support during important budgetary discussions. To bolster my case, I’d like to outline the value of the P.C., by entering a back issue of the newspaper as Exhibit A.

>>See MIYAZAKI pg 16

NAT’L DIRECTOR’S REPORT JACL’S EFFORTS TO HELP JAPAN

By Floyd Mori

Thank you to everyone who supported the Japan Relief and Recovery Fund which was established as a joint effort by the JACL and Direct Relief International (DRf) after the disaster of the earthquake and tsunami which struck Japan on March 11, 2011. If you gave to the fund, your money went to a good cause and you are in good company.

Did you know that Brad Pitt mentioned the JACL and DRf when he and Sean Penn were being interviewed by Los Angeles Times in August 2011 about their film, “The Tree of Life”? Pitt mentioned his concern about those who were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. The article states that Pitt knows a fair amount about reconstruction after a disaster. He spearheaded an effort to rebuild homes in areas of New Orleans that were devastated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. He and Angelina Jolie frequently donate to charities.

>>See MORI page 16 and registration form page 6

JACL MEMBERS Change of Address

If you’ve moved, please send new information to: National JACL 1765 Sutter St. San Francisco, CA 94115 Allow 6 weeks for address changes.

To avoid interruptions in delivery, please notify your postmaster to include periodicals in your change of address (USPS Form 3575)
By Naian J. Ko
Reporter

Editor’s note: This article was produced as a project for The California Endowment: Health Journalism Fellowship, a program of USC’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism. It is the third article in a three part series examining Asian Pacific Americans and HIV/AIDS healthcare in California.

At two years old Heather, 28, fled the war-ravaged country of Burma seeking sanctuary along the journey with her family to a refugee camp in Thailand. Heather a pseudonym to protect her identity says even while growing up in a refugee camp she always dreamed of one day becoming another.

I wanted to be a good mom,” she said through a translator. “That’s all.”

But a “dirty needle” used by a drug addict woman who shared her bath water is seen as a way to alter her DNA. At the age of 25, Heather discovered she was HIV positive. The diagnosis set Heather into depression and prompted suicidal thoughts. However when she read HIV/AIDS education materials she realized her diagnosis was no longer a death sentence.

Heather’s dreams of motherhood would come true. She has two children, who are now 9 and 4 years old, with her husband. Her children and husband are all HIV negative.

The family applied for refugee status and was eventually given permission to move to California in 2007. Their parents were left behind in the refugee camp. It was there her father died a few months ago.

Now living in the Bay Area with her husband and two children, Heather says she sometimes worries about her children becoming negatively impacted by her HIV status and the stigmatization the virus carries in the tight-knit Burmese American community.

“Maybe they will become like me depressed about this status because the community is not supporting anything about the virus,” she said.

Heather is one of 4,005 Asian Pacific American women living in California with HIV/AIDS according to a June 30, 2011 report by the California Department of Public Health’s Office of AIDS. But Heather says her self-identity is Burmese and without the help of a Burmese-speaking case worker, navigating the healthcare system can be confusing.

To access the needs of Burmese immigrants who are living with HIV/AIDS in the Bay Area, organizations like Street Level Health Project and Community Health for Asian Americans (CHAA) started a pilot program last year with about 25 individuals, who are living with the disease. There are about 1,000 Burmese in the country as of 2010, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

Organizers of the program hope to address the specific needs the Burmese and Karen community faces in accessing HIV/AIDS services in the Bay Area.

“I think they’re in and out of treatment or they get specialized treatment because of language issues,” said Sian Van Kuykpatrick, CHAA’s associate director. “A lot of what they’re being asked for in meetings is some dedicated language support and to help them navigate not just health care but social services and other kinds of things that they need.”

To bring to light the differences and similarities in treating Asian Pacific American women living with HIV/AIDS, the Bay Area Tree Project is holding the National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day on May 19. Last year 35 events were held nationwide to raise awareness about the day.

“This year we decided to go a different direction and produce a series of digital stories from community members,” said Sana Moom, Bay Area Tree Project’s national program manager. “If you look at the six stories even though they’re all APIs living with HIV, they actually are quite different and have different levels of struggle and different levels of hope.”

There are over 4.9 million Asian Americans and 144,986 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in California according to 2010 data from the U.S. Census Bureau. There are also some 45 different Asian American ethnic subgroups and over 100 languages and dialects spoken in the community, which makes identifying individuals with HIV/AIDS challenging.

“The API community is really complex because Philippines is the only Catholic country in Asia,” said Filipino American Dennis Mullin, a senior case manager with the API Wellness Center. “So the refusal to get treatment or to get treatment is really great that it translates an internalized issue for Filipinos.”

The lack of disaggregated statistical information on Asian Pacific Americans living with HIV/AIDS in California also does not give an accurate picture of the community’s needs, say healthcare workers.

Edward Mah, 69, was diagnosed with HIV in 1986 and knows firsthand the myths that exist about the virus in the Chinese American community. The Bay Area resident also lost his brother, Philip to the disease in 1994.

“I have the battle scars of this disease,” Mah says. “I have a broken face because of the side effects of the medications and whatnot.”

Growing up with HIV for over two decades Mah says he has noticed that the Chinese American community has difficulty speaking about subjects like sexuality and HIV/AIDS.

“I think the Asian community has a very easy way of dealing with denial,” Mah said. “I have spoken to Chinese people who say, ‘Well, in China we don’t have that.’ I said, ‘What do you mean? They say, Well in China we don’t have gay people.’”

To better understand the needs of specific Asian Pacific American subgroups, Calif. Gov. Jerry Brown in 2011 signed into law AB 1088. The bill was introduced by Assemblyman Mike Eng and requires state agencies to separately budget and track demographic data.

For minority Asian Pacific American subgroups like the Burmese, health care workers say they’re cautiously optimistic that this bill will give them a clearer picture of the existing healthcare issues and disparities.

Heather, who speaks Thai and Burmese, says she sometimes has difficulty navigating the healthcare system without a translator. She now dreams of going back to school and learning English. One day she’d like to return to her homeland.

“I have a chance I would like to go back to Burma. But currently I cannot. I’m not allowed to get into Burma,” she said. ■
SAVING THE ‘JEWEL OF THE DESERT’

Groundbreaking for a physical space for the Topaz Museum is slated for the summer, but large fundraising strides need to be made before then.

By Christine McFadden  
Correspondent

At the Topaz War Relocation Center in Millard County, Utah, a banner once greeted incoming internees: “Welcome to Topaz: Jewel of the Desert.”

During World War II, the prison camp held over 11,000 Japanese Americans during its operation from Sept. 11, 1942, to Oct. 31, 1945.

Over the years, wear and tear from the harsh climate and the destructive actions of some of the landowners after WWII have made this “Jewel of the Desert” — now a National Historical Landmark — severely in need of protection.

The Topaz Museum, a volunteer not-for-profit organization, is working with The Conservation Fund to acquire ownership of all of Topaz’s total 640 acres. So far, they have successfully purchased 96 percent of the land.

There are currently two remaining unprotected tracts of land: Block 35, a “key” 6.5-acre property, and nearby Block 42. Block 35 requires an additional $20,000 by June 8 (to be matched 2-to-1 by federal funding).

Currently belonging to a private landowner who built a house on the property, Topaz Museum president and founder Jane Beckwith says that it is crucial that this land be purchased to protect it from any further damage. The owner, in addition to previous owners of other blocks, has damaged the terrain through construction.

“By doing that, they started to destroy the original campsite,” said Okabe. “Right away, I could see that there needed to be a museum.”

Among the other artifacts Beckwith has collected are four chains made of skipping ropes, a dresser, a baby crib, newspapers and yearbooks from camp, and various paintings and homemade shell jewelry.

“The basement is full of Topaz artifacts,” said Okabe. “Her basement is full of Topaz artifacts.”

The land preservation efforts will additionally preserve what has been left behind outside the museum as well.

“Topaz is one of the camps that has the greatest integrity in terms of land,” said Sakana, a Yosei whose family was incarcerated at Minidoka. He says that the conservation work has “helped heal a lot of the wounds of the war.”

