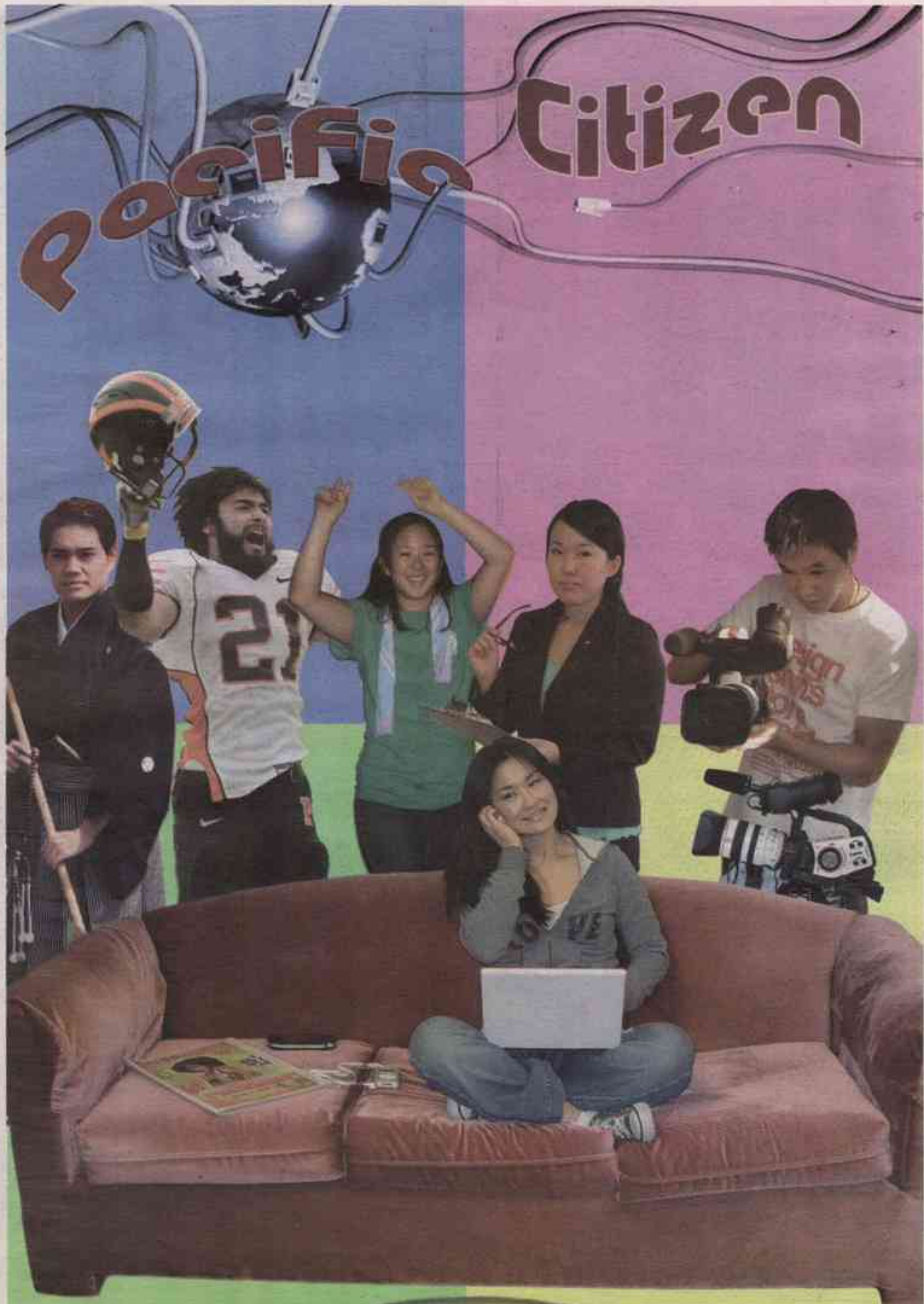
Pacific Citizen



Are You Plugged in?

HOLIDAY ISSUE 2006

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Are You Plugged In?

This past summer the *Pacific Citizen* was fortunate enough to have an intern focusing specifically on outreach/marketing to youth and young adults. Through Stacy Iwata's efforts we were able to let these young people know about our publication and the various community issues we cover. With her as our inspiration, we decided to focus this year's Holiday Issue theme on youth and young adult issues.

Soon we began the time-consuming steps involved in organizing this special issue, the first time the *P.C.* H.I. would be dedicated to and written entirely by Asian Pacific American youth. The response was overwhelming, so much so that in the end we had to turn down some writers. Although at first we were a bit worried about the time and commitment these writers would have to put into the issue, almost all of our contributors met our tight deadlines.

And thanks to these talented group of youth writers we present to you the 2006 H.I.: "Are You Plugged In?"

In the next several pages you'll read a diverse array of articles on topics including: identity, politics, sports, and entertainment. Our youth writers talk about their connections to Little Tokyo, how they got involved in the world of Kabuki, and the latest in techno gadgets. You will also read thoughtful pieces on the controversy surrounding 1st Lt. Ehren Watada and what the history of the Nanking Massacre means to Japanese American youth today.

We sincerely hope you enjoy the thoughts, ideas, and concerns of today's APA youth. We certainly did.

In addition to these talented youth writers I would like to thank the many advertisers who support us year after year. I would also like to thank the numerous JACL chapters who continue to solicit ads for us each year (Please see *P.C.*'s People Who Count, page 115). Without all of you, this issue would not be possible.

I would also like to thank the hard-working staff members who put this issue together: Brian Tanaka, office manager; Lynda Lin, assistant editor; and Eva Lau-Ting, circulation. And thanks also go to our Holiday Issue temporary workers: Gayle Jue and Alan Kubo.

Have a great Holiday and look for our special New Year's issue on Jan. 19, 2007.

Caroline Aoyagi-Stom
Executive Editor

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We're fluent in the information age, but some of us don't speak human.

Give Me MySpace!

By Peter Frandsen

What does it mean to be connected? Does that just mean you get wireless internet access anywhere in your apartment? Or is it downloading with broadband instead of the old 56K modem? Is it having unlimited text messaging with your cellular provider? Is it your social networking skills?

I remember when I moved to Manhattan just over a year ago asking myself these questions and more. I looked around at my new classmates in dental school from a myriad of backgrounds and undergraduate training — so many of them have numerous means of tracking their lives. They have accounts on top of accounts with enough user names and login IDs to make my head swirl.

I mean seriously — do we really need accounts on Facebook, MySpace, YouTube AND Blogger? And whatever happened to Friendster? Sorry to those who are still on Friendster, but you're not hip anymore. That's so 2004. But who really needs to check their e-mail accounts that often and instant message all day on three accounts — MSN, AOL, Gtalk and even Yahoo! Messenger (these are probably the same people who still use Friendster)? How does our modern economy even function with a generation of new hires, temps and interns IM-ing their days away with all their other "buddies"?

Seriously, I'm tempted to take a vow of technological celibacy just to cleanse myself of all newly acquired technovices. Am I addicted? Do my accounts and usernames drive my life? Could I really go a day without texting someone, checking my email X-times an hour, or IM-ing whoever will talk to me on that vast world wide web?

Millions of young professionals connect to their friends, pass millions of secrets, resolve conflicts and express themselves with millions of emoticons — they are connected. But it makes me wonder, does this counterfeit connection amply substitute for the authenticity of infrequent and now atypical face-to-face meetings?

Does being connected run so deep that we actually lose true connectivity with others? In a society where being "in the know" and "staying connected" is applauded, how are we so separated?

But to those who argue to

See FRANDSEN/Page 20









Bridging the Gap

A Hapa identity has allowed this writer to experience the best of both worlds.

By JUSTINE KONDO

At ten years old, I was asked whether I was alright being half Japanese. It was as if being part Asian were some sort of social condition to adjust to — as if I had somehow been an unfortunate victim of genetic deviation from a white norm. I had replied that I was proud of my background, and I was, though for different reasons than I am today. This inquiry marked the starting point of a process in which I since questioned my own identity.

Having a white mother and a Japanese father produced slightly awkward and sometimes frustrating experiences during my childhood. Because my dark features clashed with my mother's blond hair and green eyes, many assumed I was adopted when we were together, which is not uncommon among the Hapa population. However, I did experience a feeling of alienation within my extended family; when asked which parent I resembled most, my Caucasian relatives would select my father with an "Isn't it obvious?" tone, while my Japanese relatives were equally certain I looked most like my mother because of my face's European quality.

Not only did these conflicting responses serve to confuse me as to my racial identity, they made me feel unwanted. It felt as though neither side would accept my genetic makeup as bearing any likeness to theirs — as though I didn't meet the qualifications for being an actual member of either family. Hapas are a minority within themselves.

Eventually my difference developed into a superficial source of pride as ethnic diversity in general was becoming more glorified within public schools. At the same time, however, I couldn't help but feel required to choose between races. When taking standardized tests in middle school, often there was no bi- or multi-racial option to indicate my ethnicity.

This situation created more inward turmoil for an adolescent girl than one might have suspected: I found myself torn between filling in the "Asian" bubble or the "Caucasian" one. Choosing Asian made me feel special merely because it highlighted my particular quality of not being entirely white. It also declared me as a member of a culture I highly respected, although hardly understood. On the other hand, categorizing myself as Caucasian was always a safe option, generating in me a cowardly kind of relief; even at my young age I perceived the act as a concession to white supremacy. To me, choosing this option was an act of betrayal to everything Japanese, a denial of

See JUSTINE KONDO/Page 19

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS: *(top)* Young Justine with her parents and presently *(above)*.



JOGGING THE PATH

Thoughts are set in motion when the body runs through the pastoral campus of Princeton University.

By CHOKETSU UGA



I stare hopelessly at the mountain of mess on my desk.

In one corner is a half-finished math problem set, riddled with unintelligible pencil marks. The evil, overweight Chinese history book glares at me filling me with guilt for not having done the 200-page reading assignment for tomorrow. In my drawer are the instructions for the operating systems project due in several days.

But, who cares?

I put on my gym shorts, and run out of my dorm like a carefree child about to do something stupid. It's time to jog.

Heavy wind punches my face, punishing me for confronting the chilly New Jersey weather on a November afternoon. I attack the small hill that leads out of the campus, running breathlessly like a maniac past the students and the random old tourists that always pop up out of the blue. I cross Nassau, hop onto Witherspoon, and just keep running non-stop.

The public library, an old cemetery and a tiny Chinese restaurant breeze past me. The cars roar by as I keep panting uphill. I pass an interestingly cute blonde girl, but um, right now's not the time for that.

Witherspoon turns into Mt. Lucas.

The busy intersections and the row of stores fade away giving way to a peaceful path surrounded by trees and pretty houses. I breathe in the fresh air and look at the colorful leaves on the big trees relieving my mind of all the stress. I'm just jogging endlessly and feeling so relaxed and worry-free ... hey watch it, you slow dumb squirrel!

As I keep going uphill and downhill swerving left and right on the monotonically peaceful Mt. Lucas, thoughts race through my mind about the campus bubble that I left more than two miles behind. My

See CHOKETSU UGA/Page 19

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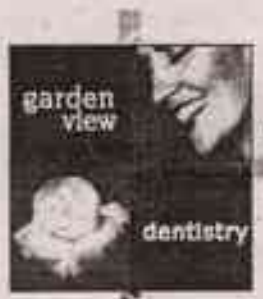
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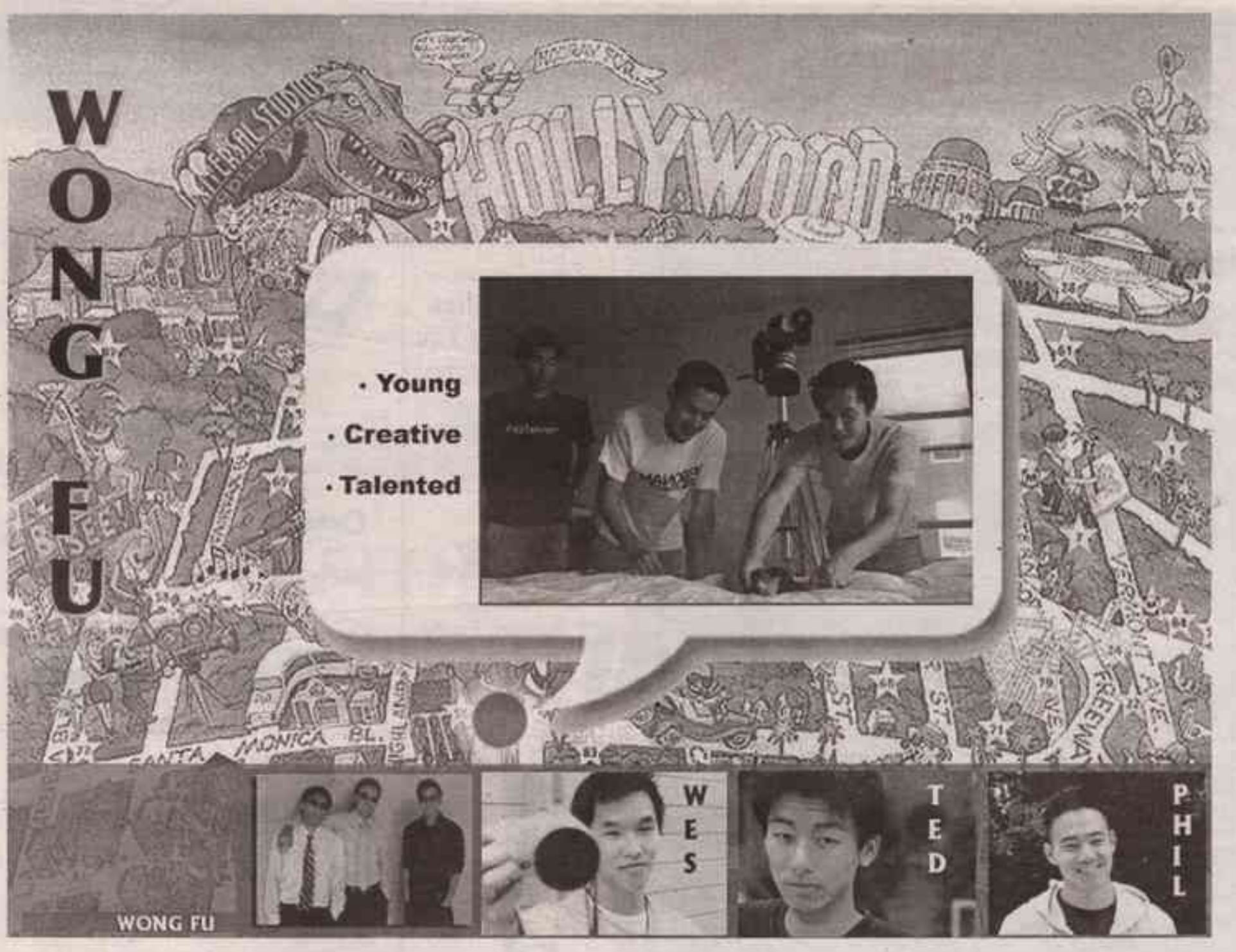
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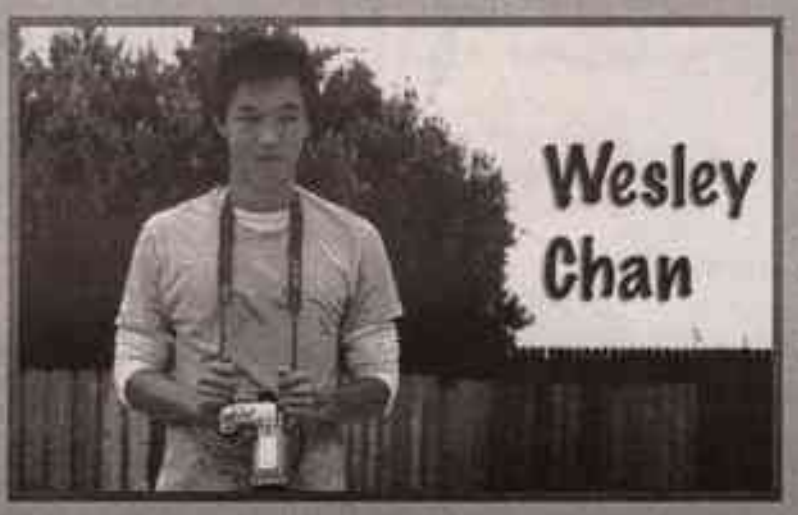
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Fast Food, A Feature Film and Autographs

Their internet short films get downloaded a million times over.

Now the men behind Wong Fu Productions are screening their first feature-length film across the world. During a stop in the Midwest, they reflect on their journey to becoming viral.



It's 2:37 p.m. at a roadside McDonald's in Ohio. Ted sits to my left and Phil sits across from me.

We're talking about the pumpkin pie we bought. We've never seen fast food pumpkin pie — only apple. I guess we're easily amused. It may be hard to believe, but less than 24 hours ago we were screening our feature film, signing autographs and taking pictures with fans.

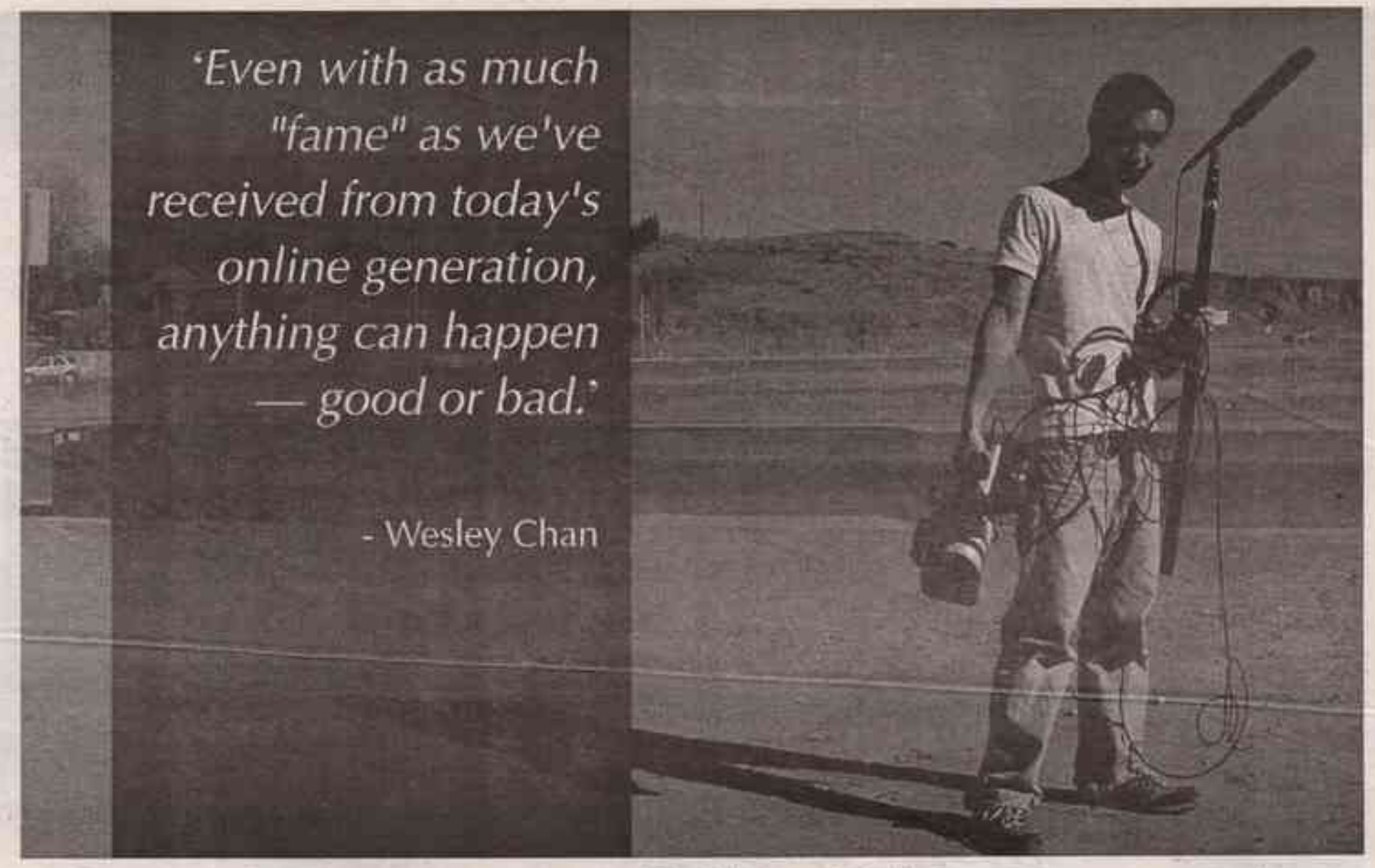
At this point, you're probably wondering, "Who are you?" Fast food, feature film, autographs — how do all these things fit together? Well, Ted, Phil and myself are the guys behind Wong Fu Productions. The guys that make those online videos that you watched instead of studying for that chem midterm at three in the morning. Yup, *those* guys.