Tule Lake and portions of Heart Mountain and Minidoka are still under private ownership. Topaz, on the other hand, is “almost completely reassembled,” said Sakana.

“We’ve almost put Humpty Dumpty back together,” he said. “But we need help.”

Save History
To donate to the Topaz Museum visit www.topazmuseum.org or send donations (indicating “Topaz Block 35”) to: Topaz Museum  
P.O. Box #241  
Delta, Utah 84524  
The Conservation Fund  
1655 N. Fort Myer Drive, Suite 1300  
Arlington, VA 22209-3199
JACL NATIONAL BOARD APPROVES PROPOSED 2013-2014 BUDGET WITH FUTURE STAFF ELIMINATIONS

In addition to approving the 2013-2014 proposed budget, the JACL national board passed a motion to support the effort to get a commemorative stamp for the Congressional Gold Medal recipients.

By Nalea J. Ko, Reporter

SAN FRANCISCO—The JACL national board voted to approve the proposed budget at its recent meeting, which includes eliminating future national staff positions in a budget cutting measure.

At the April 21 meeting in San Francisco, the JACL national board approved the proposed 2013-2014 budget, which eliminated funding for two JACL national positions in the future. Those positions include the assistant editor position from the Pacific Citizen in 2014 and the JACL Pacific Southwest District regional director position in 2013.

Chip Larouche, Pacific Northwest District governor, made a motion to approve the budget. Jason Chang, vice president of planning and development, seconded the motion.

The motion passed with friendly amendments to not increase dues to JACL's Thousand Oub and Century Club membership categories, a recommendation originally made by the budget committee.

Some JACL board members voiced their concerns about eliminating national staff positions.

“The P.C. has always worked to accommodate national JACL’s shrinking budgets,” said Jeanette Misaka, Intermountain District governor. Last year P.C. accepted a $75,000 cut in membership dues it receives. “The P.C. for people in the IDC is a lifeline to our communities because we are so spread apart. We don’t live in Los Angeles or San Francisco areas where there are a lot of Japanese Americans.”

Misaka added that if there has to be a cut in the P.C., shouldn’t the P.C. have the option to decide where they can do the cuts?”

The motion to approve the proposed 2013-2014 budget passed with an amendment to allow the P.C.’s executive editor Caroline Aoyagi-Stom to have the “flexibility to manage [the] budget.” The proposed elimination of the assistant editor position would cut $66,976 from the budget, which includes the salary, taxes and full benefits.

“It was a hard day to go through the budget and figure out how we’re going to balance this thing. In the end we’re membership-based. We’re not revenue-based or anything like that,” said Chang. “So we’re looking at the realities of today. The budget is proposed as what we can do, what we have today.”


Board members expressed the importance of balancing the budget without changes to membership dues.

“The other thing that I need to point out or outline is we have budgeted a $90,000 surplus that is virtually the cost of the regional director positions,” said Larry Oda, national JACL treasurer/secretary.

“I really don’t like to say we’re going to raise 1,400 new members to balance our budget because I don’t know which one of you has that plan. How are we going to achieve that? That’s just talk and talk is cheap. And we’ve tried that before and it didn’t work.”

Ken Inouye, the PSW District governor, presented a report to the board about the importance of keeping the PSW regional director position in the budget and the need of a “local presence in the Los Angeles region in order to secure funding.”

The report indicated that the PSW regional director position pays for itself since the previous regional director, Craig Ishii, secured funding from grants that exceeded the cost of the position.

“We strongly believe that having a strong national presence in Los Angeles is an integral part to making things happen for JACL on the national level,” said Inouye.

A motion made by Inouye and seconded by Larouche to add the JACL PSW District regional director position to the national budget was voted down 4 to 8 by the board, with three board members abstaining.

Other significant motions that passed at the April 21 JACL national board meeting include:

• A motion made by Larouche to suspend the hiring freeze for the JACL membership coordinator position. The motion also stipulated hiring a replacement for the position.

PSW District Governor Ken Inouye makes his case for the district's regional director position which was eliminated in the 2013 budget. After a lengthy discussion the position was not reinstated by the national board in a 4 to 8 vote.

• The JACL national board unanimously approved the release of the Power of Words Handbook draft to the chapters and districts. The handbook outlines the suggested terminology to use to describe the unjust incarceration of persons of Japanese descent during World War II.

• A motion was made by Larouche and seconded by Matthew Farells, the chair of the national youth council, to authorize the national director to hire replacements for the Mike M. Masocka, Norman Y. Minata, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye fellows and the six congressional interns.

• Ron Katayama, v.p. of public affairs, made a motion to support the campaign to get a Congressional Gold Medal stamp in honor of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Battalion and the Military Intelligence Service. David Unruhe, NCWNP District governor, seconded the motion.

• A motion passed to change the JACL national director title to executive director.
CONVENTION 2012 ATMOSPHERICS — ‘ASIAN AMERICAN PUGET SOUND’

By Hugh Burleson

Picking up from my previous article on the atmospherics and environment for the upcoming Convention 2012, let's look into the Asian American presence in the greater Seattle area.

We've already noted the percentage of Nikkei and other Asian residents in the area. One draw for Asians here, of course, is the large two-way trade through the Puget Sound region. You may know that such big corporations as Microsoft and Boeing are based here and contribute much to our global trade, especially with Asia. Each is supplemented by an array of lesser-known companies. Also, from east of the Cascades flow such products as apples, cherries, wines, and hay. Yes, hay, in the form of compact pellets, because Japan and other Northeast Asian nations have little room for growing things like hay.

A result of this trade is, for example, a parade of organizations and institutions: the Consulates General of Japan and Korea, the Taiwan Trade and Cultural Office, the Hyogo Business and Cultural Center, and the Japanese Business Association. Of course, a wide range of official and private offices represent mainland China, too. Noteworthy, too, is that the Japanese Consulate General has in recent years worked harder to develop its relations with local Nikkei and Nikkei organizations.

More relevant to our convention's site in Bellevue, many staff members of such offices choose to live in Bellevue, rather than Seattle, because they want the best education for their children and know the reputation of Bellevue's school system. This further boosts the ethnic East Asian population of Bellevue.

You can see this first hand simply by noting the many Asian faces at Bellevue Square, the two-story mall just a couple of blocks from the Bellevue Hyatt. In fact, an area in south Bellevue came to be called "China Hill" 20-odd years ago because so many Chinese from Hong Kong and Taiwan had moved there.

At the convention itself, you should get some inkling of the greater Seattle area Nikkei community's infrastructure of support. You've seen the Uwajimaya ads in the Pacific Citizen, pointing its stores in Seattle's International District, in downtown Bellevue (less than a mile from the Hyatt), in suburban Renton and in Beaverton, Oregon. These are not mom-and-pop operations, but supermarkets, and cultural institutions in and of themselves.

Also, since WWII, Seattle's Nikkei community has created a range of institutions supporting the elderly and Japanese American culture in general: the full-care Keim for the elderly, Nikkei Manor for the young, and Nikkei Horizons under the management of Nikkei Concerns. The community is expanding the century-old Japanese Language School into a full-blown Cultural and Community Center. Let's not overlook the huge benefit accruing to Nikkei nationwide from the endeavors of Tom Ikeda's non-profit Denso, which assiduously records for posterity the experiences of older Nikkei.

Nikkei from the U.S. and abroad also benefit from having several locally published weekly papers. Specifically, for JAs is the bilingual North American Post/Hokubei Hochi, published since the early 20th century. Generally API-oriented are the International Examiner and the Northwest Asian Weekly. We should also mention Nikkei Concerns' quarterly Tayori newsletter that lists its activities, events and contributions. Hopefully, you'll see such publications while you're in Bellevue and pokin around this area.

This look at our local media would be incomplete without mentioning the notable place of ethnic Asian women on camera here as TV news anchors and sportscasters. The doyennes of these capable ladies is Lori Matsukawa, who has starred on NBC's Channel 5 for several decades now and has long graced local JACL events.