'When we screen the movie, we get to pretend that we've achieved some kind of celebrity status.'

Online video is one thing, but a feature film, as we discovered, is something totally different and should be treated accordingly. That's why we've packed up and hit the road for a month to share our movie, "A Moment with You," with major universities across the nation. It truly is a chance of a lifetime and I'm extremely grateful to experience this.

To know that people are enthusiastic and eager to watch our movie is one of the most fulfilling feelings. Actually, the whole thing is quite surreal. Eight months of work on the film has led up to this tour and we're enjoying every moment of it. When we screen the movie, we get to pretend that we've achieved some kind of celebrity status. But we don't put it on ourselves, because with autographs and pictures it's just easy to believe that. However flattering, we do stay grounded and realistic. Even with as much "fame" as we've received from today's online generation, anything can happen — good or bad.

We know the journey doesn't end at the last stop of this tour. There is a lot left to experience but for now we're just sitting and discussing the peculiar taste of McDonald's pumpkin pie. And as odd as it may seem, that makes me happy.



'Even with as much "fame" as we've received from today's online generation, anything can happen — good or bad.'

- Wesley Chan

On Tour with Wong Fu



In a recent e-mail we received, a teenager expressed his support and admiration for the work we do. He said we are sending a great message about Asian Americans and that we are making huge strides in media for the AA community. He closed the e-mail saying how he hoped that one day, he could be as successful as we are.

In an e-mail a few days later, a college organization invited us to go to their campus to give a workshop on filmmaking since we were "so successful in our industry."

Upon reading these e-mails, I had to wonder how all these people came upon the conclusion that we had become great successes through our work. Granted we've had many accomplishments, something we are extremely grateful for, the truth is, we have a long way to go.

In terms of internet videos, Wong Fu has become extremely popular and recognized, but does this really mean success? At times I would think that all these people have a misconception of us — we are so far from where we want to be, and we may never reach our idea of success. However, while this may be true at this point in our careers, what is also true is that as people progress in life, goals change as they strive for more, and thus our perception of success also changes.

When Wong Fu first began, the goal was merely to make some fun videos with friends. The following years, we developed new goals: reach people across the world with our work and send good messages. Looking back, these objectives have been met, so in a sense we were successful. But looking forward, we have so much more to strive for.

So what is success? Thousands of e-mails from people saying how we have touched their lives through our work, inspired them, or just made them smile? Does it mean millions of people across the world seeing our videos? Is this success? Sure, but this is not where it stops. As our achievements grow, so must our aspirations. And so, one little step at a time, we will stay focused and driven to reach our ultimate idea of success while looking back in thankfulness for what has already been attained.



As we move further and further away from school, there are certain expectations people have of us — to make it big, to drop the big names and to be part of something mainstream.

However the honest truth is that when we left college we didn't know what to do. The only thing we had was a goal we had no idea how to accomplish; a goal with no clear path or finish line — we were going to be part of the entertainment industry.

'Most of our family and friends only know the paths of doctors, lawyers or scientists ...'

Most of our family and friends only know the paths of doctors, lawyers or scientists but for us in this industry that is always changing, our path will change frequently. We will have to adapt to it and hopefully even reinvent it — we are learning as we go. Although the path may be uncertain and challenging it is exciting and hopefully it will be the most rewarding.

Touring with our movie "A Moment with You" has been a great experience because we are able to put faces on all of our wonderful fans, to talk to them face-to-face, to really understand why they enjoy our work and find out why we even deserve their time of day. A lot of people come up to us and tell us that we are their inspiration. But the truth is we don't even know where we're going with all of this, we just know that we want to make a positive difference. ❋

Wesley, Phillip and Ted are recent graduates of UC San Diego. They are currently touring the world with their feature film, 'A Moment with You.' For screening info., go to www.wongfuproductions.com.

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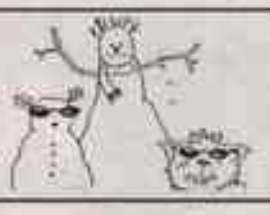
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By KEN KANESAKA

Connecting with His Classical Dreams

Chon, chon – the sounds of the wooden clappers being struck to inform the actors that it is 15 minutes before the curtain goes up.

I slowly open my eyes and look into the mirror. I hurry and apply the final finishing touches to my white powdered skin.

Barely in his mid-20s, Ken Kanesaka (stage name Nakamura Gankyo) is the youngest and only Japanese American to break into the ancient world of kabuki.

This month I take on the role of a nakai, or a young woman who helps serve drinks and food, all while creating a merry atmosphere in the pleasure quarter of Kyoto. I started my transformation about one hour earlier, applying a thin layer of wax to my face, back and neck. After layers of white make-up, pink blush, and delicately painted eyebrows, I dress myself and have the wig master gently place the wig on my head.

Fully dressed and ready to perform, I hurry off to my seniors' rooms, where I politely bow in deep respect and say "yoroshiku onegaishimasu," (thank you for allowing me to perform with you on stage).

Behind all the glamour, the audience doesn't know that I arrive at the theater about three hours before the curtain goes up. My daily chores include scrubbing floors, bath tubs, sinks, toilets, doing my teacher's laundry, getting his make-up ready, cleaning all of his hand-held props — all before dashing off into the cold to await for his arrival.

In a world that has been virtually closed off to the public for over 400 years, respect and etiquette are two of the most important things.

To most of the famous kabuki actors today, I must have been what Commodore Perry was to the last Shogun in



See KANESAKA/Page 101

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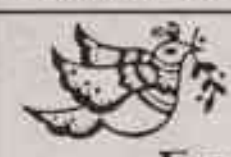
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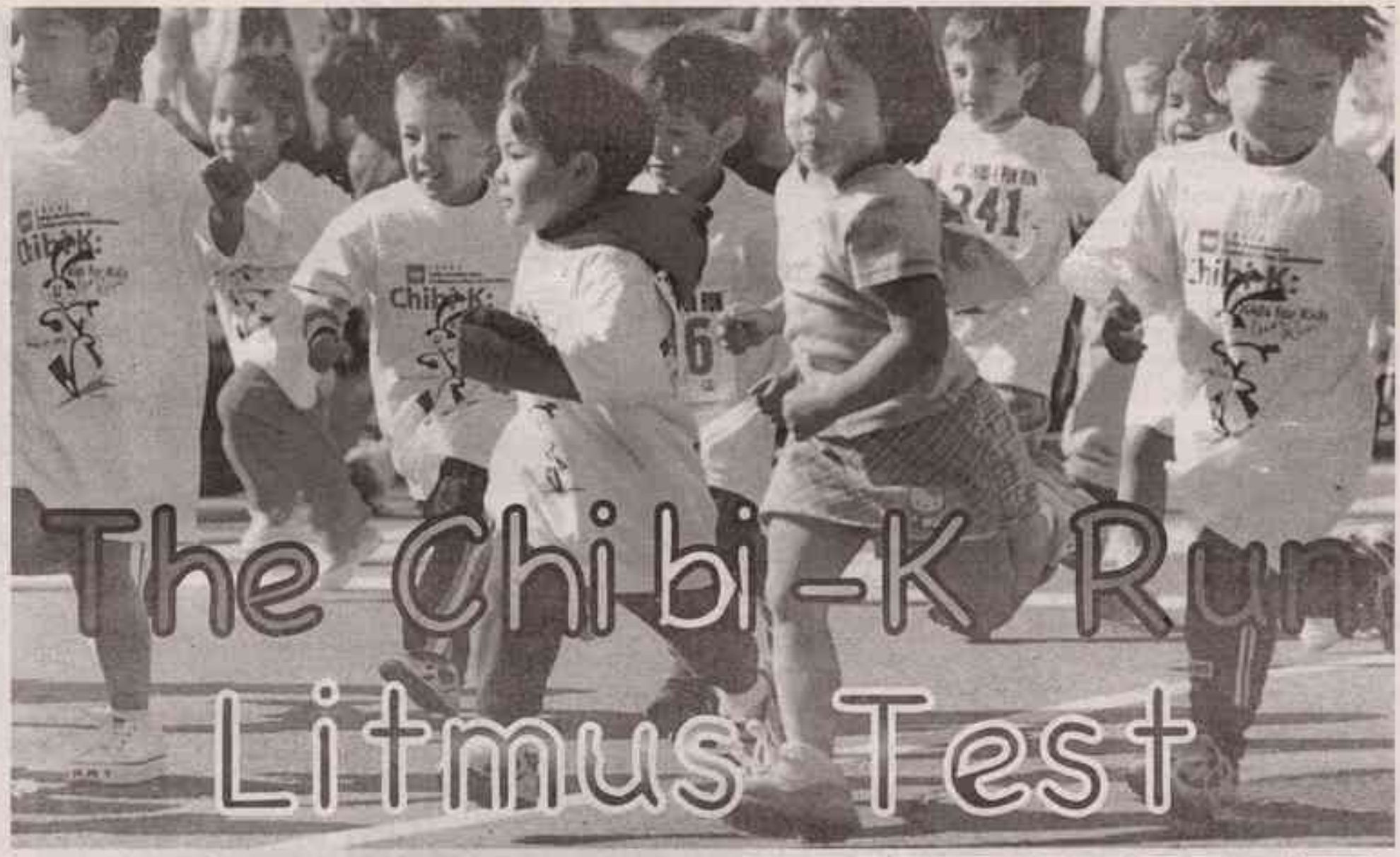
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The Chibi-K Run Litmus Test

If you grew up JA in Southern California, your parents probably made you take part in the annual run through the streets of Little Tokyo.





By ERIC M. NAKANO

I hate running. Pumping my skinny legs and arms to reach an unknown destination all the while sweating and panting in the name of "physical fitness" has always seemed like an exercise in futility and senselessness. In elementary school, I was forced to run in PE. My mom knew how much I dreaded those 16-minute-mile-an-hour-run days. She even at times seemed to sympathize with me remembering her own dislike of run days in her elementary years.

For those of you not in Southern California, the Chibi-K Run was an annual run for Japanese American children marking the Japanese holiday of Children's Day. The Chibi-K Run was followed by a festival complete with dances, activities and food all crammed into the four square blocks of Little Tokyo in downtown Los Angeles.

So I never understood why early in the morning on the first Saturday every May, my blankets would be tossed from my sleepy body, I'd be forced into a t-shirt and shorts, and dragged across the San Gabriel Valley to the dreaded Chibi-K Run. I had an idea of why we went. Attendance for Japanese American families in Southern California was a must. Those who didn't go would be forced to hear about how great the run and festival were at church, basketball games, karate tournaments and anywhere else JA families congregated.

You of course would have to listen to Mrs. Yamada or Mrs. Tanaka talk about how well her son John or daughter Amy did in the run and have nothing to contribute to the conversation in return. Having your kid in the run was a litmus test of how JA you were. And even if your son or daughter always finished last in their age group in the run, you at least could lie about it. (And I saw plenty of moms do that.) What mattered was if people saw you hauling your kid around in their official Chibi-K Run t-shirt and marathon number at the festival afterwards.

For a lot of kids, the run was torture. The sky was always cloudy and gray so early in the morning, it was cold, and we missed our Saturday morning cartoons. The festival didn't interest us either; we were usually ready to go after we got a snow cone and played a couple rounds of tag in the Buddhist garden of the Japanese American

Cultural and Community Center.

My mom would always go from booth to booth with me in tow, talking with old friends and buying a decorative magnet here, an origami doll there. I would usually slink off in the corner impatient to get home and play my Nintendo.

It was then no surprise to my parents that when I started Middle School, I stopped running. In the crunch of activities that I was involved in — Boy Scouts, saxophone lessons, church youth group, piano lessons, and basketball practice — one of the first things that I cut from my schedule was the Chibi-K Run. At the time I didn't think twice about my decision and I never thought I would ever miss it. Until now.

Recently, I walked around the streets of Little Tokyo while visiting home from Washington, D.C. I was surprised at how much had changed but yet still remained the same. There was Paul's Kitchen, newly renovated for business after the Northridge quake but with a menu different from the one I grew up with as a kid. And among the familiar Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, trinket shops, restaurants, and Japanese markets that have defined the area for decades, stood new condo buildings and high rises; evidence that Los Angeles' exploding property values had finally pushed gentrification into Little Tokyo.

As I stood there on San Pedro Street gazing all around me, a sense of nostalgia and sadness swept over me. The street was empty and cold; a barren stretch of asphalt bordered by a vacant parking lot. This was the same street that I had lined up on at the starting line of the Chibi-K Run on those cold crisp May mornings, the same street that I learned to love chicken teriyaki on a stick, and the same street that I met friends whom I only saw a few times a year.

I tried to remember the peels of laughter and cheering when the runners took off, and see the colorful booths all lined up in the courtyard of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. I tried to remember the smell of all the delicious food that wafted through the air and the whirring of the snow cone machine that spit out one rainbow flavored snow cone after another for each and every happy kid.

I tried to remember the sights and sounds of the dancers and decorative fish kites that covered the area. And as I stood there, it occurred to me that no matter how much I had convinced myself as a kid that I hated it all, I realized how much I actually loved it, looked forward to it, and missed it.

I recently learned that the last Chibi-K Run was in 2004. Beset by a lack of staff and funding, the Chibi-K Run has been canceled indefinitely. This event was more than just a run. It was a cultural experience that brought together the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of camp internees and farmers to learn about their heritage and to celebrate the resilience of our community.

I hope that it resumes again and that one day, I can drag my own kid across the San Gabriel Valley to the starting line of the run. But for now, the dozens of kids running around in Chibi-K t-shirts and numbers, the crowds of people cheering their sons and daughters on along the run route, and the fellowship and competitive bragging of parents afterwards will remain just a memory. ❁

Eric Nakano is currently the youth representative for the JACL Wash., D.C. chapter. In 2003, Nakano served as an intern at the JACL Pacific Southwest District where he helped organize the National JACL's Gala Dinner.

He earned a BA in Political Science and Public Policy from the George Washington University in 2004. Nakano currently resides in Washington, D.C. and works for organized labor.

Ah ... the memories







Photos courtesy of the JACCC





Gooo News!—The Little Tokyo Chibi-K Run will make a return in 2007 according to representatives from the Japanese American Community and Cultural Center. The event will coincide with Children's Day festivities.

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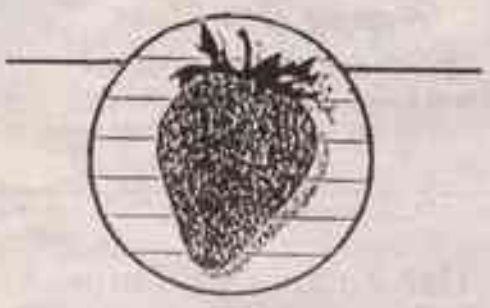
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JUSTINE KONDO

(Continued from page 6)

my ancestry, and an indication that I was ashamed of it.

Although seemingly trivial, this part of test taking repeatedly proved itself a troubling symbolic act in defining my identity. I was convinced at an early age that although we are all human, race does, in fact, matter.

I later came to believe that celebration of diversity within public schools, although noble in appearance, is in truth an exercise in political correctness and a temporary vacation from the Eurocentricity which is standard in American education. Within this scope, any minority culture is limited to that of token status; an exotic and often amusing little variation from the white norm. Unfortunately, like most people, I too am a product of this habit of thought, having relatively little exposure to the culture of my ancestors.

It is understandable that after suffering the prejudicial horrors of the World War II era, my grandparents decided to abandon their Japanese lifestyle and adopt an almost entirely "American" one. Who would want their children to have to endure such treatment? Their efforts were fruitful but came at a cost: they resulted in a nearly total severance from the Japanese culture in their lifestyles.

For example, assuming he spoke the language, many strangers attempted to converse with my father in Japanese. Ironically, all he could say in the language was, "I'm sorry, but I do not speak Japanese." It's even worsened through the generations; Sansei may be stupid, but Yonsei are completely oblivious. I pronounce my last name with a short "o" and never fail to drop my dinner on the floor when using *waribashi*.

So although the descendants of my grandparents have successfully taken on white ways and have not faced nearly as much racial discrimination, there is an unrelenting sense of separation from our roots.

However, little remnants of my family's past survived. They can be found in my grandfather's landscaping style, my grandmother's impeccable etiquette; my father even showed me how to play *Jankenpo* before I learned Rock, Paper, Scissors American style. It is these small but treasured fragments of a past way of life that I hold on to which has instilled in me a great reverence for a largely unknown heritage.

These slices of culture have also inspired me to connect with my origins; I believe that however slight they may be, they are enough to establish the process of bridging the gap between myself and the tradition of my ancestors. Perhaps we are not as separated as I think. And that's not the only connection to be made.

Rather than interpreting my mixed heritage as merely a tool for fueling further classification, I am now discovering that it can be used as a means to bring together differing ethnicities instead. In a physical sense, I am the link between two groups of people. My quest is to find the symbolic significance — the level of mutual understanding between two backgrounds required to make such a link.

The manner I should go about this mission is frustratingly vague, so for now, I'll start by learning how to properly use chopsticks. In time, the master plan will eventually make itself clear, and someday, I will transcend the ethnic divisions that once disturbed me. ❄

Justine Kondo, 19, is a sophomore at Eastern Washington University. She lives with her family in Spokane, Washington.



CHOKETSU UGA

(Continued from page 7)

friends are probably in their Wilson dorm rooms right now doing their econ p-sets. Oh crap, that *Pacific Citizen* article I haven't started is due tomorrow. Maybe I'll manage to meet that girl again on the way back … hmmmm.

I almost bump into a tree.

This is the way I spend my free afternoons, which exist about two times a week. I've found it to be an extremely fulfilling break from my duties as a student enrolled in a suicidal schedule with a suicidal workload. Sometimes, simply putting my pens and books down and just chillin' is not enough. The air in my dorm room practically consists of a sea of stress particles and I just can't relax there unless I take a nap, which isn't too constructive unless you really need to catch up on sleep.

Running is fantastic though, because it's a great method of relieving mental stress and of course, maintaining a healthy, fit body.

But I was never a cardiovascular fitness Nazi or anything of that nature. My original, primary motive for running was to burn lots of fat. In the summer before freshman year, my grandma pointed out that I was fat. I thought she was crazy; I've seen plenty of weight-loss commercials, and I looked nothing like the fat people in the "before" part of the "before and after" photos.

Then I went to China for vacation and I had a really nice massage done by a 16-year-old girl. It wasn't one of the "special" massages offered at some places, but it was definitely well worth the price. Anyway, at one point the girl told me that I was fat too, and that was the last straw. A pretty high school girl can't be wrong. I now had a grand, noble mission ahead of me: losing weight.

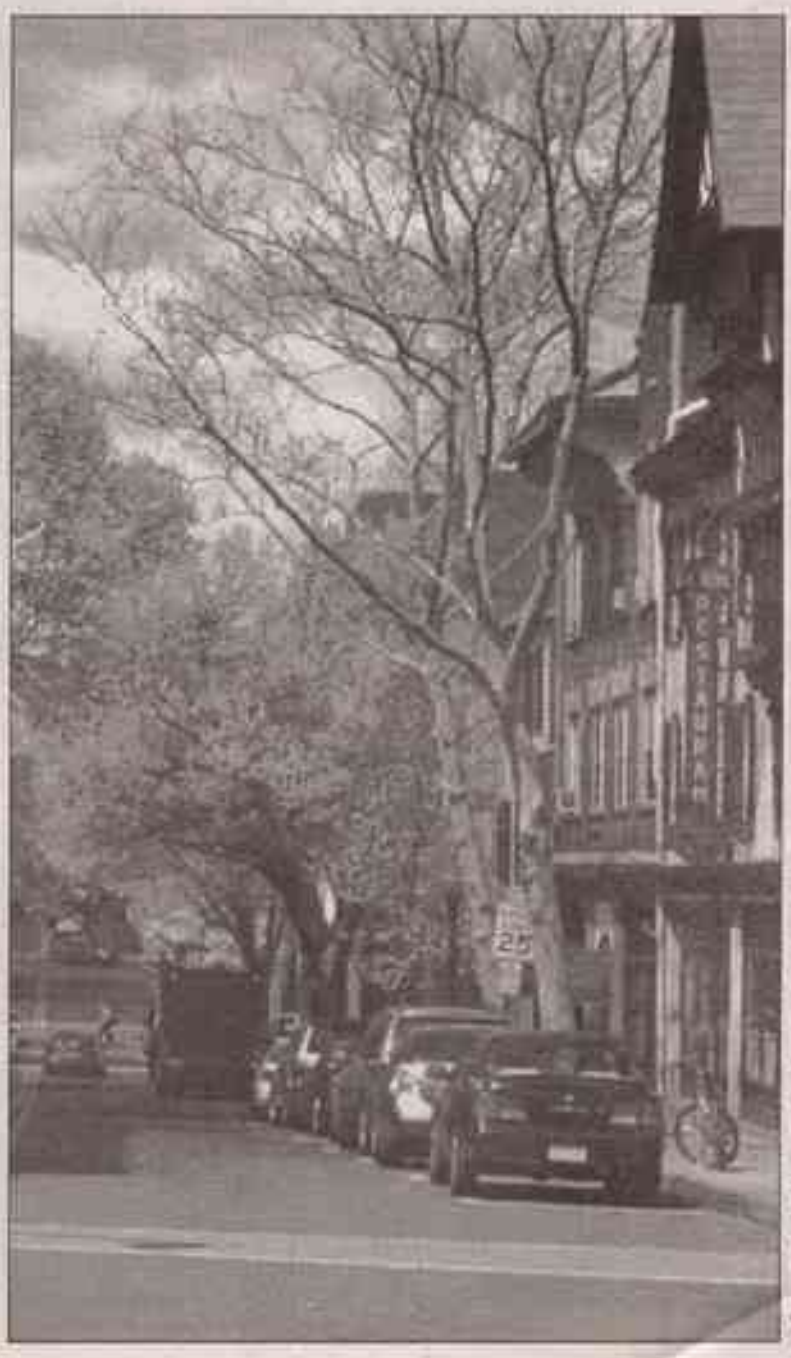
Deciding to exercise is probably the best decision I've made since being born. Unlike other things I've tried in my life, exercise has delivered mostly good consequences. At first I thought that regular workouts would make me feel tired and jeopardize my overall productivity. On the contrary, I feel more energetic throughout the day, and mentally pumped to concentrate for increasingly longer periods of time. And of course, physically I feel stronger. I used to get cramps and run out of breath after jogging just half a mile or so, but nowadays I don't feel tired even after running a 10-mile stretch.

I also have lost significant amounts of weight. Within a 50-day period I burned about 20 pounds, 10 of which disappeared within the first two weeks. I didn't think that was possible, but now I have the benefit of knowing that I can go on a long vacation, do nothing, gain 20 pounds, and then shed it pretty easily, provided I do so before I become a really old guy and my metabolism rate plummets.

I forget my original intent for writing this article, but basically, if your grandma says you're fat, you probably are, and running is a great way to solve that problem. ❄

Choketsu Uga is currently attending Princeton University. When he is not running, he is involved with the Philadelphia JACL. He is also the 2006 recipient of the Alice Yuriko Endo Memorial scholarship.

'I breathe in the fresh air and look at the colorful leaves on the big trees relieving my mind of all the stress.'



THE art of COMMUNICATION



FRANDSEN

(Continued from page 5)

the converse and proclaim that Blogger and YouTube allow access to nieces and nephews, vacation photos, homemade video clips and more that would be otherwise inaccessible to those living in different states and time zones — I agree. It is convenient.

Like a man on a rainy day bustling and bumping others out of the way to hail a cab, I too log on every morning to the family blog to see if there are new pictures of my sister's triplets who live two time zones away. However, I too will admit that when I sporadically post a comment to the latest post, the normal, natural, human instinct to make a phone call dwindles and withers away. So while it may be convenient, it is not better.

Convenience is a plague. Convenience has crippled my generation. We have access to the whole world with one properly worded query on Google, but how many of us could identify 10 countries in Africa or the former Soviet Union?

Being "in the know" means knowing why to choose Gmail over Hotmail, PC vs. Mac, MSN vs. AOL, but it doesn't mean knowing the difference between Medicaid and Medicare or the pros and cons of maintaining social security or privatization of accounts. It means knowing the names of Brangelina's or TomKat's newborn babies, but it doesn't mean knowing the names of five other countries' presidents or prime ministers.

Being fully fluent in the information age, some of us speak the wrong dialect.

However, I guess that's the beauty of our generation. We can know all sorts of information and know nothing at the same time. We can simultaneously be everything and nothing.

There are so many niches, so many pockets that need to be filled. We don't have to know things beyond our necessary scope. We don't have to be lawyers, doctors, politicians, nurses or teachers. Our options are limited only by the amount of specific knowledge we can obtain for the task before us.

We have the world. We've mastered the art of social-networked connectivity. We can obtain information quicker and more efficiently than any generation before us. We own the niche of access. We will show to all our predecessors that access is the chief secret to success.

Error! Contact not defined. is currently living in Manhattan attending Columbia University's College of Dental Medicine. Unfortunately (and ironically), he is not currently online with MySpace, Facebook, or other networks (except www.peterfrandsen.blogspot.com), but only because he does not like to encourage invitatory voyeurism (insert favorite sarcastic emoticon here ____). Or maybe he wasn't pretty enough to make the cut on www.hotornot.com and has never recovered enough to post photos of himself on the web.

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Plugged into the Best

What started out as a good idea resulted in some wounds that sent one to her early grave.

In the end, a little ball of fur named 'Jack Bauer' terrorizes a young couple.

By JOSEPH CRAIG

Being plugged in can mean a number of things.

Sometimes it can mean having the latest and greatest technological breakthrough and other times it can mean getting in touch with your peers and their emotions. I'm here to tell you that being plugged in with your spouse and their likes and dislikes means much more around the holidays when you decide to spend your hard earned money to purchase the perfect gift.

Everything was in place for yet another stellar Christmas thanks to the array of gifts I had purchased for my beautiful wife, Kristy. Thanks in large part to a brilliant gift price cap, I was able to buy several cheap gifts that looked marvelous while at the same time coming in well under the $125 cap we had to set in order to reduce the bankruptcy-inducing bonanza that Christmas shopping had become in our seven years together.

The shoes were nice as was the sweater, but there was just something missing. I was about $30 under the cap and while that would be acceptable, I didn't want to take the risk that I would spend less on gifts than my wife had on me — something that surely could result in penalties that married men everywhere dread. You know the one, the story that starts with, "Remember that one Christmas when ..." and results in feelings of inadequacy.

Riding home with my mother on that fateful shopping day, we passed by everyone's favorite destination for Christmas shopping. No, not H&M or Macy's and not even Wal-Mart — PetSmart — where everyone knows Christmas begins.

Walking the aisles, my mom and I passed many interesting gift ideas including birds, fish, reptiles and everyone's favorite — the rodents. Naturally, having been with my wife for several years and seeing her shriek at the sight of anything that's not human or dog (you should see her jump on the furniture when a cricket innocently wanders through the room), I knew she'd love nothing more than a hamster.

With this realization, my mother and I excitedly perused hamster supplies from food to cages to little hamster balls that they can walk around in outside the cage, and the hay that they hide in so you never see them when they're at home.

Music to any husband's ears: a $125 cap on Christmas gifts.

'I didn't want to take the risk that I would spend less on gifts than my wife had on me — something that surely could result in penalties'



Finally, after loading all of that hamster goodness into the cart, we got to the best part of all — picking out the hamster.

I have always believed my mom's judgment to be better than mine, particularly when purchasing gifts, so I asked her to pick out the best hamster. She proceeded to pick out the most active of the bunch – the one that tried to run out the door as soon as a hint of daylight emerged into its cage.

As the sales associate tried to cram the little sucker into the box full of holes that served as her (we reasoned that a female hamster would be more tame) transport vehicle, I congratulated my mother on a good choice and we made our way to the counter and into the car with our hamster supplies and one hyperactive hamster.

Following the three-minute car ride home, we revealed to my wife that she had to accept one of her gifts immediately since it was alive. As we opened the bag to reveal hamster feed, a cage and other goodies, the surprise was probably a little ruined before we got to the point when we opened the box with scratching creature.

A sharp set of hamster fangs sunk into my hand as I reached inside the box. My mom yelled, "NO!" to the hamster, which I'm sure made it realize its error thanks to its expanded knowledge of the English language.

Perhaps it was a sign of things to come.

After coaxing the hamster to not harm me when handled, I was finally able

(Worst!) Christmas Gift *Ever*



‘A sharp set of hamster fangs sunk into my hand as I reached inside the box. My mom yelled, “NO!” to the hamster, which I’m sure made it realize its error thanks to its expanded knowledge of the English language.’

to place the hamster into her home at which time she immediately began to gnaw at the bars and push on the door and the detachable roof.

Thankfully, she never quite mastered the art of the twist-tie, which soon reinforced the security that was her little cage. The newly anointed “Jack Bauer” — we’re both huge fans of the television show “24” — insisted on trying to escape at every moment doing her best to shove through the roof, door or any other area of the cage that seemed to move with a little force.

Her little antics were quite entertaining. She would grab the top of the cage and perform acrobatic monkey bar climbs across the roof before tumbling down three levels. In addition, the little demon ran and hid from us whenever we reached for her and was nearly impossible to place in her hamster ball because she used every bit of her might to keep from being placed inside.

Even a new cage without bars that resembled a plastic McDonald’s “Happy Meal” container did little to calm her anxious ways. She tried to burrow out of each and every corner. She also lost a little bit of her allure. Instead of swinging across bars, she was relegated to climbing through plastic colored tunnels — not very amusing anymore.

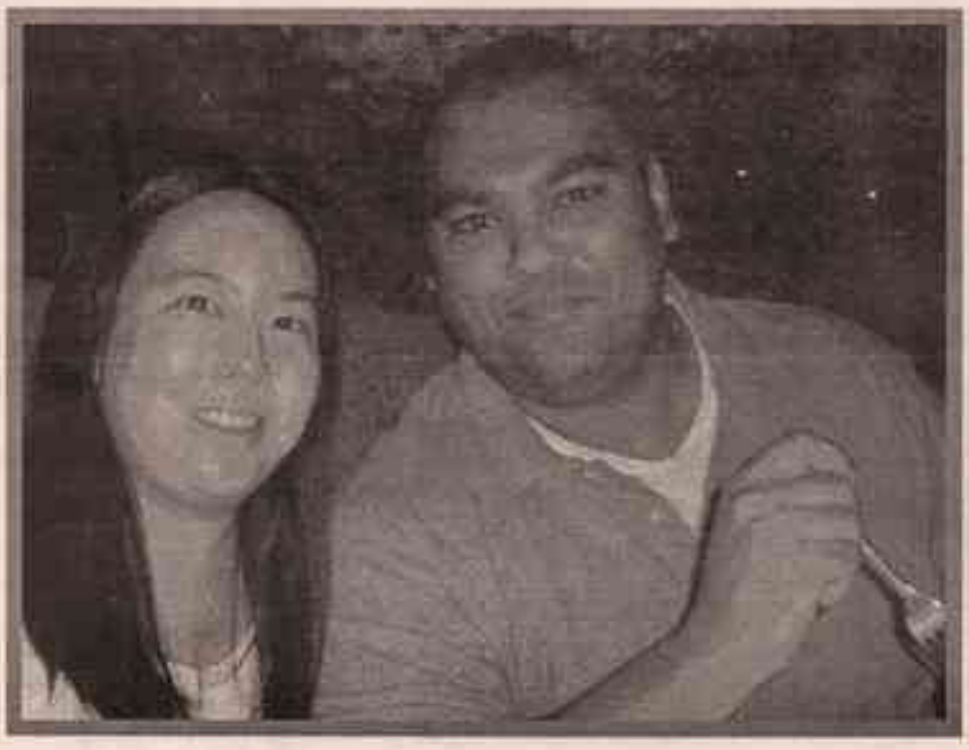
Sadly, after a little less than six months of terrorizing our happy little home, “Jack Bauer” — whom had also taken on a slew of other names such as “Hamster,” “Hammy” and “Jerk” — passed on.

It’s hard to say that it was a shock; she had begun to slow down. I knew something was really wrong when she didn’t bite me quite as hard as she used to when I would take her out of her cage to clean it. She didn’t scamper away as fast whenever one of us would come within five feet of her.

R.I.P. “Jack Bauer.” Still, I can’t say that I don’t miss her.

She was fun for a while when we tried to come up with different tactics to get her out of her home. It was hard to bury her (and by “bury” I mean throw her and her cage into the dumpster).

I think deep down, my wife didn’t mean the, “Hell no” response when I asked if she wanted another one. After all, she was a Christmas gift and as we all know, the gift doesn’t matter cause it’s the thought that counts. ❄



Kristy and Joe Craig (sometimes referred to as “El Joe,” which is not to be confused with “elbow”) were married on Sept. 24, 2005, and have made their residence in Alhambra, Calif. During their everyday normal lives, Kristy works as a lawyer and Joe makes his living being a writer. Regardless of the impressions made here, Joe does actually buy great gifts.

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What Does the Midwest Have that the West Coast Doesn't?

The West Coast may have In-N-Out Burgers and endless miles of ocean, but the Midwest is where I learned the true meaning of social justice.



By BRANDON MITA



The short answer is "not much." For this Japanese American and Chicago native, it's pretty depressing when you are craving a good double-decker "Animal style" cheeseburger and you realize that the only In-N-Out Burger locations are on the West Coast. The West Coast has an ocean. We have a makeshift ocean called Lake Michigan or Lake Superior. The West Coast has "soda" and we have "pop." For a person who is more culturally attuned and wanting social contact with those of the same ethnic heritage, the opportunities are few and far between. Unlike the Tomodachis, Tomo No Kais, as well as a plethora of other JA student and youth organizations on the West Coast, we starve ourselves in seas of corn looking for that kind of connection.

Another difference is the amount of history and knowledge of the Asian American experience that is taught in schools. While at the 2005 JACL National Youth/Student Council conference that was held in Salt Lake City, Utah, I was stunned when one of the participants from California got up and spoke about her high school's active engagement in learning about the plight of Asian Americans.

Comparatively, a high school history textbook in Chicago only contains two sentences about the Chinese American experience and one paragraph about JA internment during World War II. That's it! Taking a step back and analyzing the situation, up until college, I only had six sentences of formal education on the topic of AAs. Not once did I hear about the Hmong, Vietnamese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Korean, Thai, Cambodian, or Pacific Islander experiences. Amazing, isn't it?

According to Census 2000 data, AAs and Pacific Islanders make up a little over four percent of the general population in Chicago. I grew up in Skokie, a northern suburb of Chicago. Skokie, unlike many cities in the "Chi-Town" area, has a different dynamic in terms of its population demographics. My high school was 35 percent AA, which comprised of mainly Filipinos, Koreans, and South Asians. And then, there was me. The one out of three JAs in the entire school.

Despite the uniqueness of my situation in high school, outside of our microcosm, there existed an animosity and institutional branding against us. For example, our soccer team was probably the most ethnically diverse team in the state of Illinois. With about six Asians, five Latinos, three Eastern Europeans, and one African American, we almost always got an ear-lashing at the away games.

Being pelted with words that stung my soul was a constant reminder that I was different. I didn't know how to describe it at the time, but I knew of its hideous existence as pure and simple racism.

Another example would be the time I walked into a cemetery construction site. I was working as a runner for an electric company and I was on a job to deliver some much needed materials to a couple of the guys in the field. When I arrive on location with a brown paper bag in hand, an unfamiliar man approaches me with a grin on his face. He looks at me and then the brown paper bag and says, "Is that my Chinese food?"

Without a real sense of the situation, I shake my head in disagreement. This only provokes him to continue his attempt to make a mockery out of me. What's more disheartening is when the men I work with also chime in. How was I to defend myself? I exited the building with my head hung in shame.