We also enjoy two community events highlighting each year: The Seattle Cherry Blossom Festival has been held for decades, at the Seattle Center, where the Seattle Fair opened just 50 years ago this April. It features both Japanese and JA culture and draws crowds from the whole region.

Complementing that spring festival is Bellevue's Aki Matsuri, the fall festival put on at Bellevue College by another all-volunteer team from the non-profit Eastside Nihon Matsuri and Drawing down some 20,000 to this early September weekend event, Aki Matsuri benefits from having free on-campus parking. The "eye candy" there: the many children and other young people in their brightly colored kimonos.

Hugh Burleson is a member of the Lake Washington JACL.

REGISTRATION FORM

Online: To register online visit http://www.jacl.org/2012

By Mail: A separate form must be completed for each individual registration. Additional registration forms are available online, or by email at info@jaclseattle.org, or by calling (206) 623-5088. Convention Package $250 ($300 after June 1°) Youth/Student Package ($250 after June 1°) Both packages include the Welcome Mixer, Awards Luncheon, Youth Luncheon, Workshops, Continental Breakfast, Sayonara Banquet & Dance. These events can also be purchased individually (see below).

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CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellations must be received by June 1, 2012 for a 100% refund. Cancellations received between June 2, 2012 and July 2, 2012 will receive a 50% refund. No refunds will be issued for cancellations after July 2, 2012.

Hugh Burleson is a member of the Lake Washington JACL.
GORDON HIRABAYASHI TO RECEIVE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

The civil rights icon joins singer Bob Dylan, civil rights pioneer Dolores Huerta, and former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in the honor.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

What do musician Bob Dylan, former astronaut John Glenn, and noted author Toni Morrison have in common with Gordon Hirabayashi? They are among 13 individuals who will soon be honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor.

Although civil rights icon Hirabayashi’s courageous story of defying the WWII internment order is legendary in the Japanese American community, his story will now have a much wider audience as his legacy is honored this Spring at a White House ceremony.

“This extraordinary honoree come from different backgrounds and different walks of life, but each of them has made a lasting contribution to the life of our Nation,” said President Barack Obama said. “They’ve challenged us, they’ve inspired us, and they’ve made the world a better place. I look forward to recognizing them with this award.”

The Presidential Medal of Freedom is given to “individuals who have made especially meritorious contributions to the security or national interests of the United States, to world peace, or to cultural or other significant public or private endeavors,” according to a White House statement.

Hirabayashi was a 24-year-old student attending the University of Washington in 1942 when President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066, sending tens of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry to denature relocation camps. Defying those orders, Hirabayashi turned himself into the FBI asserting that the order was discriminatory.

Hirabayashi was convicted by a U.S. Federal Court for defying the exclusion order and violating curfew. His fight would take him all the way to the Supreme Court where in 1943 his conviction was upheld and he was imprisoned.

After the war Hirabayashi earned his doctorate in sociology and became a noted professor. In 1987, his WWII conviction was finally overturned by a U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. He passed away earlier this year.

Hirabayashi “had the courage and fortitude to stand up for civil rights during a difficult period when racism against Japanese Americans was rampant,” said Floyd Mori, JACL national director. “We commend Gordon for his valiant effort and thank President Obama for this honor to Gordon which is an opportunity to tell the story of innocent Americans of Japanese descent during World War II when the Constitution did not protect them and preserve their rights.”

Hirabayashi will be honored at a White House ceremony in late Spring posthumously. The other honorees include former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, civil rights pioneer Dolores Huerta, and former Israeli president Shimon Peres.

CHICAGO HONORS JAPANESE AMERICAN WWII VETERANS

At its April 22 luncheon, the Arizona JACL celebrated both young scholars and World War II Nisei heroes.

The awards and graduates luncheon, held at the Glendale Civic Center, marked the awarding of the Sara Hutchings Clark Scholarship Awards. This year, the chapter also honored local Nisei WWII veterans who served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, 100th Infantry Battalion and Military Intelligence Service.

In his keynote speech, Rep. Trent Franks congratulated the youth and praised the WWII Nisei veterans for their service to the country.

The Arizona Congressman presented a replica Congressional Gold Medal to the following Nisei WWII veterans with Arizona ties: Robert Kiyoto Amano, Yoshitaka Eto, Tom Haga, Tatsuo Iguchi, Katsumi Ikeda, Masaji Inoshita, Satole lwakoshi, Thomas Kadomoto, William Kajiwaka, Ben Komatsu, Yoshiyuki Motoyoshi, Clarence Ohta, Harry Oyama, Jack Sada, George Takagi, Henry Takagi, Oto Tamashiki, Makoto Tanida, Mitio Tani, Tamotsu Tanita, Wataru Tanita, Koichi Tomita, Masatsuki Yamamoto and Ted Yoshimura.

Many of these Japanese American WWII veterans were unable to attend the Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony in Washington, D.C., so community groups like the Arizona JACL are honoring their heroes locally.

The Congressional Gold Medal is Congress’ highest civilian award. Among the 145 individuals and units awarded the medal are the Tuskegee Aires, the Navajo Code Talkers, Thomas Edison and the Wright Brothers.

This year’s two recipients of the Sara Hutchings Clark Scholarship Awards are Katy Ettling and Charlotte Kishi.

Elementary graduates introduced at the event included Brookie Niimi and Emi Tanita. The high school graduates were Katy Ettling (Hamilton High School), Daniel Hashimoto (Campo Verde High School), Toy Iwashita (Mountain View High School), J.T. Kawaguchi (Highland High School). Charlotte Kishi (Shadow Mountain High School), Shalsey Sato (Westwood High School), and Alexis Tanita (Mountain Ridge High School).

The college graduates were Alexandria Etting (BA, University of Arizona), Alyssa Hinckman (BS, University of Arizona), Ryan Iwasaki (BS, Arizona State University) and Christina Yoshi Kelly (MS, Arizona State University).
OBAMA AND SAME SEX MARRIAGE

By John Tateishi

Today, May 9th, President Barack Obama announced to the nation that he now supports same sex marriage. It’s a historic announcement and one that will bring all kinds of baggage to his re-election campaign.

Were it not for Vice President Joe Biden stating four days ago on national television that he was “perfectly comfortable” with the idea of same-sex marriages, the president would not have made his statement now. It forced the issue into the forefront of the presidential campaign, much, I suspect, to the consternation of some of Obama’s campaign advisers.

No doubt President Obama could still have side-stepped this issue until after the elections, but he chose instead to state his personal views on this controversial issue, to the surprise of just about everyone — and to the shock of many.

His view, President Obama said in an interview today, has evolved over the past four years. As you no doubt recall, Obama did not favor same-sex marriage, even as few as six months ago. His leanings have always been at best moderate on social issues, and while he may have sympathized with those who sought same-sex marriage, he has never been a supporter of this issue.

Until today. I was among those who were shocked to hear him declare his position, shocked not because he favors the issue (I figured he would come around eventually, maybe long after his presidency is over) but because it is such a daring and risky declaration to make in a presidential election year.

You can bet the right-wingers and Republicans are frothing at the mouth with this and can’t wait to launch a full-scale attack on the president. This is the golden opportunity they have been waiting for, and I can only imagine how this will become the focus of the Republican attack, especially on key swing districts and Latino communities and among religion-based constituencies.

Republicans have little credibility in criticizing the president on the economy because their insistence on austerity and a budget that did little to create growth incentives left too little room for Obama to establish a momentum towards a quicker recovery. In the last three recessions this country experienced (all under Republican presidents, by the way), the key to recovery was always expanding public sector jobs, which spurred on the private sector. While Republicans argue that Obama’s economic policies are responsible for the slow recovery of the economy, they remain vulnerable for their role in this.

But now they have a ripe issue that cuts across all sectors of the voting public and gives Republicans an entire for reaching working class and middle class voters, whom they have screwed for longer than I care to remember.