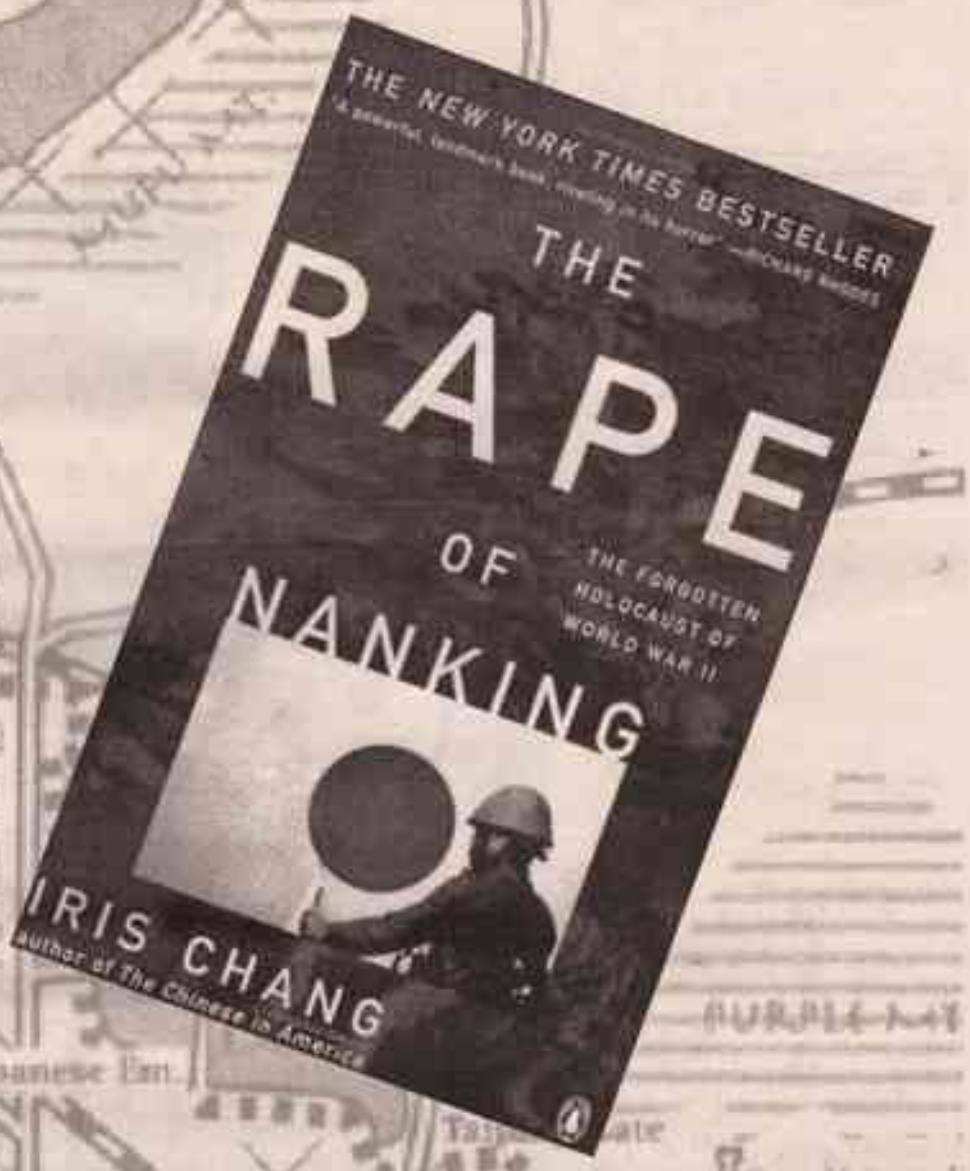
These are the memories I carried with me into college where I was first exposed to the Asian American Coalition Committee (AACC), a political organization at the University of Illinois at Chicago that focused on two objectives: 1) influence the administration to create an AA Studies program and 2) empower students to use their collective voices to obtain more resources.

Seems simple, but considering that this struggle has been reoccurring for the past 15 years with few, very small concessions, coupled with the fact that the University has turned away several excellent and enthusiastic AA academics from pursuing careers at UIC, makes the simple task of obtaining resources and an AAS program appear insurmountable.

It was here where I gained social and political consciousness as well as a sense of self-identity as an AA and a JA. It dawned on me halfway through freshmen year that college is a place to define myself and my goals in life. At first, I started out as a civil

See BRANDON MITA/Page 89

The Most Unanswered Question





By YUMI SAKUGAWA

Although the history of the Nanking Massacre, particularly Japan's role in this horrific moment in history, is something I grew up knowing, reading Iris Chang's 'The Rape of Nanking' made me finally ask: Why?

In high school, a Korean American classmate liked to remind me that the Japanese had wronged his people. That during their occupation of Korea, Japanese soldiers took pleasure in tossing newborn infants in the air and catching them with the point of their bayonets. And that somehow, my ancestry gave me the burden of shouldering the blame of this historical incident.

In spite of the hurt and confusion I felt from being unfairly accused of something that was beyond my responsibility, for the longest time I was strangely uncurious to learn more about the wartime atrocities committed by the Japanese during their imperialistic conquest of Asian countries.

Even in my freshman year of college when I took a road trip to San Francisco and passed by a group of demonstrators from China demanding wartime reparations from the Japanese government, I felt a pang of discomfort but let the feeling pass. Surely something that happened so long ago did not necessarily demand my attention or time.

All of this changed when I learned about the death of Iris Chang.

Iris Chang was a Chinese American freelance historian and journalist who became famous at the age of 29 after publishing a historical account of the Nanking Massacre in 1997, which publicized for the first time in public imagination the extent of the horrors that occurred when the Imperial Japanese Army invaded the city of Nanking during the Second Sino-Japanese War. Her tragic suicide in November 2004 was a shock to the Chinese American and greater Asian American community. As some people have commented, perhaps she was one final victim of the Nanking Massacre.

Less than a year before her death, I saw her in passing representing a panel of speakers at the *Los Angeles Times* Festival of Books at UCLA. From what little I remember of her, she carried herself as the intelligent, articulate and driven person that she was known for. It was my personal shock to learn of her death and somehow, this fleeting connection gave me the motivation to finally read "The Rape of Nanking" and to further educate myself on this subject.

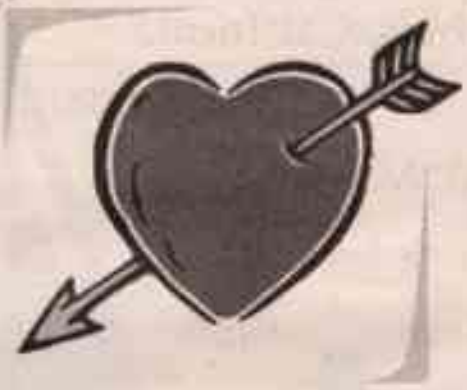
Nearly nine years after its publication, the subject matter in "The Rape of Nanking" continues to be a source of bitter international conflict between Japan and China. Japanese history textbooks continue to underplay and omit historical details. Controversy continues whether or not the new Prime Minister of Japan will visit the Yasukuni Shrine, a shrine in Tokyo dedicated to the spirits of the dead soldiers who served the Emperor, some of them who include Class A war criminals. As for the many young Japanese people like myself, they are faced with the question of how to handle this dark legacy of history for future generations.

During her life, Iris Chang used her public celebrity to demand that the Japanese government provide reparations for the living victims of the Nanking Massacre and to offer a more sincere apology for the crimes that have been committed during their imperialistic rule. Still, she emphasized in her book that "The Rape of Nanking" was not meant to condemn the Japanese as an ethic group, but to remind people that evil is born out of "a dangerous

See YUMI SAKUGAWA/Page 83

Cultural









Experimentation



By LAURA MARSHALL

My Japanese boyfriend glances down at me, turning my shoulders toward him to get a better look. His eyes slowly trace the contours of my face, examining my sun-tanned skin, my "tall" nose, my thick dark hair. He's trying to make sense of the combination of East and West, I think, or maybe he's noticing the wrinkles around my eyes when I smile. As is often the case here in Japan, I can never quite guess what others are thinking — yet I'm somehow left feeling uncomfortably inadequate.

'I am not Japanese,' I want to tell him. Even though my mom is a Sansei and I supposedly got half of her genes, I certainly don't measure up to the Japanese ideal of feminine beauty. The truth is, I'm a whopping size six in a land of zeros and twos, and even worse, I fail to use products like "Beautiful Diet" that might help me conform. And another confession: I usually dash out of my host family's house in the morning *without putting on makeup*.

So why would my boyfriend, Yuta, want to date a foreigner freak like me? I definitely don't fit into his preconceptions of gender roles. "You act so *otokoppoi*," so *boyish*, he tells me. "*But*," he always adds quickly in Japanese, "that's not a *bad* thing. I mean, I like a girl who can finish a whole bowl of ramen." Or, "I've just never *heard* of a girl who would rather hike than shop … but actually, I think that's kind of cool."

Yuta's friends ask him what it's like to date a "Western" girl. Before they meet me, a lot of them assume that I'm probably loud, bossy, and assertive — but also *eroi*, very *sexy*, in a self-assured, Hollywood sort of way.

After they meet me, however, their illusions are invariably shattered. "She's so cute!" the girls squeal, and even though they're just politely flattering me for Yuta's benefit, I still end up blushing from

See LAURA MARSHALL/Page 83



Writer Laura Marshall (*pictured second from right)* with her family in front of the Heian Jingu gates in Kyoto, Japan.

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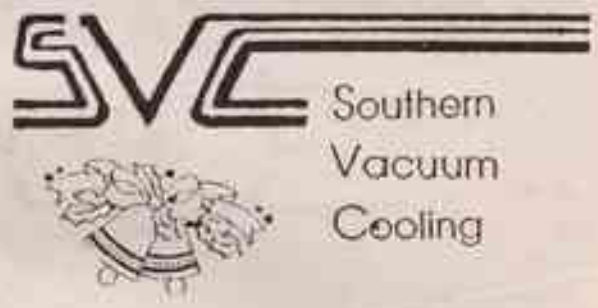


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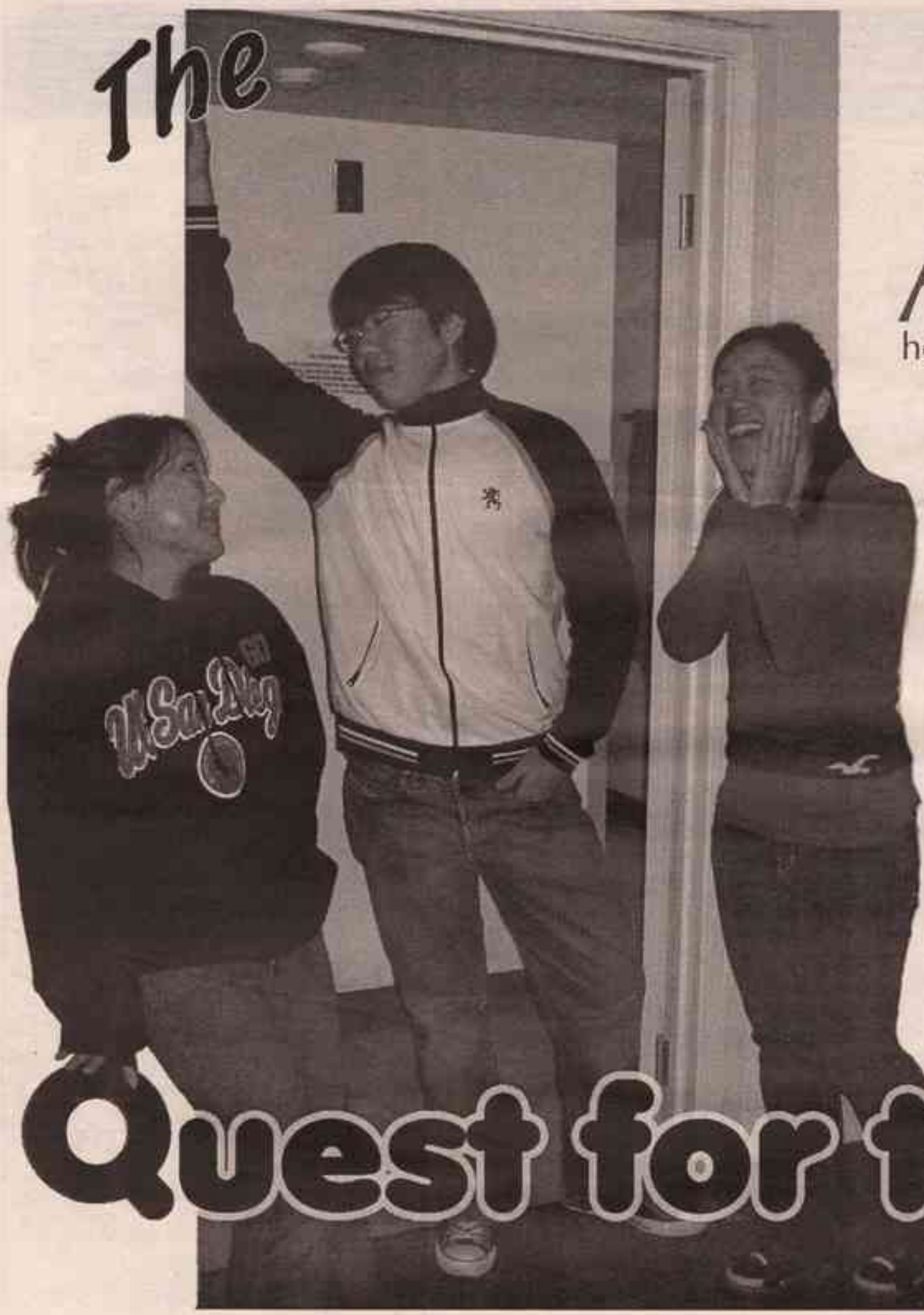


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The Quest for the



A women may hear many of these same pick up lines through the years — some crude, some rude, and some down-right desperate — but in the end all seem to hit a humorous note.

By STACY IWATA

Everyone is searching for something. Some might be searching for who they are or perhaps what makes them different from society. Others might be searching for love — for that one person that makes them "whole." No matter what it is, we are all searching for something.

What am I searching for? I am searching for the ultimate pick-up line.

Everybody knows that pick-up lines are the worst and most degrading way to "pick up" women at social outings and gatherings. Wikipedia defines pick-up lines as "the very nature of pick-up lines, short and often crude, means that there is a low chance of success when they are used."

If pick-up lines have such a low success rate, then why do people even bother to use them? If pick-up lines are that bad, then why is a 20-year-old college student bothering to search for them?

To be honest, I have heard some really good pick-up lines in my life and I think they're funny. Today's pick-up lines have gotten pretty creative; "Hey baby, what's your sign?" just doesn't cut it anymore. So as I search for that one line that will make me laugh until I burst an artery, I make mental notes of the ones I have heard that deserve some recognition.

This is why I have written my top ten favorite pick-up lines thus far. Enjoy, but use with caution!

1. Boy goes up to a girl and starts fanning her face vigorously.

GIRL: ***"What are you doing?"***
BOY: ***"I'm keeping the bees away from this honey!!"***

I first heard this at my church's vacation bible school that I used to work at from a new teacher aide. I thought it was so ridiculous that it just had to get on this list. All of my friends in UC San Diego's Nikkei Student Union (NSU) thought it was pretty awesome as well — so awesome that it was used in a skit promoting a clubbing event in our first general body meeting!

2. "If you were DNA, I'd be DNA helicase so that I can unzip your genes."

My friend from NSU, Darius Chan, told me this one when I told him that I was writing an article about pick-up lines. I think it goes to show how "hip" and "fresh" we both are to appreciate a pick-up line about genetics.

3. "Baby, I wish I could be your derivative so that I can be tangent to your curves."

This pick-up line is pretty popular and has been circulating around the internet for a while. Those



CRAIG ISHII AND STACY IWATA



CHRISTY SAKAMOTO AND STACY IWATA



Ultimate Pick-Up Line

that understand and appreciate mathematics probably find this to be nothing short of awesome, but to those that can't do simple arithmetic to save their lives (like me), it would take a while to figure out what it means. Thankfully, I learned a thing or two in my calculus class so I too can embrace this line in all of its nerdy glory.

4. Boy starts fanning face with a disgusted look, as if he smelled something putrid.

Boy: ***"Whooo ... did you just fart?"***
Girl: ***"No, why?"***
Boy: ***"'Cause you blew me away!"***

I heard this at the same NSU meeting promoting the clubbing event that the "honey" pick-up line (#1) was used in. It's gross, it's crude and it's downright funny. Who says flatulence can't be sexy?

5. "If I were Peter Pan, you'd be my happy thought."

This is one of the cuter pick-up lines that I've heard, and it's even better because it has a Disney reference. (I am an avid fan of Disney, especially the classics.) As cute as this is though, it will still result in failure if it were to be used seriously.

6. "Have you heard the latest health report? It says you need your daily dose of 'Vitamin Me'!"

The Vitamin Me pick-up line has been around for a while, but it is still ridiculous enough to make it on the list. It's one of the more egocentric pick-up lines, but it's pretty funny watching your friends yell this, thinking they're kings of the universe.

7. Boy: "So ... do you know how much a polar bear weighs?"

Girl: ***"No, how much?"***
Boy: ***"Enough to break the ice ... Hi, my name is _____!*** **(extends hand to girl)**

I first heard my friend say this at an NSU event. I don't know if this really qualifies as an actual pick-up line or just a really corny greeting. Either way, this is good for breaking the ice when you first meet someone!

8. "Hey baby, you want to go out? I've got meal points."

At UCSD, first years have "meal points" to use at the on-campus dining halls all year. Now, the dining halls aren't exactly 5-star restaurants — they're hard enough to eat at on an everyday basis, let alone going there to eat on a date. With this in mind, my friend from high school who attends UCSD came up with this pick-up line for reasons that are unknown to me.

9. "Are you the square root of 2? Because you're making me feel all irrational."

This is one of my roommate's favorite pick-up lines, and who can blame her? It's nerdy, it's dorky and it gives a warm, irrational feeling inside.

10. "Please, I'm so lonely."