What will be interesting now is to see how President Obama responds to the barrage he’ll no doubt face. He’s good under fire and a great speaker, and my guess is that his response will be measured and calm and very rational. His campaign people might be going crazy, but you’ll not suspect it from the way he carries himself through this part of the election campaigning. I think we’ll see just how much Republicans hate this president.

So what does this have to do with the JACL? Other than same-sex marriage is a civil rights issue? Other than denying two people — yes, of the same sex — the right that extends to every other person in this society, even hard-core criminals, even the most despicable among us, even those who seem to be babbling idiots? Why should two people who love each other and happen to be of the same sex be denied a right that we give to every other adult in this society? And what business is it of the rest of us anyway?

I think people are offended by the thought of two people of the same gender having sex. To those people, I can only say, stop using your imagination so much.

I don’t know if you’re aware of it, but the JACL is the only national civil rights organization that has an affirmative position on the same-sex issue, according to the ACLU, with whom I joined on numerous same-sex legal cases during my seven-year tenure as national director.

For seven years the JACL was on public record and was very public about supporting same-sex partnerships. I’m glad to see in the most recent D.C. Alert that the JACL leadership continues to support that position.

John Tateishi is a former JACL national director.

FOR THE RECORD

THE RIGHT PLACE

RELEVANCE IN THE ERA OF DIVERSITY

By James Kumpel

Japanese Americans have a reason to feel proud during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage (AAPIH) Month. Our history includes the first AAs elected to the Senate and to a governorship. The heroic exploits of the 442nd Regiment and the MIS during WWII helped to resoundingly counter the WWII-era suspicions about loyalty or Americanism. The 1987 explosion of the Challenger included the most diverse assemblage of Americans to ever take flight for NASA, including our own Ellison Onizuka.

With a decade-long effort to win passage of redress, the JACL demonstrated a gritty determination and highly effective grass roots organization to secure justice for the direct victims of what the ACLU deemed the “worst wholesale violation of civil rights of Americans in history”. The organization made forceful arguments that influenced Democratic and Republican congressmen alike, ultimately securing the support of President Reagan to sign the legislation into law that historic August of 1988. We can rest assured that the JACL made a difference to those who had been wronged and helped firmly establish that Americans need to be treated as individuals and not be relegated to profiling by the mere accident of their race or ethnic background.

Investors often target diversification of their holdings in order to ensure low correlation as a means of preventing a single event or factor from decimating all assets at once. Diversity can be a strategy to reduce group-think and advance views that might not otherwise even be considered.

Diversity should reflect a breadth of ideas, experiences, perspectives, cultural backgrounds, religious viewpoints and geographic origins. In other words, race should not be a proxy for diversity or equal opportunity. It really depends on the individuals whose lifetimes of experiences add to the collective wisdom and body of knowledge of a group.

I would contend that a fundamentalist Christian housewife from Alaska, a small farmer from the Midwest, a coal worker from West Virginia, a Polish immigrant from Milwaukee, and an entry level administrative worker from Texas would reflect a far more diverse set cross-section of experiences than would be found at most elite universities or companies, even if the former group were all white.

From my vantage point, diversity is not attained through addressing the evolving concerns of new Asian immigrants, aging AA residents who are underserved by government, and the tacit profiling of AA students that limit their prospects and opportunities.

In this way, the JACL can achieve another great objective by taking on a broader mission in representing the very diverse national backgrounds and divergent concerns that comprise the AA community.

I am encouraged by Floyd Mori’s efforts to partner with the Vietnamese community in New Orleans that was hurt by the BP disaster in 2010. But, I think that the JACL could reinvigorate the organization and take on greater relevance by addressing the evolving concerns of new Asian immigrants, aging AA residents who are underserved by government, and the tacit profiling of AA students that limit their prospects and opportunities.

I believe that Americans of all stripes should be concerned when outstanding students with impeccable academic backgrounds, impressive extra-curricular activities, and demonstrable potential are held to more restrictive admissions standards just because they are AA or Jewish, for that matter.

I believe that Americans of all stripes should be concerned when outstanding students with impeccable academic backgrounds, impressive extra-curricular activities, and demonstrable potential are held to more restrictive admissions standards just because they are AA... or Jewish, for that matter.

When AA students are “profiled” as mere members of a racial group, rather than as individuals blessed with unique skills, then universities are engaging in the very institutional racism that Martin Luther King, Jr. railed against in the 1960s. The JACL and other civil rights organizations have accepted this prima facie discrimination as tolerable in the name of promoting diversity, as viewed through an affirmative action prism.

The JACL can achieve another great objective by taking on a broader mission in representing the very diverse national backgrounds and divergent concerns that comprise the AA community.

James Kumpel is a JACL New York chapter board member and former JACL scholarship winner.
LOL-ING WITH BEN HUH, THE MEME MOGUL

Ben Huh, a graduate of Northwestern University’s prestigious journalism school, never thought he’d be running an Internet humor empire based on the ubiquitous “lolcat” — but now, with a Bravo reality show in the works, he’s knee-deep in memes and loving it.

By Christine Fukushima, Correspondent

“Do u mind? internetz r seriuz biznez,” says the web-surfing cat, with that pouted expression unique to cranky kitties.

Such is a typical greeting from a “lolcat,” the now-ubiquitous Internet meme that features adorable kittens doing something silly with a caption that reads like the text message of a middle-schooler.

Ironically, the man who helped make these cats Internet-famous is allergic to them in real life.

Huh’s more of a dog person — in fact, he got his start in the Internet humor industry after making a blog about his pet dog with his wife, Emily.

After posting some details about a pet food recall on their blog in 2007, it was linked to “I Can Has Cheezburger?”

At the time, “I Can Has Cheezburger?” was already getting 500,000 views daily by lolcat-purveyors. The traffic the link brought crashed the Huh’s blog, but it turned out to be a “feline-icitous” coincidence.

“We reached out to the creators, Eric Nakagawa and Kari Unebesami,” said Emily Huh, now editor-in-chief of Cheezburger. “We weren’t angry, just really fascinated!”

After striking up a friendship with the site’s founders, who lived in Hawaii, Ben and a group of investors purchased “I Can Has Cheezburger” for about $2 million.

Huh, whose own start-up had “folded and died” during the dotcome boom of the early 2000s, decided to take a risk with the site because “the community was really compelling and it was a major form of entertainment,” he says.

“Once we purchased the site, the traffic continued to increase, which was when we realized that it was more about humor rather than just cats,” added Huh.

“It’s a risk that’s paid off. Last year, Cheezburger received $30 million in funding from venture capitalists, and in the works is a Bravo reality show (tentatively titled “Huh?”) following Ben and his team.”

“When we saw inside the company Ben has built, and got a sense of the characters he has surrounded himself with, we immediately fell in love with him and his world,” said Eli Lehrer, vice president of development and original programming for Bravo.

“It’s a truly unique organization filled with creative, eccentric, totally compelling personalities, and Ben is the ringleader,” he added.

Over the years, Cheezburger has expanded, adding more blogs to its blogroll and contributing to the proliferation of Internet memes that “I Can Has Cheezburger” helped start.

According to Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary, a meme (rhymes with “beam”) is “an idea, behavior, style, or usage that spreads from person to person within a culture.”

“Everyone has a favorite meme … They’re all over our social networks,” said Earnest Salgado, a 21-year-old from Valencia, California, on the omnipresence of memes on popular websites like Reddit and Tumblr.

“It’s like a subculture of social media. Since it’s a subculture, I guess the reason we like [memes] so much is because we like social media so much,” he added.

Today, the “Cheezburger family” contains over 60 meme and humor-based sites, with topics ranging from “Historic LOLs” (“captioned portraits of yore”) to “Monday thru Friday” (“photos related to ‘falling in the workplace’”).

In addition, Cheezburger’s “Know Your Meme” has a database of over one thousand memes, detailing the origins and notable examples of each.

And for those who want to create their own memes, a variety of “meme builders” are available, as well as a platform for people to create and curate their own meme sites. More than 22,000 “Cheezburger sites” have been created by the company’s fan base of over 16.5 million people.

A graduate of the prestigious Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University, Huh had no idea that he’d one day be running such an instrumental and comprehensive institution of Internet humor.