My friend came up with this one in high school. It's so pitiful that it's ridiculous, though it is straight to the point and brutally honest. Here's to you Mike. ❄

Stacy Iwata currently attends UC San Diego and was the Pacific Citizen *intern this past summer.*

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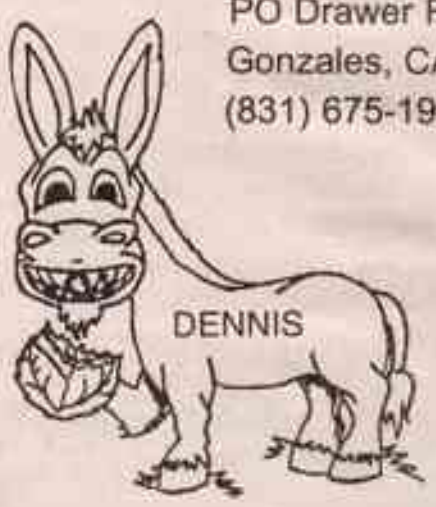
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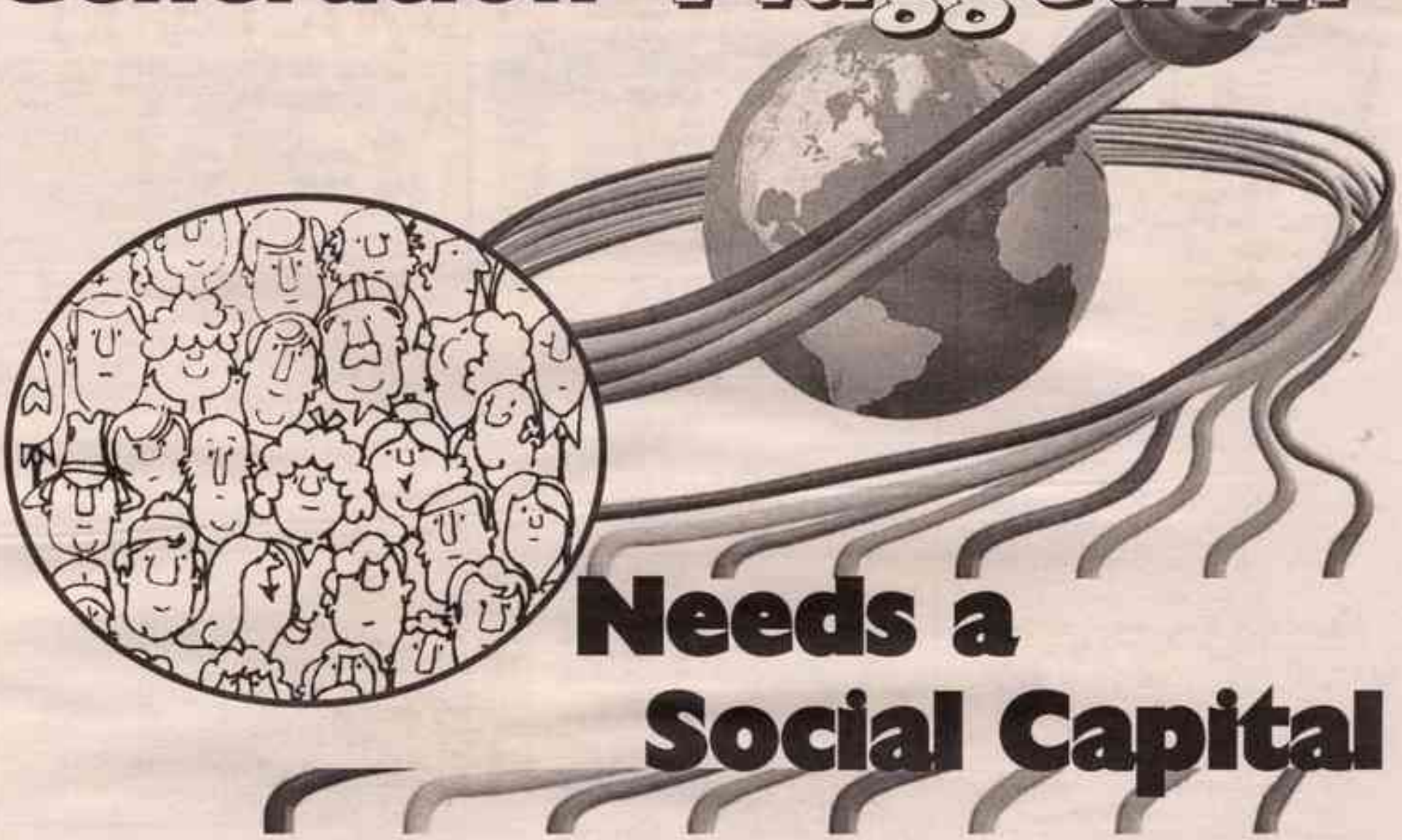
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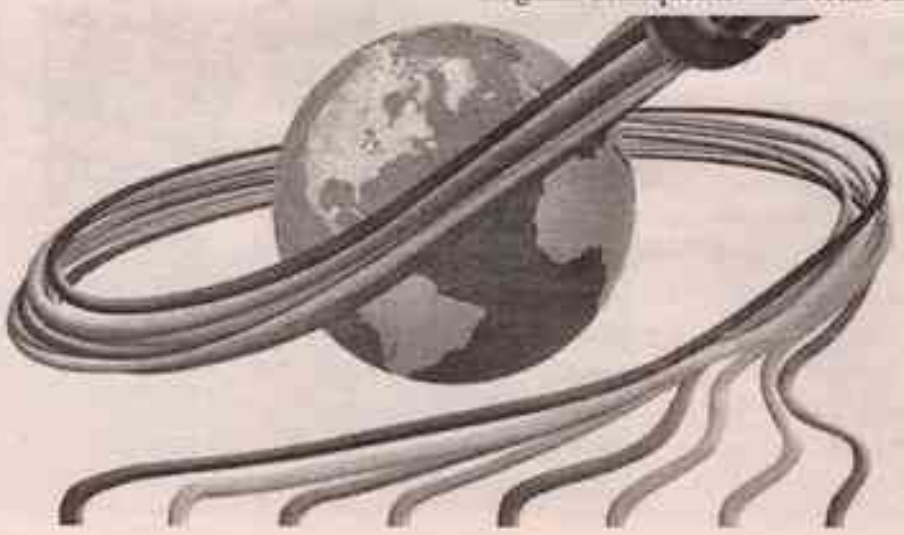


By KIYOMI MACDONALD

The light breeze was a welcome interruption as we walked across the National Mall in stifling, mid-summer heat. Large chain-link fences separated dirt covered plots from sections of dead grass that gave way underfoot. Meandering, white concrete sidewalks traversed the famous park and fruitless trees broke the monotonous landscape.

Where were the sprawling couples clad in bell-bottoms? Where had the girls in loose tunics with long, wavy hair and bright flowers gone? They surely did not dance at the Mall today.

Looking at my father, I recognized the drastic changes that our country had undergone between his teenage years and mine. He was a hippie, growing up among flagrant delinquents — at least that is the image of the 1960s made famous by textbooks. I wished that I could have seen him and his cohorts protesting because it really wasn't such a bad thing. The entire nation now faces a more serious problem than flamboyant youth.



Summer is over, college has begun, and everyday I walk from my chilly, basement apartment to the Brigham Young University campus. We students move like an amoeba — conglomerating at corners waiting for lights to change, crowding each other at the bases of stairs waiting to be funneled up a narrow case, breaking off tiny pieces of ourselves to enter various buildings and plodding up the slopes of campus until there is enough room to foster dispersion.

At the heart of all this movement is an eerie silence. Certainly there is *noise*: high heels clipping at the pavement, change rattling in someone's pocket, cars rushing before the next pedestrian enters the crosswalk.

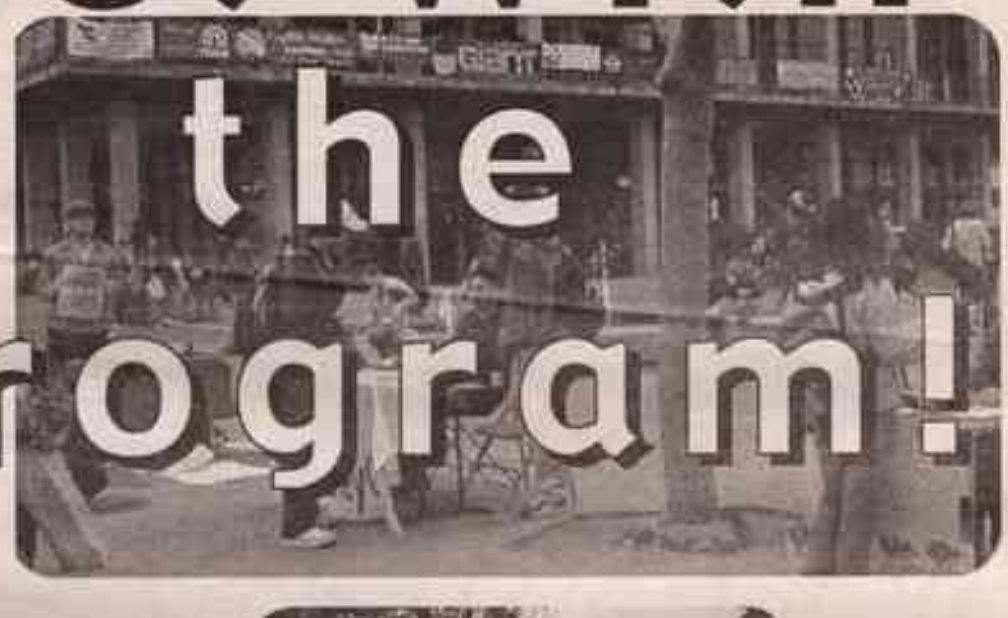
Above all these noises, though, I've learned to hone in on the two most subtle and most prevalent. Inevitably someone's iPod is turned up just a bit louder than necessary and people's phone conversations are miraculously maintained as they gasp for breath while racing up the hill.

That is our problem — not the gasping for breath — but the fact that we are a "plugged in" generation.

Dr. Robert Putnam, a Harvard professor, is very concerned with the decrease in America's "social capital." The concept of social capital is based on one of the most basic principles of economics: if you invest in something profitable, you will gain something. Putnam explains that if you invest in con-

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Get With the Program!





By JASMINE JANE CHO





Message to the youth: political activity and activism create the backbone of democracy — so get involved!

As a student of the University of California, Berkeley, I am relentlessly bombarded with propaganda of a political nature each day that I walk through Sproul Plaza. Student run organizations line the busy plaza with their tables and posters, and volunteers eagerly search the crowd for casual eye contact from even the mildly curious pedestrian. I probably receive at least 10 flyers each week — and I'm only one of the 30,000 students at Cal.

Student activism, recruitment, and outreach, whatever you want to call it, continues at a steady high. In fact, several weeks ago, a group of students organized in front of Sather Gate to protest the amount of paper wasted by these proselytizers.

Most would complain about the inordinate amount of unwarranted exposure to political agendas. However, I gladly appreciate the passion of my generation. In a time when the most recent presidential election saw that only 47 percent of citizens from ages 18-24 voted, the activism of my fellow peers is quite refreshing.

The statistic above unsettles me because I believe there is much to improve in our country and much we can do to achieve a more democratic nation. We can start with sharpening and opening our minds. Education is not confined to the walls of our schools. It is possible to learn more about the sociology of poverty and ethnic/racial stratification from volunteering at a homeless shelter than from reading a textbook about it in Sociology 201.

Read journals and news articles. Watch documentaries! Talk to professors and community leaders. These are (often free) sources of information that are guaranteed to change the way you approach politics, which, by the way, cannot be separated from your life in the way that an orange peel can be separated from an orange. It is up to us, not the government, to shape public policy by voting. Voting for candidates for public office and lobbying public officials are important; remember, these are the people influencing the legal age we can drive, drink, smoke, serve in the military, pay taxes, and most importantly, buy lottery tickets.

Seriously, our city council members have the power to build recreational facilities for youth and provide funding for programs to empower youth. They shape the landscape of our cities when they use public opinion to name schools, increase the development of low-cost housing for families and regulate the police department.

On a larger scale, state officials influence our conservation of natural resources through laws that regulate the toxic emissions from our automobiles and promote the use of alternative fuels. They influence the quality and fairness of public education through laws that affect the funding we receive as college students, the resources public schools have and the types of standardized tests elementary-age students may have to take to demonstrate their precocity and thus be eligible for advanced education.

Even more broadly, federal officials decide our foreign policy, which, for the quarter of Californians who were reported as foreign-born on the 2000 Census, may determine the livelihood of close relatives. Because we live in a representative democracy, we are responsible for ensuring that our values and opinions are advocated — we shouldn't blame our public officials if we don't make an effort to choose them and tell them what is important to us.

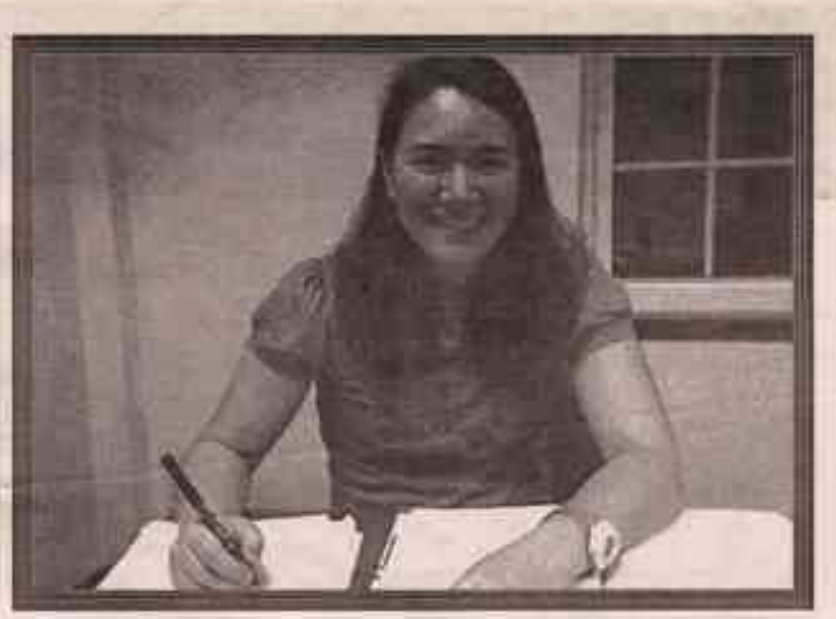
Young people face the challenge of breaking free from their present inertia. When issues that affect us in so many ways abound, will we take our eyes off Facebook.com and, yes, even studying for a second and mobilize ourselves to vote and just as important, to lobby our public officials? ❄



Jasmine Jane Cho is a Florin JACL member and the 2006 recipient of the Henry & Chiyo Memorial # 2 Scholarship.



Kids grow up so fast: Mark with Hana



Settling for Public In-State Colleges:

A National Disappointment

By HANA OZAKI

So you're finally going to college, and after months of nervous anticipation and frantic preparation you're about to cross the threshold into a world of cramped dorm rooms, unrelenting professors and unbelievably time-consuming Facebook.com addictions.

The excitement of leaving home and being independent for the first time is overwhelming, but there is one harsh reality that undeniably taints the experience for many freshmen all around the country: the money-saving "in-state settle."

Many college students face the dilemma of having to settle for an in-state school because of unaffordable tuition costs at their first-choice private or public out-of-state colleges and they find themselves reluctantly having to search for loyalty to a university that they swore they would never attend.

Why are so many of us college freshmen faced with this predicament, and what can we do about it?

Due primarily to increased labor costs for professors, increased financial aid for students from lower-income families and the emphasis on college prestige, college tuition has increased over the past 20 years — especially for private universities and out-of-state students attending public colleges.


Hana *(center)* with her parents.

Consequently, a surprising number of college freshmen without scholarships or substantial financial aid packages are forced to make the "in-state settle" and attend a cheaper, and often times, less prestigious public college in their state.

The disappointment of turning down an acceptance from a first-choice school because of exorbitant tuition costs, not to mention room and board — which adds at least another $10,000 or more per year — is perhaps one of the most heartbreaking letdowns any student can experience in his or her first 18 years of life. It is also one of the most painful blows to one's pride when they are forced to accept an offer from that state school that they wish they didn't have to attend.

> *'I knew that I had no choice but to attend a public university in Georgia, my home state. Bitterness practically consumed me that summer, and I couldn't seem to force myself to let go of all my resentment.'*

After receiving a meager financial aid award consisting completely of loans from my first-choice school (a public college in California), I knew that I had no choice but to attend a public university in Georgia, my home state. Bitterness practically consumed me that summer, and I couldn't seem to force myself to let go of all my resentment.

But a few weeks before college started, I realized that I had come to a fork in the road: I could either keep cursing my situation and make my college experience miserable or I could begin to be optimistic and make the best of the opportunities available. Changing my outlook was not an easy choice. At times I still feel painful surges of regret and disappointment and wonder what could have been, but making an effort to embrace life here has made me much happier than I would have thought.

Of course, there are those students out there who are either fortunate enough to be able to afford to go to their dream schools and those that take the plunge by accumulating tens and often hundreds of thousands of dollars in student loans. But to my fellow reluctant in-staters and to those that might find themselves in this situation in the future, I suggest that you look at your circumstances with an optimistic perspective and believe that you are at the right school at the right time.

Thinking of what could have been or what could be will only make you less appreciative of the experiences you can have at your state school and holding on to bitterness will inevitably lead to an unhappy and unfulfilling college experience.

Remember that there is always the possibility of attending your dream school for grad, law or medical school. And when your friends at college give you annoyed looks when you vent occasionally, take comfort in the fact that there are thousands of angry students like you all around the country trying to cope with their disappointment. ❄

Hana Ozaki is a Southeast JACL chapter member and the 2006 Masao & Sumako Itano Memorial Scholarship recipient.

— (INTANGIBLE DREAMS)



The heartbreak of a reluctant 'in-stater' is caused by dollar signs. Listed below are some private and out-of-state public universities Hana and her friends had to forgo because of unaffordable tuition.

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George Washington University (Wash., D.C.)	$37,820
Notre Dame (IN)	$33,407
Swarthmore College (PA)	$33,232
University of Virginia *(out of state)*	$25,945
Cornell University (NY)	$32,981
New York University	$33,420
Vanderbilt University (TN)	$33,440
Tulane University (LA)	$34,896
University of Michigan — Ann Arbor	$29,131 *(out of state)*

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The Changing World of College

By DEREK FURUKAWA



When I started college back in 1995, I thought I was pretty technologically savvy. I had used computers since elementary school and had even bought a new Macintosh to adorn my residence hall room. I thought it was cool that I already knew how to use e-mail, even though most of the people I knew didn't even have it. I was one of the few that had a computer *in* my room.

Over the years, I began to notice the computer labs becoming busier and busier. By the time I was a second-year senior, everyone was raving about how they could burn music onto a CD and some guy just came out with something called Napster.



In four short years, my "state of the art" computer had become obsolete several times over, but I still continued using my technology.

If I were to still have that computer today, I would be either laughed at or heralded for my infinite patience with the technology. I work and study in a world that is now full of new technologies and innovations. Classes and even degrees can now be completed without ever having a face-to-face conversation. The changes in today's higher education setting are evident everyday.

To start, there have been several technological advancements that have assisted higher education. Not only have sophisticated databases helped streamline the retrieval of student information, but communication such as e-mail and instant messenger have changed the way that services are delivered to students.

Students receive links to Web sites rather than hard copy course catalogues. They register online rather than waiting in line at the registration window. Student services must change their way of thinking to offer services more often and have them available at all hours. Most importantly, today's college students have a vast understanding of technology that usually exceeds the knowledge level of those actually working at the colleges.

We have developed into a society of convenience. We are able to do almost everything through technology. From banking to shopping, research to telecommuting, and chatting to dating — our world has made a marked change. Now, students are able to access much of this information from their cellular phones while always keeping connected to their network of friends.

Students have become as outwardly distant from each other. Just like a bustling downtown, you will see droves of people on a college campus walking and talking on their cell phones, often while someone is walking with them. I can't criticize them because I find myself doing it from time to time.

The biggest complaint from traditionalists and baby boomers is that the students of today live



Most of the students were born in 1988, which means that Billy Carter, Lucille Ball, Gilda Radner, Billy Martin, Andy Gibb, and Secretariat have always been dead.

life without building the social skills through traditional F2F (that stands for "face to face" for those unfamiliar with the lingo) values. The social networking of today's college student does not solely revolve around school rallies and sporting events. You see it everyday through the use of programs like Facebook.com.

New students are already forming their communities before even stepping foot on the campus. It's a changing world with a real need for everyone to understand the mentality of Generation Y, or "millennials," as they are also called.

Beloit College distributes a mindset list for students entering college. It helps us get a sense of what today's incoming college students grew up on. Here are some items of interest regarding the class of 2010:

- For most of their lives, major U.S. airlines have been bankrupt.
- There has always been only one Germany.



There has never been a 'skyhook' in the NBA.

- They have never heard anyone actually 'ring it up' on a cash register.
- They are wireless, yet always connected.
- A coffee has always taken longer to make than a milkshake.
- 'Google' has always been a verb.
- Bar codes have always been on everything, from library cards and snail mail to retail items.
- Madden has always been a game, not a Super Bowl-winning coach.
- Reality shows have always been on television.



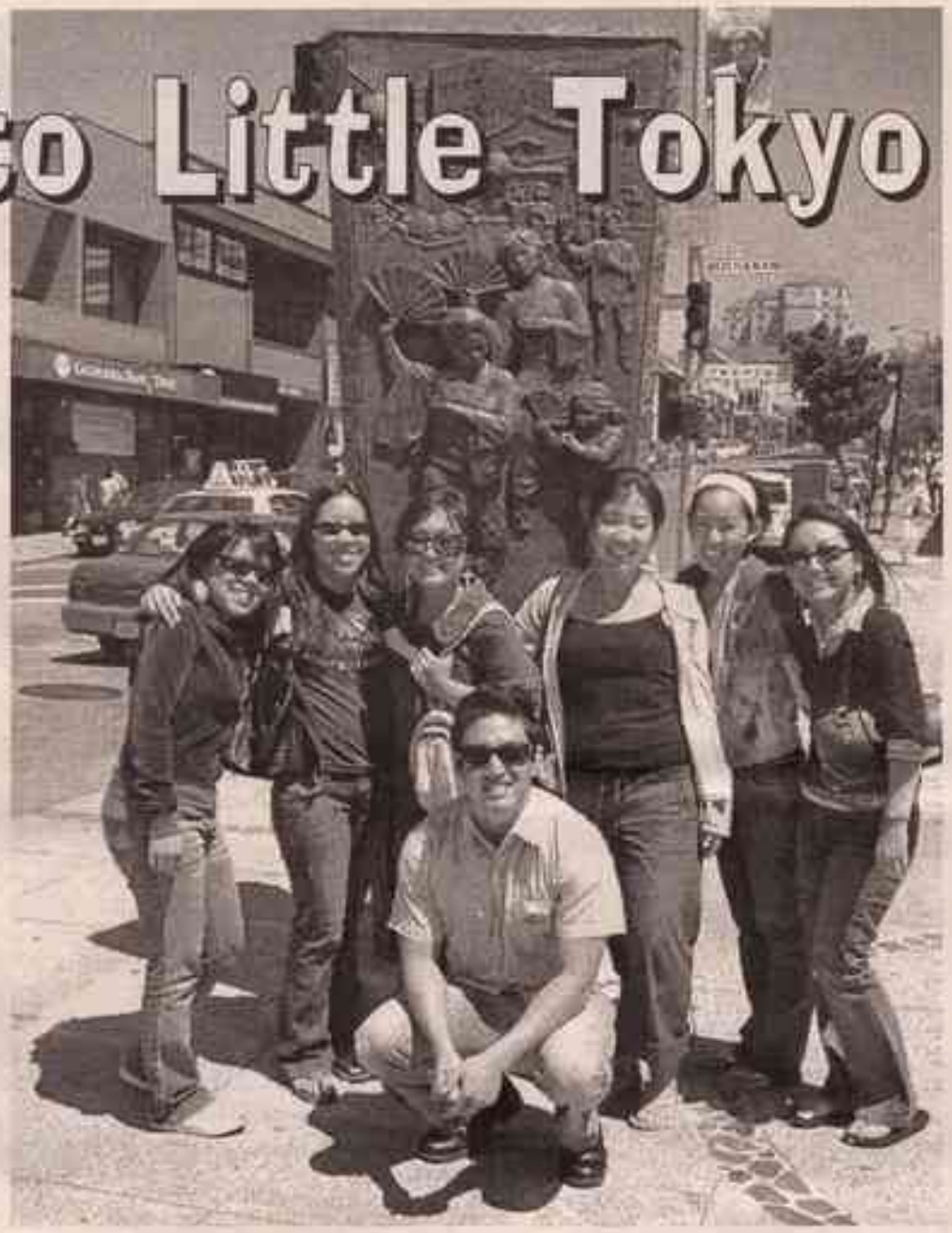
Small holiday lights have always been in style.

See DEREK FURUKAWA/Page 85

Connections to Little Tokyo

nikkei community internship

A summer in the Nikkei Community Internship program helps this JA youth find a connection to the community.





By SALLY KIKUCHI

Growing up in a Southern California suburb, Little Tokyo was as foreign to me as Chinatown. I thought of it as a place for cultural festivals and a community of people that I couldn't necessarily relate to. The extent of my cultural community seemed limited to the Mitsuwa Marketplace in the neighboring city. This isn't to say that I didn't have any association to my Japanese background; I grew up eating home cooked Japanese food, hearing my parents speak Japanese, and practicing traditional Japanese customs during the holidays.

But despite my assumed cultural familiarity, I wasn't aware of the opportunities available to me in Little Tokyo, other than its role as the host of New Year's celebrations and Nisei Week festivities. I knew of its existence, but coming to think of Little Tokyo as a community of my own never seemed like an option. But my situation recently underwent a significant change.

This summer, I took part in the Nikkei Community Internship, a program that places college students in various Japanese American community based organizations. Having heard about the program through friends in the UC Berkeley Nikkei Student Union, I had expectations of my internship to be a simple job that just happened to be located in Little Tokyo. What I didn't expect was how much time and sincere thought I would actually put into my work: I wouldn't know what effect this experience would have on my outlook on not only the Little Tokyo community, but also on my own cultural identity as a JA.

I was placed at the Little Tokyo Service Center, with a focus on community development and outreach. At first, I felt overwhelmed by the amount of work that I had to do during the summer, and I also felt the personal need to research the history of Little Tokyo to better understand my work. My work involved organizing a booth at the Tofu Festival, promoting public awareness of the Little Tokyo Recreation Center project, and attending various Community Council meetings related to the maintenance of Little Tokyo, in addition to many other projects.

The NCI Program also included a weekly meeting with all seven of us Southern California interns in order to debrief on our current projects and to meet with community leaders through work training. We had the opportunity to attend international symposiums, get the "inside look" of various established organizations, and discuss many important

See SALLY KIKUCHI/Page 91



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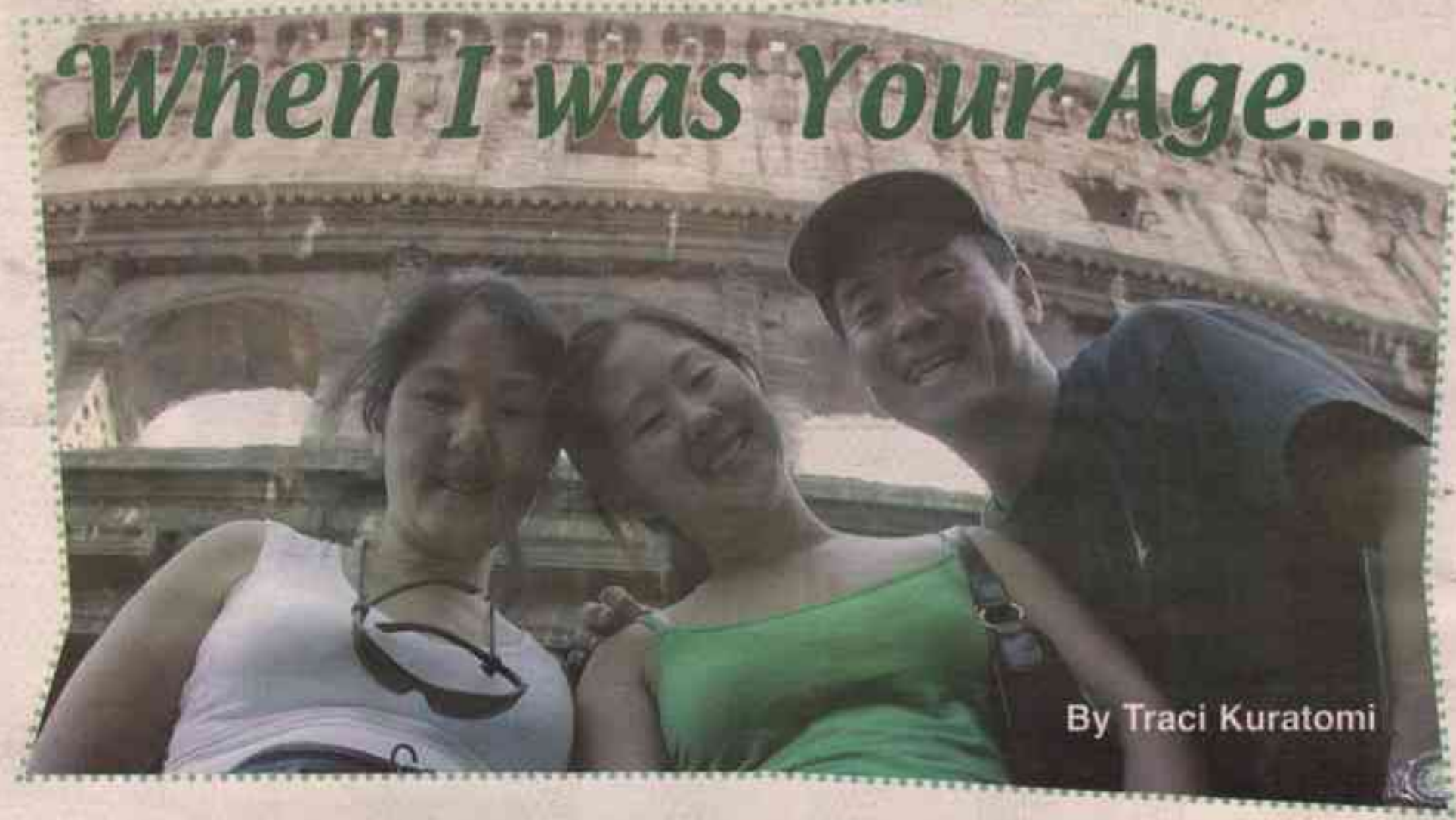
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FRESNO CHAPTER JACL

When I was Your Age...



By Traci Kuratomi

Thirty years in the future, what will we tell our children? What makes our generation unique?

We'll never say:

"When I was your age, I had to walk three miles in the snow to get to school" or "When I was your age, I faced discrimination and segregation" or "When I was your age, I protested against the Vietnam War."

Our generation does not have a great economic, social or ideological struggle that defines us. As a result, many people have begun to wonder if our generation has become the generation without a cause and the generation without meaning.

An examination of the past decade proves this belief. As the generation that represents the beginning of the 21st century, we have done surprisingly little. To some extent, one could argue that the remnants of the punk movement belong in our generation, but this was not anything like the hippie movement of the 70s. The hippie movement was based on the ideological belief that war is wrong and that peace should be embraced. The punk movement was more of a widespread rebellion and fight to be different, rather than for any cause. The fact that we have a movement that focuses on being different proves that we aren't.

Rather than any real change instigated by our generation, we have allowed ourselves to be defined by the changes and events that have occurred in our lifetime. One change that has shaped our generation from the beginning was the tremendous increase in technology. We are arguably the first generation to be truly "wired." Technology has become an integral part of our lives, presenting us with opportunities far beyond any of those who have come before us. We can find information on the internet in seconds and communicate with anyone in the world.

Essentially, we were given the world at our fingertips.

What has resulted from this power? Did it lead to tremendous globalization and interpersonal communication? No. Instead, technology has caused us to become more withdrawn and isolated. We now have a million and one ways to separate ourselves from the world whether it be spending all day surfing the net or playing our Xboxes. Today there are individuals who know more about the lives of the characters on "Lost" and "Grey's Anatomy" than the lives of their own family members and friends. We can shop, play poker and even learn about people (through www.facebook.com) without talking to a single individual.

As we plug into our iPods in a very "Fahrenheit 451" manner, we don't speak to people, don't reflect and don't participate in society.





'Today there are individuals who know more about the lives of the characters on "Lost" and "Grey's Anatomy" than the lives of their own family members and friends.'

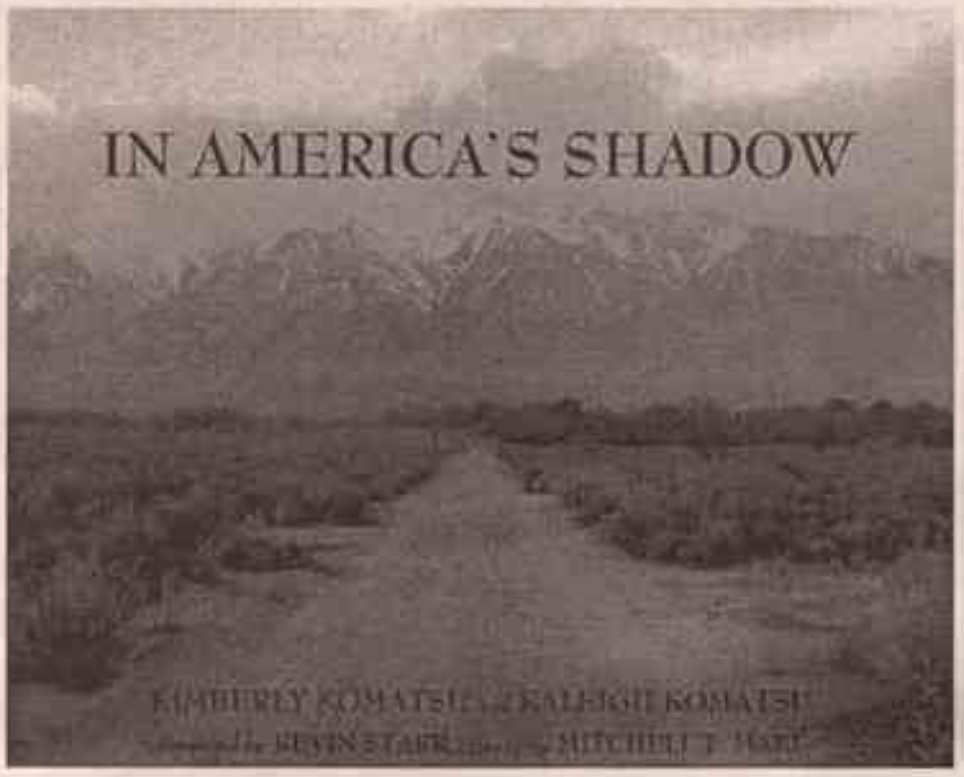
However, there is another event that has drastically changed our generation. The attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, happened when we were just old enough to understand them. Moreover, they have had a deep and lasting impact on us. The United States — like us as teenagers — felt invincible and immortal. These attacks forced the country and forced us to realize our vulnerability and mortality. Whereas this realization does not hit many people until the middle of their lives or after a life-changing experience, our generation received it early.

In thinking about death, you think about the life you live and the legacy you will leave. To some extent, our generation has now been spurred to make a difference and is not content with simply living their lives.

In the end, our generation has yet to be defined. We no longer have to struggle for basic rights and livelihood. We now have two clear options — one option is that we can live quite comfortably and become apathetic, tuning out the world and each other. The other is to use the understanding of our mortality to motivate us to change the world and make a difference.

In thirty years, when we talk to our children what will we tell them and what will we say that we did when we were their age?

Traci Kuratomi is currently attending Smith College in Massachusetts. She is a San Fernando Valley JACL member and a 2006 recipient of the Nobuko R. Kodama Memorial Scholarship from JACL.



'IN AMERICA'S SHADOW':

Fourth generation Japanese American authors Kimberly and Kaleigh Komatsu take readers on a pilgrimage into the passages of history and memory to witness an almost forgotten, yet historically significant moment in America's past.

Over 60 years ago, amidst the tragic and turbulent times of World War II, more than 120,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry were forced from their homes and sent to live in internment camps. Lives were changed forever, lifetimes were left behind, losses were devastating and immeasurable.



But out of the turmoil of a world at war, there emerged remarkable stories of quiet courage and indomitable spirit. Ones that can truly touch us and teach us in countless ways about the lives of those who have come before us — where they stood, what they saw, what life was like in America's shadow.

It is 1942, when a young JA girl and her grandfather board a train bound for a distant and desolate place. The shattering effects of war have left a community torn apart, and the young girl has watched as those around her lose their homes, their way of life, but most importantly their freedom.

'That was a very long time ago, Grandfather says to me. The United States is in a terrible war and the government has issued Executive Order 9066. This means that we will have to leave everything behind and go live in a place called an internment camp. All we can take is what we can carry and what we can carry is all that we will have left in this world. Do not be afraid, Grandfather says to me. 9066 is only a number and nothing more. It cannot take away who we are, but I know it is the number that will change our lives forever.'

— from 'In America's Shadow'



The images here appear in 'In America's Shadow,' courtesy of Kimberly and Kaleigh Komatsu.

Question: What was your inspiration for writing this book?

Kaleigh Komatsu: The initial inspiration for 'In America's Shadow' came from not one, but many sources. Growing up listening to family stories told by our older relatives, we wanted to make sure that the voices of previous generations would continue to be heard, even as time passes.

Many family members quietly reflected when they saw moments of their lives in print, remembering camps and remembering relatives and friends who are no longer here … it was remembering that brought sadness, but not despair.

We hope that whoever reads this story will see truth in it and will see their own story. I think we're coming to a time in our culture and society that we want to reflect on the past, and look towards these unspoken stories.

Q: The photographs in the book are really extraordinary. Where did you acquire those?

Kimberly Komatsu: Well, when we originally started our project, we went first to our family albums. For us, that was the most meaningful and the most accessible. We drew from there first and then went to research images at different museums and archives.

For us, the images are equally as important as the prose of the book — to see things like the American West, Japanese American evacuation, American culture from the early

Yonsei Writers and Sisters Kimberly and Kaleigh Komatsu Talk About Inspiration, History, and Lessons Learned in Their Debut Book







'In America's Shadow' by Kimberly and Kaleigh Komatsu tells the story of the Japanese American community during World War II.

The book chronicles the various events, people, and times through the eyes of a young girl named Aiko (pictured above) and her grandfather.

'We hope that it is a commemoration and a dedication to those who lived through it. We also hope that for people our age, it will spark their interest in talking to their families — documenting their own family stories. I think that through the stories and lives of any individual and their personal remembrances, an entire American history can be seen.'

Kaleigh Komatsu, Author

1900s to the 1940s, and the story of Japanese immigrating to America and how they contributed to the building of America. They were apart of the American landscape. It was important to us to show the diversity of the individuals that made up America.

Q: Why did you write this book especially for children and young adults?

Kimberly Komatsu: We wanted to be able to reach them on an emotional level and understand the story from the perspective of a child. We chose to tell the story through a child and her grandfather, because I think it's a universal relationship, all of us can relate.

It's especially meaningful for us when people say, 'I'm going to read this with my grandchild,' that this book opens up the door for this kind of intergenerational conversation; I think it is something that is very special.

Kaleigh Komatsu: Through the personal stories in the book, the Grandfather character is imparting more than mere recollections, but he is giving the gift of memory, a sense of identity, and the wisdom to look beyond any circumstance towards a greater hope. We hope this is a message that readers will take away.

I think Kevin Starr in the foreword of the book states it best: 'Young people reading "In America's Shadow" will be challenged to grasp and meditate upon a most complex message indeed; namely, that in the midst of tragedy and injustice, nobility and family values managed to prevail and love of country engendered the beginnings of reconciliation and forgiveness.'