“Running a cat picture site was not my first choice, but I really loved the way it made people happy,” said Huh.

Growing up in South Korea and then Hong Kong, Huh was “a pretty serious, studious kid,” he says. He immigrated to Sacramento at the age of 11 because his parents wanted him to have better educational opportunities.

After graduating from journalism school in 1999, Huh gravitated towards what he felt was the next wave in communication — the Internet. But he experienced the brunt of the dotcom bubble burst after his start-up failed in eighteen months.

He credits his parents’ unwavering support for the entrepreneurial spirit that motivated him to take a risk with purchasing “I Can Has Cheezburger.”

“That was pretty unusual about my parents. The first generation of family tends to push toward a professional career, but they didn’t,” he said.

Huh believes Cheezburger has become so popular because “people have the desire to be happy. They like to laugh and they want to share the things that they find funny with other people.”

“Also, people like to think they are funny so when others laugh, it gives them credibility,” he added.

And after years of doing good on Cheezburger’s mission of “making the world happy for five minutes a day,” Huh’s favorite site is still “I Can Has Cheezburger?”

“It’s the one I save until the end of the day and it always brings a smile to my face,” said Huh.
GET TO KNOW THE CANDIDATES FOR NATIONAL JACL OFFICES

In accordance with the JACL Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1 (b), the national nominating committee for national officers, also known as the nominations committee, has reviewed and approved the candidate applications for the positions listed below for national offices.

**National president:** Jeff Yoshioka, David Lin

**National vice president for public affairs:** Craig Tomiyoshi

**National vice president for planning and development:** Jason Chang

**National vice president for One Thousand Club, membership and services:** John Moy

**National secretary treasurer:** Matthew Farrell

**National youth/student council chair:** Jeffrey Moy

The offices for national vice president for general operations and national youth/student council representatives do not receive any applications in accordance with the JACL Bylaws, Article VII, Section 1 (c). A member in good standing may run for any national office as a late filer. To have your application considered and processed, all late filers must submit a completed application form with the signatures of the majority of chapter presidents or chapter president-elects and the national nominating committee on July 5 at 13:00 p.m. A copy of the candidate’s application form, the nominations and elections guidelines, and the addendum to the guidelines can be found at the national convention home page: [www.jacl.org](http://www.jacl.org).

The nominations committee has released the candidates’ statements and selected candidates’ application responses for publication. The full text of all candidate statements and responses can also be found at the national convention website.

**OFFICIAL CANDIDATES’ STATEMENTS**

**Jeffrey Yoshioka (national president candidate):** After obtaining my BS in accounting from San Jose State University, I became a certified public accountant. I have owned my own firm in San Jose for 15 years. I have been a member of JACL for over 30 years. I am currently the president of the Silicon Valley chapter and for the past 10 years, I have been an effective leader as the chapter treasurer or chapter president of San Jose JACL or Silicon Valley JACL.

I am running for JACL national president because I believe the JACL is at a crossroads. We need to be an organization that is led from the bottom up, with the members telling the leaders what they want and need in the organization. As national president, I will make sure that the leadership is listening to those voices.

I want to make the Program for Action a real roadmap for the organization. Starting with discussion at the chapter level, the members will be responsible for identifying their local priorities. We will then develop a strategic plan for our past and planning for our future while setting the Program for Action to require comprehensive and careful planning at the annual convention. Implementing the Program for Action will be the goal of the national board to carry forth in the next biennium.

In the Silicon Valley chapter, we focus on intergenerational events, leadership development and exploring the Japanese American culture in fun and educational ways. We develop and foster diverse memberships and networks as a good foundation for sustainability. We can do the same and even better for national and future generations. It will not be easy because of budget constraints, but together we can make the JACL a stronger organization. We need effective leadership. Please vote for Jeff Yoshioka for JACL national president.

**David Lin (national president candidate):** I currently hold the position of executive director, external affairs at AT&T. My primary responsibility is to build and nurture relationships with Asian American community-based organizations.

I received an MS degree in Computer Science, a MEA and a BA degree, all from Rutgers University. I am also a graduate of the Program for Management, Development, and Executive Education at Stanford University.

My motivation to run for national president is exactly the same as why I volunteered to serve as the v.p. of membership in February 2012. JACL will be a stronger, a more vibrant and influential Asian American organization for all of us and for all Americans.

JACL is nationally recognized as a civil rights organization and I want to continue the tradition and take JACL to a whole new level by focusing on the following key areas: 1. Financial stability, 2. Membership, 3. Civil rights advocacy, 4. Culture & heritage preservation.

Of these four areas, I think the most challenging issue is that JACL must address quickly is the financial challenges we face. The fact that our members are aging and the membership dues, as the largest revenue source, continue to decline. As such, we need to continue to diversify our revenue sources focusing on grants and sponsorships.

Additionally, we need to continue to place an intense focus on our membership so we can maintain this revenue stream. In 2011, we saw a 1 percent decline in revenue from membership and a 9 percent decrease in membership. We must take steps to reverse this trend.

I am running for my second term as v.p. of planning and development. This past biennium, it has been an honor to serve on the national board and learn the intricacies of our great organization.

The past two years have focused on a common theme of developing membership leading to deficit funding in our general account. We continue to make some hard decisions this past biennium and without changes, more hard times lie ahead.

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**Craig Tomiyoshi (v.p. for public affairs candidate):** My name is Craig Tomiyoshi and I am a candidate for the national office for public affairs. I am currently an accountant at Deloitte, a national CPA firm in the San Francisco Bay Area. I have been with Deloitte for 12 years and currently hold the position of Financial Analyst in the San Francisco audit department.

I am running for the national office of the JACL because I believe the JACL has a very important role to play in our community in the years to come. JACL also has an important role in representing the public interest through its advocacy efforts.

I am a member of the San Francisco JACL chapter. In the Silicon Valley chapter, we focus on intergenerational events, leadership development and exploring the Japanese American culture in fun and educational ways. We develop and foster diverse memberships and networks as a good foundation for sustainability.

We can do the same and even better for national and future generations. It will not be easy because of budget constraints, but together we can make the JACL a stronger organization. We need effective leadership. Please vote for Craig Tomiyoshi for JACL national vice president for public affairs.

**Jason Chang (v.p. for planning & development candidate):** My name is Jason Chang and I am running for my second term as v.p. of planning and development. This past biennium, it has been an honor to serve on the national board and learn the intricacies of our great organization.

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**John Moy (v.p. for membership candidate):** As chair of the nominating committee, I have come to understand some of the needs of the members of the JACL. As in any organization the more money it has, the greater its impact can be. As the national office, JACL’s membership is its greatest strength. We must continue to grow our membership and maintain our membership base.

I am running for my third term as v.p. of membership because I believe there is a need for within the JACL. The JACL needs an organized approach that will grow our membership and maintain our membership base.

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**Jeffrey Moy (national vice president for One Thousand Club, membership and services candidate):** My name is Jeffrey Moy and I am running for national youth/student council chair.

I received an MS in Management Development Executive Education from Stanford University.

I am running for my second term as national vice president for One Thousand Club, membership and services because I believe the JACL has a very important role to play in our community in the years to come. JACL also has an important role in representing the public interest through its advocacy efforts.

I am a member of the San Francisco JACL chapter. In the Silicon Valley chapter, we focus on intergenerational events, leadership development and exploring the Japanese American culture in fun and educational ways. We develop and foster diverse memberships and networks as a good foundation for sustainability. We can do the same and even better for national and future generations. It will not be easy because of budget constraints, but together we can make the JACL a stronger organization. We need effective leadership. Please vote for Jeffrey Moy for JACL national vice president for One Thousand Club, membership and services.

**Matthew Farrells (secretary treasurer candidate):** It is important to me that the JACL must remain relevant for decades to come. How we will achieve this is the major question. I believe one key way of ensuring the JACL will remain relevant is by overcoming our current fiscal challenges and identifying long-term solutions to help JACL get through these difficult times.

As a graduate of the University of Minnesota and currently an analyst at American Express, Inc., a Fortune 500 wealth and asset management firm, I believe JACL has developed a skillset that is transferable to the national secretary/treasurer position. I look forward to serving every member of the JACL national board.

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**CANDIDATES’ Q&As**

Please state your definition of leadership and your perception of the role of the JACL national board.

**Jeffrey Yoshioka (national president candidate):** I believe in leadership by example. I have been fortunate to have had many mentors in my life who have helped me...
grow throughout the years. I listen to and solicit input from others before coming to an opinion. Leadership is also working with people and maximizing their strengths. As a leader, you need to address the individual concerns and strengths and put everyone in a position to succeed.

The national board acts on behalf of the membership while the national board is not on the lookout for strong leaders and strong leadership should come from the membership, and the role of elected officers is to make sure that the priorities of the membership take precedent. The national president needs to be approachable so that people feel comfortable, but the national president also has an obligation to go out and solicit information, not just wait for it to come in.

David Lin (national president candidate): Leadership is having the vision to seize an opportunity in the disguise of a problem.

"Please state your definition of leadership and your perception of the role of the JACL national board.

The ability to work with others as a team to develop solutions to the problem; and the skills to implement the plan to successfully solve the problem.

The role of the JACL national board should be one that: Sets strategic direction of the JACL; Ensures the organization is well run through the staff; Provides guidance and support to the director and staff; Asks the right questions about the organization's current situation; Seeks input from all members; And, Act as a steward of JACL's image and assets.

Craig Tomiyoshi (v.p. for public affairs candidate): One of the most important qualities of a leader is the ability and willingness to listen. Good leaders are willing to listen to a variety of viewpoints — even from people or organizations that traditionally have different perspectives than their own — to ensure they have the right information to make the best decision. Listeners don't necessarily mean making decisions that try to appease the largest number of people, good leaders will make a decision that they think is right for their organization. This can create openness, dialogue and respect; people tend to respect decisions — even if it is not in sync with their own thoughts — if it's clear their needs to change within the infrastructure of the JACL or it will cease to exist. This is the time for strong leadership and strategic thinking to push change and make decisions that ensure the JACL mission is carried forward.

John Moy (v.p. for membership candidate): I believe the board has a responsibility to represent all Asian Americans with regard to their rights and privileges within the United States Constitution. It must stand up for strong leadership and strong leadership should come from the membership, and the role of elected officers is to make sure that the priorities of the membership take precedence. The national president needs to be approachable so that people feel comfortable, but the national president also has an obligation to go out and solicit information, not just wait for it to come in.

Matthew Farrells (secretary/treasurer candidate): My definition of leadership is leading by example, developing leaders of the people you are leading to perpetuate the growth of the whole. Good leaders inspire and empower those around them to become their best. My perception of the JACL's national board role is one that embodies leadership, social justice, and community preservation. Second, I think the most important issue that needs to be addressed is relevancy. The JACL needs to focus on the younger generations and how we can engage them in its mission so we have that steady stream of revenue. The fact is that our members are aging and the membership dues, as the largest revenue source for the JACL, continue to decline. At the same time, we have a number of great programs that need to be funded to sustain the ongoing operation of the JACL. As such, we need to continue to diversify our revenue streams to ensure the long-term survival of the JACL.
that are core to the mission of the JACL in order to solidify the JACL's place as the premier Asian American human and civil rights organization.

Jeffrey Moy: Thanks to the strategic plan drawn up at last year's NYSC retreat, we have a number of specific goals which include growing the number of youth members in JACL, providing additional leadership opportunities at the local and district level, and educating youth around the nation on what we do. My hope would be that these efforts will allow for an influx of youth into JACL, which will provide for a new generation of leaders that can take care of the organization for years to come.

How would you explain the purpose and role of the office you seek to someone outside of JACL?

Yoshioka: The role of the JACL national president is to be the leader of the national board and to direct the national director and executive director of the Pacific Citizen.

The president needs to be knowledgeable in all areas including membership, finance, operations and civil rights.

The national president needs to make sure that we are fulfilling the mission of the JACL while the national council is not in session. Since JACL is an organization rich in culture and has a long standing history, it needs to ensure that the organization is well run and financially stable, and represent the organization in a professional manner with all stakeholders, e.g. elected officials, foundations, sponsors, non-profit organizations and all ethnic communities.

Tomiyoshi: Until JACL is able to successfully address the issue of declining membership, fundraising will need to be the pri-

ority. JACL, as an organization is one of the most successful organizations in the U.S. I believe that raising funds through a strategic plan is vital to the organization. I would like to see how it will translate in the JACL. My hope is, given time, I can come up with ideas that will boost our finances.

Chang: The role of a.p. of planning and development is intri-

cately involved in securing new sources of revenue. From representing the organization amongst funders and working with staff to develop revenue generating programs, it's a hands on approach.

John Moy: Managing money and raising funds through client acquisition is the strength of my success as a financial advisor.

As a financial advisor, I have the ability to attract funds to the organization by focusing on growth in areas that will help shift the mindset of the organization towards a more fundraising-focussed model. This does not involve "selling out" or compromising values, nor does it mean neglecting the importance of relationships. Rather, it means raising funds from within JACL, and activating resources within the organization at all levels.

Chang: As a.p. of planning and development I expect to seek out relationships and opportunities that are aligned with JACL initiatives. At the same time, I will be very diligent ensuring that the initiatives and projects that have been carried by my predecessors are completed in a seamless manner.

John Moy: I tell people outside of the JACL that this organiza-

tion is the oldest and largest civil rights organization concerned with issues of education and public policy of Asian Americans. Even though JACL means Japanese American Citizens League, it represents all Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

Farrell: The national secretary/treasurer position is one of great importance. As treasurer you oversee the organization’s fi-

nances and are an integral part of national board meetings. Some major responsibilities include, but are not limited to, ensuring proper financial reporting occurs frequently to the national board and national council, working with staff to ensure the finances are in order to conduct day-to-day operations and ensure the proper accounting and meeting notes of the national board meetings.

Jeffrey Moy: My role is to oversee the NYSC, a body that edu-

cates students and young professionals on issues facing the greater APA community, and encourages networking and leadership development to create the next generation of JACL advocates.

How would you assist in or actively participate in raising funds for JACL?

Yoshioka: First, I would assess what funds are needed and look into all available options including corporate donations, fund-

raising events, and grants. More specific to the position of the national director so we can all contribute to the success of the organization, and report on fundraising results on a monthly basis and at each national board meeting to ensure progress.

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sue of declining membership, fundraising will need to be the pri-

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How would you develop and/or improve relations with youth groups, corporate sponsors, organizations, and ethnic communities?

Yoshioka: Each of these groups is different and will require careful consideration as to how we can develop a stronger re-

lationship. JACL has a long history that we can share with other Asian American and Pacific Islander organizations. My hope is, to support various Muslim communities and share our experience as Japanese Americans during World War II.

I feel that we need to develop programs that are attractive to a wide variety of youth. We need to reinstate the youth conference to get them together to share what they are interested in.

We need to encourage more intergenerational discussion and activities.

It will be imperative to use existing relationships and work with people who already have a network of connections. Part of the challenge will be going to the membership and looking for their help with various corporate groups and sponsorships.

Lin: I will be doing the following to develop and/or improve re-

lations with stakeholder groups:

- Develop a list of target organizations that JACL is or should be working with, with input from the national board and staff.
- Prioritize the list of organizations.
- Develop a relationship building plan for each organization.
- For each organization, assign responsibility for building/ managing the relationship to either staff or a national board member.

How would you explain the purpose and role of the office you seek to someone outside of JACL?

Jeffrey Moy: Since I work for OCA, and regularly attend events held by other organizations such as NAPAWF and CAPAL, I am able to look for partnerships as both a person and na-

tionally. In addition, I work with a number of corporate sponsors and continue to discuss different possibilities for further collabora-

tion.
COMMENTARY

THE TRUTH ABOUT WWII WILL SET YOU FREE

By Stanley N. Kanzaki

In the April 20 issue of the Pacific Citizen, Ed Suguro wrote a letter to the editor and Paul H. Kusuda wrote a commentary about euphemisms used by the U.S. government to describe the unjust incarceration of Nisei during WWII. They both favored the use of euphemisms, which is not the truth.