Q: What kind of impact do you hope this book will have?

Kaleigh Komatsu: Well, we hope that it is a commemoration and a dedication to those who lived through it. We also hope that for people our age, it will spark their interest in talking to their families — documenting their own family stories. I think that through the stories and lives of any individual and their personal remembrances, an entire American history can be seen.

It really is all about education. I think that by sharing this story with children, or with anyone at any age, it puts a spotlight on this tumultuous time in American history, in our history. Although the book will definitely serve as an important history lesson about JAs during World War II, we hope that young readers will remember the most significant statement from the book: "that you cannot imprison a spirit that refuses to be imprisoned." The history of JAs continues to reaffirm the truth of this statement. ❁



Kimberly (right) and Kaleigh Komatsu are members of the JACL East Los Angeles chapter and were recently honored by the PSW District at their annual awards dinner.

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Food, the Universal Language











1. Kristica Kolyouthapong (left) and Krista Fierro get ready to cook up some savory dishes;

2. Writer Kimberly Kan (right) savors some of her roommate Stacy Iwata's cooking; and

3. (l-r): Roommates Stacy, Kimberly, Kristica, and Krista share a love for cooking and have treated each other to their culture's most savory dishes. Enjoy!

By KIMBERLY KAN

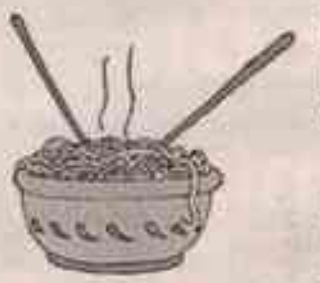
Along with a culturally diverse group of roommates comes a variety of tasty Japanese, Filipino, and Thai dishes to savor and digest.

Growing up in Rowland Heights, Calif. — a town that nearly resembles Chinatown — I've had access to all types of food. Chinese, Korean BBQ, Japanese, Vietnamese, Thai, Pacific Islander, Taiwanese, Mexican, Italian, American, and fast food restaurants were all within a 12-mile radius of my hometown. Not only was I surrounded by a large variety of restaurants, I had the opportunity to dine in neighboring areas such as Chinatown, J-town, K-town, Pasadena, and more. Food became my hobby and I believed that I could not be any more culturally diverse or open-minded. I've tried nearly everything, right?

On the contrary, my knowledge of food barely skims the fat off the top of a bowl of soup. In fact, ever since I started living with my college roommates —Stacy, Krista, and Kristica — I have come to appreciate new depths of food.

Japanese Food, Oh My!

When I would eat out with my Japanese roommate Stacy, we would occasionally head to Japanese restaurants. I would always order the popular entrees like teriyaki chicken or beef, curry, sashimi, and sushi rolls. On more than one occasion, Stacy would order ramen. I quietly thought to myself, 'Why would someone pay eight dollars for a bowl of Top Ramen? You can buy those packages for 25 cents from the grocery store!'



So one can imagine my surprise when Stacy told me ramen was a type of noodle and Top Ramen was a brand of instant noodles. In fact, a lot of time actually goes into making fresh ramen. In addition to learning about ramen, my roommate introduced me to many other Japanese foods like Spam musubi, soba, somen salad, as well as many other lesser known Japanese dishes.

Filipino Cuisine

Before coming to college, the only Filipino cuisine I had ever tried was a taro drink called halo halo. But since living with my second roommate Krista, who is half Mexican and half Filipino, she has cooked many Filipino dishes for me to try including: chicken adobo, a vegetable soup called sinigang, a tomato-based vegetable medley dish titled apretada, and a noodle dish named pancit.

I don't believe I've ever tasted dishes with such pleasantly sharp flavors. One day, Krista brought pan de sal which I thought was a normal dinner roll. I had forgone her offers to try the bread for over a year because I was on a low-carb diet. But after I tried her cooked entrees, I decided to give pan de sal a try because I really started to take a liking to Filipino food.

I took one bite of warm pan de sal and it has now become one of my favorite on-the-go breakfast and snack foods. With my tight morning schedules, pan de sal has become quite a convenience.

Tasty Thai Treats

My last roommate Kristica is half Thai and half Cantonese. Before college, the only Thai foods I had ever tried were the token pad thai and pad see ew entrees. Fortunately for me, her parents own a few Thai-Chinese restaurants in the Orange County area. Oftentimes Kristica brings back Thai food from her restaurants for my roommates and me to try.



I must say that the food she has brought has some of the most exotic tastes I have ever tried including: pineapple fried rice, garlic pork rice pot, twice cooked pork, garlic spare ribs, and bellpepper egg dishes. Thai food is just flat out tasty and definitely one of my favorites. I am so glad Kristica pulled me out of my comfort zone of just ordering pad see ew at Thai restaurants.

Food has become my gateway to experiencing other aspects of the Japanese, Filipino, and Thai cultures. Now I have branched out to watching Japanese and Filipino dramas, learning about Filipino and Thai traditions, and staying in touch with current issues in their respective communities. All in all, I must admit that I am extremely lucky to live with such a diverse group of girls who are in touch with their cultural heritages and are able to share them with me. ❄

Kimberly Kan currently attends UC San Diego.

What's in a Name?



Sansei Kristin Mariko Iwata ventures on a quest to discover the kanji characters that make up her Japanese middle name. Hint: think 'Million Miles.'

Long ago, in a distant land (1984, Torrance, Calif.), an auspicious child who would bring peace and balance to the Force (not really) was born. She, like many of the Japanese Americans before her, was given three names: a first name in English, a middle name in Japanese and the last name of her father. After consulting with their advisors, (a long period of indecision) the parents of this child gave her the name Kristin Mariko Iwata.

She was raised in the Japanese American style (attended Japanese School, played basketball). In her 19th year, when she wasn't slaying dragons or rescuing male equivalents of damsels in distress, she took time to attend Japanese language classes. It was within the walls of this classroom that Kristin was faced with one of the most challenging tasks of her life: writing her Japanese name in kanji.

As legend has it, the meaning of a Japanese name determines which kanji characters are used to represent it. The quest began with our heroine searching the dark recesses of her memory for any clues that might help her on her quest. The phrase "Million Miles" revealed itself from beneath the dust and cobwebs of Kristin's early memories. However, this was all that was found (she has a poor memory).

Further research (a call to her mother) revealed that the phrase "Million Miles" was the intended meaning of "Mariko". There was also mention of a sacred scroll containing the desired kanji as written by the oracle that foresaw Kristin's greatness. This scroll was buried at the foot of a great volcano on an uncharted island (a family friend wrote the kanji for "Mariko" on a piece of paper that was then put in a "safe place"). Since the island remains uncharted, Kristin decided to venture forth into the world and discover the elusive kanji on her own.

As Kristin set out on her journey, she came across an elderly scholar, wise in the ways of kanji (her roommate that is one month older than her and had studied Japanese longer). After implementing her powers of persuasion, the scholar agreed to join Kristin on her quest. Armed with just dictionaries and shuriken, the two journeyed towards the land of ま (ma).

Upon entering the land of ま, Kristin and the scholar met with an incredibly long 間 (ma: n. interval; pause). Thinking quickly, Kristin countered with some 魔法 (mahō: n. magic), but it backfired and summoned an 悪魔 (akuma: n. demon; evil spirit). Fearing for their lives and not finding what they wanted, they accepted the負 け (make: n. defeat) and journeyed on to the land of り(ri).

After traveling a 里 (ri: n. unit of measure=2.44 miles) the pair arrived at a fork in the road. Due to her own 利己 (riko: n. self-interest; selfishness) Kristin decided to ignore her scholarly companion and the poetic verse she was spouting and chose the paved road leading directly to the land of こ (ko). The pair were greeted by林檎五箇 (ringo go ko: five apples) and were suddenly all too aware of their hunger. After eating, a thorough inspection of the land of こ produced the kanji, 子 (n. child) but nothing else.

Our heroine returned to her base (dorm room) without the necessary kanji, but was not disheartened. There was still one option. The next day, Kristin gathered her courage and made her way to the place where it all began (Center Hall room 203). She had come to see the all-knowing and all-powerful SENSEI.

"Oh, wise SENSEI, I have searched high and low for the kanji that would make my name. My only clues are 'Mariko' and 'Million Miles'. Please, I beseech you to end my quest and my suffering and tell me the true kanji of my name."

"Ah yes, the answer you seek is quite simple. Let me think. …yes, yes, that's it. … maybe this other one … Ah, this is it: 万里子 (Mariko: 10,000 ri child)." (It only took her a minute whereas I had spent two nights with my roommate.)

Kristin felt a stirring within her soul as she found a part of herself that she had never realized she had been missing (but 10,000 ri is only 24,400 miles!). With the knowledge of her name's kanji, Kristin was free to focus on more important things, like bringing balance to the force (not knowing had been bothering her for some time). ❀



Kristin Mariko Iwata currently attends UC San Diego.



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Embracing Empowerment Through Organizational Structure:

What the JACL Can Do to Develop Youth



By HARUKA ROUDEBUSH

To assess the current state of the youth membership in the JACL, it is important to consider which aspects of being involved with the organization appeal to youth.

Certainly JACL is a great place for those of us who care about civil rights and our community's history of immigration, internment and redress to learn more and be involved with the issues. Scholarship and internship opportunities are also benefits of being part of the JACL, although perhaps not necessarily effective incentives for long-term participation in the organization.

For many of us, the most compelling reason we stay involved is that participating in JACL allows us to explore and develop our Japanese American culture and identity by giving an opportunity to actively participate and connect with the community, especially in places where the JA and APA communities are smaller. The JACL is often one of the few outlets that allows for this sort of learning and social interaction on a national scale, yet as the times change, so too must the focus of each generation.

The JACL's success with the younger generation will depend on the ability of the organization to shift its emphasis when concerning organizational youth development. The JA community's historical legacy and civil rights issues are an integral part of our organization and should remain an important focus of the JACL nationally, yet it is obvious that youth are finding it increasingly difficult to feel a legitimate connection and relevance between our lives and the JACL's mission and activities.

'... it is obvious that youth are finding it increasingly difficult to feel a legitimate connection and relevance between our lives and the JACL's mission and activities.'

Part of this problem lies with some of us not being particularly politically aware or knowledgeable of the issues and history surrounding the JACL. To better engage young people in these discussions, perhaps the JACL's efforts on educating youth should expand to broader APA issues and on encouraging greater general political awareness and active civic involvement on which to lay the basis for cultivating concern for civil rights and community issues.

The key, however, to bridging the disconnect between the youth of the community and the JACL lies beyond merely educating or lecturing young people. To be relevant to us, the JACL must enable youth to participate in the organization in a capacity that not only addresses the shifting interests and concerns of our generation, but also connects us more directly with ourselves and into the workings of the organization itself.

The solution to meeting the needs and interests of youth while integrating us into the organizational structure is simple: provide guidance, but let the youth do the work. On the chapter, district and national level, it is imperative to provide the opportunity for youth to play an active role in the planning of events and activities meant for youth.

The national youth conference is a great opportunity for JACL to serve as a forum for discussion amongst the youth on issues we deem relevant to us, yet individual districts and chapters should push their youth to organize on a smaller scale and meet with similar purpose and greater frequency than just once every two years.

JACL youth would benefit from an organizational structure beyond district youth representation in the national youth council. Youth members should be encouraged to form student-run membership bodies within districts and chapters to organize our own educational and issues-based youth events as well as our own fun socials.

Opportunities to collaborate with existing Nikkei or APA student groups, particularly on college campuses could serve as good sources for new members as well as youth leaders for particular projects. The development of a consistent structural organization for youth on the district and chapter levels will not only create a more involving youth membership experience, but will also create a fertile environment for peer-to-peer, youth-initiated discussion that will encourage the development of individual thought amongst youth, provide the opportunity for us to build a consensus and deeper understanding of issues addressed by the JACL, as well as give the opportunity for youth leaders to emerge. In addition, a developed organizational structure could serve as a springboard for youth activism and mobilization on issues and campaigns we feel are important on a local to national scale.

Providing these opportunities not only allows for us to feel more active in our community and more invested in our own participation in JACL, but just as importantly helps us develop organizational and leadership skills while gaining greater familiarity with the JACL's operations.

Empowering the youth in JACL today will in turn facilitate our transition into more active participants beyond our days as youth members.

Haruka Roudebush is a member of the JACL San Francisco chapter.



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JACL Arizona Chapter would like to thank all of the JACLers, Chapters, Districts, Sponsors and Friends who participated in this year's JACL 2006 National Convention in Arizona. We look forward to seeing you again at the JACL 2008 National Convention in Salt Lake City!

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Four Days of Asian Pacific American Political Nourishment



By LEILANI SAVITT



I grew up in the Twin Cities where the JACL chapter was strong and active. The Twin Cities chapter was very supportive of youth and asked me to serve on the chapter board as a youth representative during high school. Chapter members were so supportive of youth that I was urged to step up involvement on the Midwest District Council (MDC) regional board by serving as a youth co-representative.

At the many MDC board meetings I attended, I recall how alums of the Washington, D.C. Leadership Conference were always discussing how great the conference was, but I was told to wait until I was at least 21 years old to go.

When my senior year of college had rolled around, I didn't know what my future held. My uncertainty made me want to step down from JACL even more. I had started to show a lack of dedication as other volunteer opportunities became more relevant to my life. I was frustrated with planning retreats for my district, which had poor turnouts and finding incentives to recruit youth. All this made me start to question the role and need for youth in the organization. It also did not help matters that I went to college in an area where the closest JACL chapter was over an hour away.

Well, I graduated college and I am still actively involved in JACL. In fact, I am more dedicated than I have ever been. I am sure you are all wondering, what happened? How did I get my motivation back? The event that changed my outlook was attending the 2006 JACL/OCA Washington, D.C. Leadership Conference sponsored by State Farm.

When I first got to Washington, D.C., I had no idea what to expect. As I started to meet the other participants, I felt a little intimidated. I was the youngest one there and clearly had the least amount of experience. Many of the participants were thinking about running for office, held jobs in non-profit organizations, and were actively involved back home in other Asian Pacific American organizations.

As I got to know the other participants, I found that there were more similarities among us than differences. We were all leaders but we all tended to lack the effective tools of leadership. I learned that leadership is:

Learning how to influence your U.S. Congress

Engaging yourself and your community in the issues

Adapting to long days of workshops followed by after-hours bonding

Dining with personable and genuine leaders, like former Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta

Educating others about what you have learned

Realizing that you can make a difference

Socializing and building a network

Hearing inside perspectives

Initiating visits to the Hill

Participating in events that are life-changing

I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to attend the leadership conference. Because of the variety of speakers and activities, the conference never had a dry moment. Some of my favorite parts of the conference were eating lunch with renowned speakers such as Bruce Yamashita — who discussed how he fought discrimination in the Marine Corps — and watching a performance of "Citizen 13559: The Journal of Ben Uchida" at the Kennedy Center.

I also enjoyed touring the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism with Warren Minami, listening to a panel discuss changes in the courts, hearing first hand accounts of the legislative process and how to effectively work with legislators on Capital Hill. I learned from this conference that it is important for youth to attend to digest the information and to build networks.

This conference really lit a fire for me to go back home and to fight for civil rights. Most importantly, I learned that you do not have to live near a JACL chapter to fight for JACL's mission. All you need is an open mind, dedication, and the tools of leadership.

I strongly urge any youth interested in participating to check out the information for the 2007 conference on www.jacl.org. ❀

Leilani Savitt is currently the JACL national board youth representative.

'This conference really lit a fire for me to go back home and to fight for civil rights. Most importantly, I learned that you do not have to live near a JACL chapter to fight for JACL's mission. All you need is an open mind, dedication, and the tools of leadership.'

The New Nikkei *Movement*?

The Nikkei youth of today have different issues and members than the youth of the 60's, 70's, and 80's. So who are the Nikkei youth of today? Let's see if we can find the answer.



By CRAIG ISHII

Common statement: "What does the new generation of Nikkei youth have that they can really unite themselves with?" The 60's, 70's and 80's generations — the *Sansei* — they had Redress, the fight for ethnic studies, Little Tokyo Redevelopment, and the Civil Rights movement. Yet, in the year 2006 what *is* "the movement?" What can we use to define our generation?

I first heard this question being asked four years ago. The question was inserted in a script for a Cultural Night put on by the Nikkei Student Union at UCLA (it was written by *Pacific Citizen* columnist Yumi Sakugawa). The Cultural Nights and shows of the various Nikkei student organizations across California seek to educate and inform their audiences about the issues and interests of youth in our day and age. It's an expression of culture, heritage, family, and most importantly of community … that is, the whole community.

So in the very program that asked the question, "What do the new youth have to unite and fight for?" I found my answer. The Nikkei youth of today aren't a cohesive unit, they aren't Sansei or Yonsei, but instead a mix of different generations and different ethnicities. But at the same time, *this* becomes the central point of unity for the Nikkei youth.

The youth of today still fight to bring *their* version of cultural awareness, community activism, and energy out to the forefront. To them that expression becomes all the more interesting when the culture and community is broad. In other words I like the idea that the Nikkei youth do have a point of identity rooted in the task of redefining our community. I like the idea that Nikkei youth do have a movement. Maybe we can call it the *New* Nikkei Movement or the *Shin*-Nikkei Movement.

The movement is characterized by programs such as the Nikkei Community Internship program which actively introduces and plugs its participants into a community that was relatively unknown to them in the first place; it is characterized by education, and volunteerism of collegiate Nikkei student organizations. The movement is also characterized by historical and community awareness and action and finally, the movement is characterized by a general re-examination of what defines Japanese Americans in this century.

There is a general realization that the definition is not clear-cut and that the community characteristics of the past are changing quite drastically and quickly. In fact, the definition is changing so quickly that it's happening without folks even noticing!

Working off of a personal example, I'm a product of the Orange County Buddhist Church. In all my years of pre-collegiate schooling, the church occupied every weekend. Friday's saw Boy Scout Troop 578 with the Lightning Bolt and Komori Patrol, with occasional Camporee's, Invitational Field Days (IFD), and training hikes.



Writer Craig Ishii (above) and in the front row in the group photo poses the question: 'What does the new generation of Nikkei youth have that they can really unite themselves with?'

Saturday's saw basketball practice for team OCBC in order to ensure our victory in the friendship game of every tournament, and eventually a second place victory in the league! (Even if the victory came because we had been held back two years and as seniors were playing freshman and sophomore teams. A second place is a second place!!)

Saturday's many times also consisted of events for the Jr. Young Buddhist Association to which belong many of my fondest memories. Finally, Sunday's con-

See CRAIG ISHII/Page 59

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Envisioning Our Future:

UC Berkeley Nikkei Bridge History and College Youth



By CHRISTOPHER TOSHIRO JOCSON





CULTURE NIGHT—Scenes from the Berkeley Nikkei Student Union's 3rd Annual Culture Show.

I recall my freshman year at UC Berkeley, bright-eyed and eager to delve into the vast opportunities offered by a higher education — diverse social and academic opportunities, and a seemingly endless breadth of student organizations to become involved with.

It was here that I first became involved in the Nikkei Student Union, an organization that empowered me as a member of the Japanese American youth community and encouraged me to take ownership of the history passed on by my grandparents. Not only did NSU connect me with like-minded Nikkei youth, but it also allowed me to appreciate my personal history, apply it, and share it with others through meaningful productions and events, such as NSU's Annual Culture Show and its own Day of Remembrance.