At that time there were 120,313 of us, of which two-thirds were American citizens, who were so incarcerated.

Suguro proposed a poll to be taken by those who were incarcerated on what the WRA camps should be called and given some suggestions. His choice was “internment camp.” Technically only enemy aliens are interned in this type of prison. During WWII the U.S. government interned 14,000 Issei in 17 internment centers. This seems to be the only time the government did not use a euphemism. And to use that term to describe everyone who was incarcerated would make it seem like all 120,313 of us were enemy aliens.

The use of the term “concentration camp,” according to Suguro, is too harsh and “conjures up images of the Nazi death camps.” His use of the word “conjure” does not seem appropriate but he did make the differentiation. One was a Nazi death camp and the other America’s concentration camp. History reveals there were other concentration camps in the Spanish American War, the Boer War in South Africa, the Philippine Insurrection, Cambodia, Boraon and the 10 in the U.S. during WWII, which imprisoned 120,313 Nisei. Those in America had all the physical make-up of a concentration camp.

Kusuda said he polled some Issei specifically the obasan and not the Issei ojisan since he stated they do not “express their feelings and emotions” — and they all had “positive feelings about the camps.” This is hard to believe for it was the Issei who suffered the most in the concentration camps. It’s not known how extensive or the number of the Issei obasan he polled. Was it done in Nihonmichi? But the final question in was: Suguro incarcerated during WWII in a concentration camp or “internment camp” as he likes to call it?

Kusuda said, “Let’s not rewrite history,” but history always has to do so if the truth is to be known. The use of euphemisms as used by the U.S. government during WWII is not the truth. Why did they use euphemisms? It was to justify that which was not justifiable. Kusuda objected to the JACL’s POW Committee’s effort to “rewrite history.” The committee is working to bring truth to history.

Kusuda said his experience while imprisoned at Manzanar was positive. It was for many a physical and a psychological imprisonment. If he had the choice of being there or being free, which would have been his choice?

So then what is a concentration camp? This comes from a 1998 statement made after officials from the Japanese American National Museum and Jewish groups met to resolve their objections to the use of the term “concentration camp” in the title of the exhibit at Ellis Island, New York:

“A concentration camp is a place where people are imprisoned not because of any crimes they have committed, but simply because of whom they are... All had one thing in common: the people in power removed a minority group from the general population and the rest of society let it happen.”

This is what happened to 120,313 of us during WWII. David A. Harris, then executive director of the American Jewish Committee, said in a New York Times editorial, “We have not claimed Jewish exclusivity for the term ‘concentration camp.’"

It’s been 70 years since President Franklin Roosevelt promulgated E.O. 9066 in 1942, which unjustly imprisoned 120,313 persons in America’s concentration camps. And do you know that he, along with President Harry S. Truman and other high U.S. government officials, called them concentration camps? Stop being brainwashed. Free your imprisoned heads from the desert where we were once imprisoned. Face the truth for the truth shall set you free.

Stanley Kanzaki is a member of the New York JACL.

COMMENTARY

COMMITTEE INTRODUCES NEW POWER OF WORDS HANDBOOK ON LANGUAGE, JA WWII EXPERIENCE

By Power of Words Committee 2

The Power of Words draft handbook, which aims to more accurately describe the World War II Japanese American experience, is now available online for public review.

Last April, the JACL national board unanimously approved PNW District Gov. Chip Larouche’s motion to distribute a draft of the Power of Words handbook to JACL chapters. The handbook is available online at www.jacl.org/powerofwords.

Guided by the Power of Words resolutions, which were passed at the JACL national conventions in 2010 and 2011, the draft handbook more accurately describes the events and actions experienced by JAs during WWII.

During this difficult period in JA history, the U.S. government strategically used euphemisms to inaccurately portray the forced removal and unjust incarceration of approximately 110,000 people of Japanese descent. Euphemistic terms like “evacuation,” “assembly centers,” and “relocation” masked the government’s civil rights violations and the incredible hardships experienced by JAs.

Written by the Power of Words 2 (POW2) Committee, the draft handbook addresses the problematic use of euphemisms and recommends preferred terminology to describe the incarceration of JAs during WWII.

Among other things, the draft handbook points out that the word “internment” refers to the confinement of enemy aliens in a time of war. Most JAs incarcerated in WRA camps during WWII were American citizens and therefore, according to the handbook, the term does not apply.

“A few thousand mostly aliens were held in DCI camps, where the term does apply according to the Geneva Convention,” according to the handbook.

The draft handbook recommends “incarceration” to more accurately describe JAs held in WRA camps.

“This term reflects the prison-like conditions faced by Japanese Americans as well as the view that they were treated as if guilty of sabotage, espionage, and/or suspect loyalty,” the handbook states.

The handbook also recommends that instead of “relocation center,” the words “concentration camp” be used.

“Depending on the context, words with quotation marks ‘American concentration camp’ may be used,” according to the handbook. “Alternatives are incarceration camp or illegal detention center.”

Rather, the handbook was created to promote greater understanding and awareness while recognizing an individual’s freedom of speech. By using more accurate and appropriate language, we hope to promote a more honest, real, and transparent understanding of this historic time period.

We invite JACL members and the public to get involved in three ways:

1. Provide valuable input.

Please read the handbook and provide feedback to the POW2 committee by June 8. This will give the committee time to review comments before the JACL national council votes on the handbook this July. Comments may be emailed to powwords@jacl.org or mailed directly to JACL’s national headquarters, care of the Power of Words Committee (1765 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115).

2. Sign the Power of Words supporter’s list.

We are reaching out broadly to people including JACL chapters and districts, historians, writers, academics, community groups, leaders, individuals, and many others. If you represent an organization, please include the name and contact information for the president or other official representative.

3. Make a donation to support the Power of Words handbook.

In 2011, the JACL national council approved Emergency Resolution 1, which had a fiscal impact indicating that $1,040 was needed to cover the expenses for national staff time and the publication of the final version of the handbook. This amount, which will be raised from other sources such as donations, will not impact the national budget. Contributions are needed to complete the work. Checks should be made payable to the JACL with a notation of POW2 in the memo line and sent to JACL headquarters. These designated funds will be used only for administrative, printing, and distribution costs associated with the POW2 handbook.

We wish to thank our supporters for their comments, care, and dedication. The POW2 Committee is also drafting a brief implementation plan with helpful suggestions on how JACL chapters, districts, national, and others can promote more accurate language. We look forward to finalizing the handbook and implementing plan for distribution at the 2012 JACL national convention in July.

National JACL President David Kawamoto appointed a representative from each JACL district to serve on the POW2 Committee. These representatives are: Greg Matsuiishi (chair), Megan Gately (PSW), Sandra Ono (EDC), Lisa Hasassohn (MDC), Hiro Nishikawa (EDC), Andy Noguchi (NCWNP), Dawn Rege (PNW), and Bob Taniguchi (CCDC).
**CALENDAR**

**NATIONAL**

The 43rd Annual JACL National Convention
BELLEVUE, WA
July 5-8
Hyatt Regency
900 Bellevue Way NE
Info: Hyatt Reservations: 888/421-1442
Convention website: www.jacl.org/2012

**NCWNP**

Memorial Day Service
SAN BRUNO, CA
May 28, 10 a.m.
Golden Gate National Cemetery (section R)
1300 Sneath Lane
This JACL-sponsored event will feature keynote speaker Gary Hongo, retired lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force who assisted with the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony in Washington, D.C. Following the services, lunch will be served at the JACL national headquarters at 1765 Sutter Street. To donate make checks out to “Nisei VFW Post 4979” in care of Quartermaster George Fujikawa 3017 Glenis Drive, Richmond, CA 94806. Info: Patty Wada, NCWNP regional director 415/345-1075

Right from Wrong:
Honoring the Lessons of the Honouliuli Internment Camp
HONOLULU
May 23, 10 a.m.-12 noon
Wahiawa State Library
820 California Ave.
This event will feature a short film on Honouliuli and a Day of Remembrance pilgrimage and personal testimonies. Info: www.jcch.com

Food Bazaar
BERKELEY, CA
May 27, noon-4 p.m.
Berkeley Methodist United Church
1710 Carlston Street
Admission free, food $2-$10

Japanese Cultural Fair
SANTA CRUZ, CA
June 16, 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Mission Plaza Park
103 Emmett Street
Admission free
This annual event will feature a full program of folk dance, tea ceremony, taiko, martial arts, flower arrangement, koto music, Kyogen play theater, mochitsuki (rice pounding), Okinawan dance, and more. Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL Community Picnic
SANTA CRUZ, CA
June 23, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Aptos Village Plaza
100 Aptos Creek Road

Riverside JACL Scholarship Awards
RIVERSIDE, CA
May 20
First Christian Church
4055 Jurupa Ave.
The Riverside JACL will be announcing the eight scholarship recipients for 2012 at the annual potluck dinner. Info: Michiko Yoshimura 951/844-7057 or my141@sbcglobal.net

Rhythm Relations 2012:
The Remix Show
HOLLYWOOD, CA
June 30, 8 p.m.
Ford Amphitheatre
2580 Cahuenga Blvd. East
The best of taiko from the U.S. and abroad come together on one stage in this Taiko-Project event. Now in its fifth year, this taiko extravaganza comes with an innovative new twist by offering its own remixed versions of traditional taiko compositions performed by celebrated groups. Tickets prices start at $20-$25. Info: www.taikoproject.com or 213/266-4011

**PSW**

CBSSoCal Camp Stories Awards Show
ARCADIA, CA
June 2, 8:30-11:30 a.m.
Santa Anita Park
285 W. Huntington Drive
Honorees include Esther Takei Nishio, who was taken out of camp to attend Pasadena City College in 1944. There she experienced prejudice, but with the support of Quakers, fellow students and college administrators, Nishio went on to excel in her studies. Info: www.cherryblossomfestivalsocal.org

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“Proud to Serve” contains the names of 20,000 Nisei men and women who served during World War II. The book will be over 400 pages with a color paperback cover. INCLUDE SHIPPING ADDRESS

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FORMER JACL NAT’L PRESIDENT
JAMES MURAKAMI PASSES

Murakami served as president from 1976-1978 during the early stages of the Redress Movement.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

When James Murakami, former national JACL president, made the decision to help lead the Redress Movement during his tenure from 1976-1978, he solidified his place in U.S. history with the passage of the historic Redress legislation in 1988.

Active until the end, Murakami passed away April 28 while helping his son change the oil in the family’s tractor. Murakami was 85.

Murakami grew up in Sonoma County, Calif. and at the age of 15 he and his family were first sent to the Merced Assembly Center and eventually to the Amache incarceration camp in Colorado during World War II for three years. The Murakami were among tens of thousands of Americans of Japanese ancestry who were rounded up after Executive Order 9066 was signed by President Franklin Roosevelt.

It was his unconstitutinal imprisonment that fueled Murakami’s later efforts to help win redress for the Japanese American community. It would take more than a decade, but the legislation for an historic apology and redress payments was signed into law in 1988.

“One of the main things that he said to me was, ‘Alas I hope this injustice that happened to the Japanese Americans never happens again’,” said his son Alan Murakami of Sebastopol, in an interview with The Press Democrat.

A UC Berkeley graduate, Murakami owned his own electrical and mechanical business, Murakami Engineers, for 40 years. In addition to his lengthy career, he devoted much of his time to JACL, having served as a Sonoma JACL chapter president in addition to his national presidency.

“Jim was a great friend who served the JACL well,” said Floyd Moni, JACL national executive director. “It was my privilege to know him for many years, and I have valued his ideals and views. I would like to express the deepest condolences to the family from myself and the JACL as an organization. He will be greatly missed.”

“We are grateful for the service that Jim gave to the JACL and his support of redress,” said National JACL President David Kawamoto. “We will miss his presence at JACL functions.”

Murakami leaves behind his wife of 59 years, Margarette; son Alan; daughter Kimiye; grandson Matthew; Mark, Danny, Ray; sister Fuji Kamatami and a host of relatives and friends.

A memorial service is planned for Sunday, May 20 at 3:00 at the Community Church, 1000 Gravenstein Hwy No., Sebastopol. Donations can be made to the organization of your choice.
MIYAZAKI

>>continued from pg. 2

The March 26-April 5, 2012, issue was a great example of what the tiny P.C. staff does so well. It reads as a compelling mix of news and information for our diverse JACL membership, which represents a wide range in terms of age, interests and geography.

The P.C. is invaluable in keeping members abreast of issues facing the national organization. In Nalae J. Ko’s enlightening and lengthy interview with Priscilla Oochida, JACL’s first female national director, we learned about her life and background, including early encounters with racism and her pioneering Redress work in the state of California. Oochida, who has been active in JACL since the 1980s, outlined her visions for the future of the organization.

The P.C. does a great job of informing us about our own communities while covering news of others whose interests we share. Story subjects in this issue include a high school band on tour preparing for a performance at Carnegie Hall, Nisei veterans being honored in Monterey and Portland, and an obituary for Dorothy Katsuko Hamade, who will be remembered by her surviving family, including seven grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The story of incarceration during WWII will always be at the surface of our collective history. In the issue were updates from ongoing projects at Tule Lake and Honolulii, news of an upcoming symposium in New Mexico addressing the Department of Justice camps at Lordsburg and Santa Fe, and a moving commentary about remembrance by New York chapter member James Kempel.

More than ever, we’re aware that the concerns and interests of the Japanese American community are often shared with the broader Asian Pacific American community. The issue included stories on racist remarks directed toward NBA player Jeremy Lin, Asian Americans participating in the remembrance of the march on Selma to fight for voter rights, and Arizona chapter member Leslie Tamura’s account of personally protesting the end of a Mexican American Studies program in Tucson.

Nalae J. Ko’s report on HIV/AIDS in the APA community (funded by The California Endowment Health Journalism Fellowships, a program of USC’s Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism) is a great example of important, original reporting.

In closing, I would appeal to your love of editorial board rep. Kevin Miyazaki is the Midwest District’s Pacific Citizen editorial board rep.

I rest my case!

MORI

>>continued from pg. 2

Mori visited a temporary housing center for the elderly displaced by the tsunami.

Pitt mentioned Direct Relief International as “a really responsible and worthwhile organization. It has been around since about 1948, and they also work with the Japanese American Citizens League toward Japan’s relief effort.” One hundred percent of the funds to go to help, and it’s an outfit I feel comfortable about supporting or giving funds to.” Pitt also said of Japan: “It’s a huge issue, but it’s also one of the few times when a catastrophe on that scale happened to a place that wouldn’t tank if others didn’t step in and help.”

In April I was privileged to make a trip to Japan accompanying DRI CEO Thomas Tighe and members of his staff to visit the projects funded by the Japan Relief and Recovery Fund. The initial objective of the fund was to reach out in a direct manner to those who were impacted by the disaster. We have worked with nine local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide immediate and long-term sustainable initiatives to help the people in need in the hard hit areas.

Among the programs which the NGOs have provided with the funds furnished are: helping victims with cash for work programs, restoring damaged businesses, providing on-site and mobile libraries, monitoring health and well being needs of the aged, improving sanitation for temporary housing, training volunteers for daycare facilities, helping to build capacity to provide human services, and providing volunteer coordination.

We have been able to see the positive impact on thousands of people and the restoration of properties and public places. The resilience and enterprise of the Japanese people have been remarkable, but there is still work to be done. It is encouraging to see the progress which our efforts have helped to accomplish. The many who made contributions can feel proud of the lives which are being improved through their monetary donations.

I experienced much gratitude from the victims of the disaster who were impacted by the disaster. JACL, the Japanese American Citizens League, and other organizations around the country have been able to provide aid.

I rest my case!