And now, as a senior, the Berkeley Nikkei Student Union has made leaps and bounds from when I first joined. Through the leadership, drive, and dedication of its members and officers, NSU has not only become a prominent Asian American voice on the UC Berkeley campus, but has also developed increasing attention through its Annual Culture Show production.

Through the tremendous aid and support of the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP), the Nikkei Student Union is spearheading a two-fold project educating and empowering Nikkei youth with the rich history and culture of JAs.

The first piece is an entirely student developed Field Studies course, entitled "Empowering Youth: Studying Japanese American Incarceration through Cultural Production." The course, which began on Sept. 13, opened with a dynamic discussion on civil liberties and its applications to youth.

Posing the question, "What are Civil Liberties?" the course educates students on the incarceration of JAs and others during World War II through a variety of methods including speaker panels, video screenings, guest speakers, role-playing, and discussions. The goal is not just to teach youth, but to have them apply these historic lessons to their own lives, be they JA or not.

"This course has greatly expanded my view of American history," said Nina Zheng, a sophomore at Cal. "It's a history class that's not just about books, but about people, relationships and understanding."

The second component of NSU's ambitious project is their 4th Annual Culture Show, entitled "Visions." "Visions" is truly a testament of the efforts of Berkeley Nikkei, with production on the show dating back as early as December 2005. Featuring three short plays written, directed, and produced entirely by students, this is NSU's first year to host its production at the acclaimed Zellerbach Playhouse in Berkeley. Students draw from their own personal backgrounds and actively engage in interpretations of the stories passed onto them from their *bauchans, jiichans,* friends, and relatives.

"It gave me a better perspective and a different vision of how the internment experience relates to how things are now," said Brian Takashi Jocson, co-writer and director of a historical play on love in the incarceration camps.

Sally Kikuchi, a participant in NSU's 2005 and 2006 production, added, "it's allowed me to participate in a production reflective of what matters to us as youth ... It's a really interactive way of learning and feeling like a part of a community."

Producing "Visions" has not been an easy task, as it has been well over a year in the making, but through the dedication of its members, it is hoped that this will become a sustainable production honoring and commemorating the vibrancy of JA history and culture, recognizing the travesties of WWII and the impact of war on the civil liberties of others.

I hope that "Visions" and future productions manage to touch and empower Nikkei and non-Nikkei youth, just as NSU's first Culture Show did when I myself was a freshman student.

"Visions" debuted on Nov. 29 but additional donations and support are welcome to keep both the student-run course and theatre production sustainable for years to come. Colleen Oinuma, the Culture Show chair, can be contacted for questions and comments via e-mail at nsucultur enight@yahoo.com. ❁

Christopher Toshiro Jocson is currently the president of the Nikkei Student Union.

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Let's Have Our Voice – Our Youth Voice – Be Heard



By MEGUMI J. KAMINAGA



It's usually around this time during the holidays when self-reflection begins. The closer it gets to *oshogatsu*, the more we begin to think about what has happened during the year, what changes have come over us, and we question whether we've grown older and wiser … or just older. And then there comes a point when reflection turns to regret, regret turns into motivation and motivation creates change.

Over the past few days I have been contemplating my role as a youth representative for the NCWNP district and what role I had played as a member of the National JACL Youth/Student Council (NYSC). Was I successful? Had I accomplished anything?

Honestly, I don't think I have done as much as I could have. It wasn't until I had returned from the JACL national convention this past summer that I took a second look at my position and saw that by taking a more active role, I could be more affective in creating change.

I believe that the JACL has an amazing historical legacy that many of us, as youth, are unaware of. Many of us are never caught up to speed on what JACL has done and are often left without knowing who represents the JACL, how the organization functions, and what role they play in the organization, especially as youth. What is a JACL youth member?

It's difficult to jump into an organization that seems complicated and most often than not, you feel like an outsider when you're learning the ropes. I speak from experience; even now I'm still learning how we as an organization, or how we as a youth function in JACL.

After thinking about this past year and learning that JACL is open for youth initiated programs, its time for a New Year's resolution that will stick.

As youth, we have a voice yet lately it's been silent. This coming year, make it a resolution to initiate change and take an active stand in changing the image of how the youth are seen. Many of you have skills in leadership, mentorship, and community activism and are active in campus organizations or community churches.

Yet we don't hear from you. We see only membership numbers that continue to fluctuate and lapse as you go off to college or travel around the world, or remain uninvolved. Yes, we need to find new strategies to retain members and outreach to new youth, but we need support and help in doing so.

The NYSC is made up of unique and enthusiastic representatives from seven very different districts. We come together to plan the Biennial National Youth/Student Conference, which will be held this summer in Northern California, in efforts to provide a space for youth to network, discuss youth issues, and provide resourceful workshops on leadership, civil rights, and empowerment.

We're here to represent you and your opinions, so let us know that you're concerned with what's happening to the youth in this organization.

Have your voice be heard. Not only can we work together to create more youth events and activities, we can create dialogue on issues that affect our communities, multiethnic communities, and youth issues on the chapter, district and national levels. ❄

Megumi J. Kaminaga is the NCWNP district youth representative.

Leadership, Community and Fun

By KIMBERLY SHINTAKU

'Where was I?' is a common refrain from apathetic youth. Jar yourself out of disorientation by attending youth conferences.

Where was I two summers ago?

While I was debating on whether or not to attend the Salt Lake City JACL Youth Conference, I thought, "Why should I go? I won't know anyone there. I haven't done much with JACL ever since I left for college."

The summer of 2005 in Salt Lake City was my first time at a national youth conference. I was nervous about traveling by myself. I wondered if I was going to meet anyone and I questioned whether I was going to fit in. Surprisingly, there were tons of other people that felt the same way!

The workshops and mixers gave me an opportunity to make so many new friends. The workshops included educational workshops that allowed me to learn about Japanese American history and the activism of those that came before me. I was also able to choose from workshops like taiko and calligraphy. How exciting is that? The last night of the conference, we all attended a banquet where we were able to spend time with new friends and dance the night away. I had a blast!

The JACL Youth Conference encouraged me to get more involved in my community in San Diego. It also motivated me to help plan another awesome youth conference in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo the following year.

ReVISIONS was a youth conference put on by the Intercollegiate Nikkei Council, a composite group of Southern California Japanese and Japanese American Collegiate organizations. These youth were once just like everyone else — they attended conferences, educational forums, and community events — but with their own conference they decided to take one step further. There are a ton of other conferences held throughout the country similar to this one that is put on for the youth, by the youth.

If you're a student, you can get involved and make a difference. These conferences are a great place to start! If you are an adult, a little encouragement can go a long way in getting your youth active!

Everyone has the potential to make a difference. Events like these are opportunities to give students the chance to get more involved and create change in their communities.

Where am I now? I am active in the Nikkei Student Union at the University of California, San Diego. I am also the current National JACL youth chairperson. Just a single step in one direction took me to a complete new level of involvement. All I had to do was decide that I wanted to become more active and my eyes opened to all of the possibilities and opportunities that are available for students like you and me.

When and where will another fantastic opportunity come up? The next JACL Youth Conference will be held in the summer of 2007 and hosted by the San Jose JACL. It will be a great place to travel to visit one of the three remaining Japantowns, meet new friends, and get more involved in the JACL!

Don't be left asking the question, "Where was I?" Be the one left answering, "I was there." ❄

Kimberly Shintaku is a student at UC San Diego and is currently the national JACL youth chair.



2005 Nat'l JACL Youth Conference in Salt Lake City: 1. Youth at the Vision Awards Banquet dinner; 2. Waiting for the featured guest speaker; and 3.Writer Kimberly Shintaku (left) and Christina Hironaka relax at the University of Utah dormatory rooms.



MIN YASUI

Organizations like the JACL need to ensure the civil rights movement remains strong and vital today.

Are We There Yet?



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

By LISA HANASONO

Is the civil rights movement dead? Some people believe that the collective effort to establish and maintain equality for all people was buried with the passing of honorable civil rights leaders such as Rosa Parks, Min Yasui, and Coretta Scott King.

Over 40 years have passed since Martin Luther King, Jr. shared his inspirational dream from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. But has the dream of equality come into fruition? Is our work done?

As the nation's "oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization," the Japanese American Citizens League has left a legacy for its Yonsei and Gosei members. From its formation in 1929 to the redress movement, the JACL has relentlessly fought for justice and equality.

Like the civil rights movement, some people have questioned the need for civil rights organizations, including the JACL. Is the JACL's work done?

I strongly believe that the civil rights movement is evolving and growing, and our nation needs organizations, such as the JACL, to remain vigilant and dedicated to the fight for justice and equality. Discrimination, hate crimes, and ignorance still plague our society.



> "I am extremely proud and grateful to be a part of the JACL."

Unfortunately, there are many people who have never heard of the internment of Japanese Americans during the World War II era. Overt and covert acts of racism continue to emerge in the public sphere and in everyday interactions. These problems justify the need to continue the pursuit and maintenance of civil rights for all people.

As members of this noble civil rights organization, we are privileged with the ability to truly make a difference in the world. As you can see, there is much work to be done! From the Washington, D.C. Leadership Conference to its programs to its youth conferences, the JACL empowers its members to be leaders at the local, district, and national levels.

I am extremely proud and grateful to be a part of the JACL.

Our American society needs the JACL to fight for equality and to educate others about our unique culture and history. As our organization progresses into a new biennium, I hope that we can continue to thrive as a leading organization in the civil rights movement. ❄

Lisa Hanasono is the JACL Midwest District Council youth representative.

CRAIG ISHII

(Continued from page 53)

sisted of morning Service, our basketball game and eventually a return to school life with homework in the evening.

But most interesting under all of these fun filled weekends was the changing community which slipped right under my nose, at my own church! In another memory I remember that some of us Boy Scouts were taking classes in order to earn our Sangha religious award. Those classes occurred on Thursday evenings. Every Thursday we attended, I remember seeing kendo practices before and after the meeting, but it never occurred to me that this was a broader culture I was almost ignoring at the time.

I was stuck in my own paradigm, only hearing the sound of my voice with the occasional "ichi!" and "ni" in the background as the kendo folks were doing *suberi*. In addition, the church also provided a great establishment for Scouts to carry out their Eagle Scout Project. Select Saturday's saw everything from re-installation of sprinklers, to re-painting rails and classrooms.

But in addition, these select Saturday's allowed all Scouts to observe Japanese school, the closest contact any of us ever got to it. "Craig, you should go to Japanese school," was not enough to convince me to spend my Saturday mornings in school. But then, in one swift statement of "no way," another connection to one part of this broader community was overlooked and given up.

Of course kendo and Japanese school cannot be sole points of unity for new second generation JAs, and in addition new second generation JAs cannot be the sole population of the "non-Yonsei" community, they're merely examples. But in short, there is a rapidly changing definition for the term JA.

This is where the *Shin*-Nikkei movement comes into play. Collegiate organizations are the living examples of what this new community looks like. But more importantly collegiate organizations are living examples of what this community of youth can do. This broad community has the ability to address its own needs. It has the ability to plan conferences, plan Cultural Nights, take trips to Manzanar, and spark discussion. This is truly cultural awareness at its best.

The observation of this changing community and the task of redefining it is part of what defines what Nikkei youth are doing today. But one of the immediate questions that you should have asked yourself upon reading that sentence was: "what was his definition of Nikkei youth?" Let's work together and redefine it! ❄

Craig Ishii currently attends UCLA and is a former JACL Pacific Southwest District office intern.





Photos courtesy of Craig Ishii

Two Nikkei Student Union members look onto the Manzanar monument at their annual spring pilgrimage to the former WWII internment camp (*top photo*).

Each year the Intercollegiate Nikkei Council volunteers for the community event San Tai San in order to support the campaign for the Little Tokyo Recreation Center.

Young JACLer Stars at Princeton



Six feet of linebacker muscle meets steely brain mass – JACL member Brigham Walker helps the Tigers roar.

He's got brains to boat. The senior will graduate with a degree in molecular biology.

By JACL Staff

"... and the tackle is made by Number 21, Brig Walker," said the announcer at the Nov. 4 Princeton Tigers versus the University of Pennsylvania Quakers.

At 6'1" and 210 pounds, Brigham Walker dominates as a Princeton starting linebacker in the orange and black jersey. He is set to graduate with a degree in molecular biology next spring and pushes the game to a double overtime victory of 31-30.

With Princeton in the lead for most of the game, Penn came back and tied just before the buzzer, but was unable to follow through. The Quakers had not lost at Princeton since 1992 so this was an especially satisfying win for Princeton.

Walker is not just all about football — he's a good student as well, according to his college advisor, Karen Malatesta.

After being recruited from Evergreen High School in his hometown of Vancouver, Washington, Brig — the son of Brad and Debbie Walker — received offers from Oregon State University and Harvard University. He was offered a football scholarship to Oregon State, but he chose to attend Princeton because of its impressive football program and coach.

During his freshman year, he sustained a back injury and did not start, but has since gone on to become a major defensive player for the Tigers by helping Princeton win the Ivy League Championship this year.

Walker has enjoyed his years of Princeton football, but he feels ready to give up the sport after winning the last game at home against Dartmouth on Nov. 18. Football takes a toll on the bodies of the players, and Walker said he would give his body a rest and pursue other interests after graduation.

He and his sister Mackenzie are planning to travel to Hawaii and Japan together before she begins her college studies next fall. Brig also plans to do some extensive traveling (to the Mediterranean, China, and Japan for starters) after his graduation and before he settles into his "grown up" life.

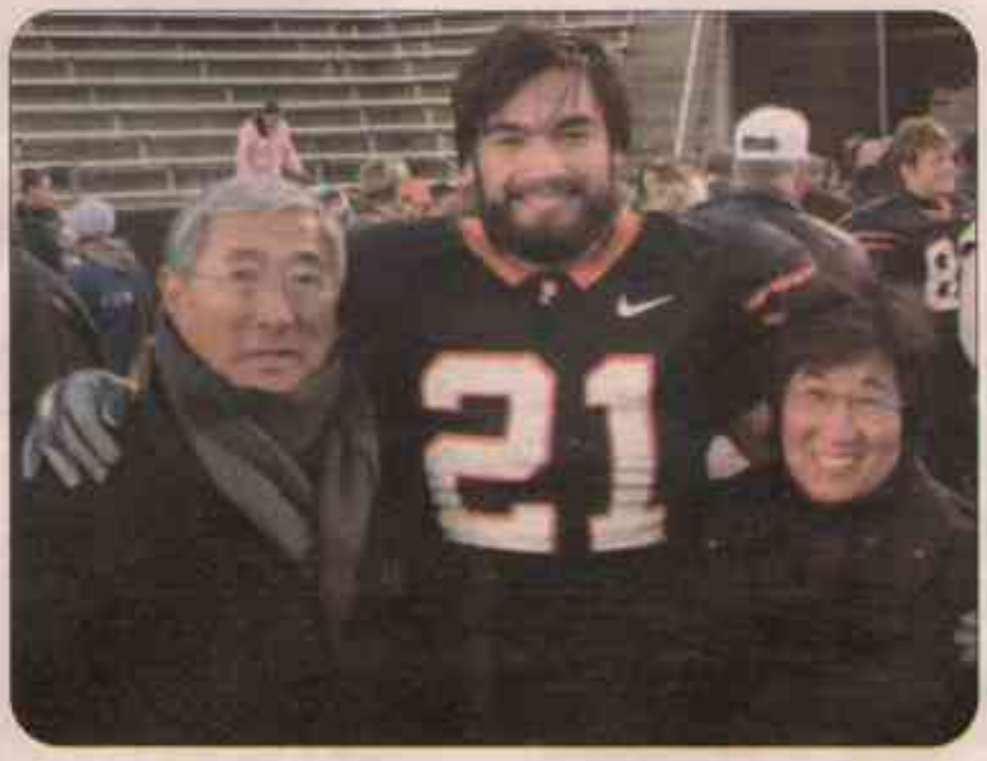
His family has made several long trips across the United States to watch Walker play football, including three games this year during his senior season. His grandmother also attended Walker's final game at Princeton where he was honored along with the other seniors on the football team.

Walker, who is also a JACL member, became involved with the organization because of the scholarship program. While at Princeton, he has been the youth representative for the JACL Eastern District Council. He has helped with national JACL conventions and JACL youth conferences.

Although Walker has been extremely busy with college studies and football, he is committed to JACL and plans to continue being active with JACL. He proved this by recently becoming a life member.

Brigham Walker is a member of the JACL Philadelphia chapter.





SUPERSTAR: *(very top)* Princeton Tigers' Brigham Walker signs a football for a young fan after their Nov. 4th victory. *(above)* Walker, who is also a dedicated JACLer, is flanked by Interim JACL Executive Director Floyd Mori and wife Irene Mori.





2.



4.

1. *Yukata*-clad Jessica Kawamura and her Brown University classmates dress up for a cultural show.

2. The Kawamura family.

3. Jessica and a friend on a snowy day at Brown.

4. Jessica *(standing, far right)* on the Shinzen Nikkei Youth Basketball team.

The Changing Identities of Nikkei Youth

By JESSICA KAWAMURA

In this particular moment in my life as a senior in college, I have spent a lot of time reflecting on my experiences and thinking about what I want to do with my life.

As someone who grew up with a strong sense of being Japanese American, the past seven years have really challenged my conceptions of both ethnic identity and community.

In retrospect, when I think about the many ways I have changed over the past few years, I realize how much my conceptions of being JA have also transformed. Although being Nikkei has and always will be an integral part of who I am, my relationship to this identity is constantly developing.

Growing up, any conception I had of the JA community stemmed from my family and the activities that we participated in. Although I grew up in a predominantly white suburb of San Francisco, my mom made a special effort to immerse my brother and I in JA activities in Berkeley and Oakland.

I grew up attending a JA Methodist church while playing basketball for local Buddhist churches. In the summers, my brother and I also participated in Daruma-no-Gakko, a cultural enrichment program for JA elementary schoolers. From these early experiences, I had a strong sense of ethnic and racial identity, but my conception of it was very narrow.

As a high school and college student, I have had the opportunity to grow personally and as a member of the JA community. In high school, getting to know the broader JA community expanded my sense of what it meant to be Nikkei. From interaction with peers in the Shinzen Nikkei Youth Basketball exchange program to working with older generations with the Berkeley JACL, I was able to meet many different people from all over to learn about very different JA experiences.

College has also had a huge impact on my perspective on being JA. Being away from family and church forced me to find my own sense of community and belonging at school. I ended up getting involved in the Asian American Students Association on campus and getting to know a number of the few JAs on campus. I found that sometimes it was hard to identify with other JAs because we had come from such different backgrounds. I wondered, in fact, if there was anything to this concept of a JA community.



I came back to the Bay Area with a very different perspective on the JA community. After seeing the struggles of some community organizations as well as experiencing a life away from home, I questioned to an extent the validity of a JA community in the 21st century.

The summer after my freshman year in college, I came back to the Bay Area and participated in the Nikkei Community Internship Program in San Francisco's Japantown. I spent the summer working on an exhibit for the National Japanese American Historical Society and connecting with a group of peers who also cared about being JA and being part of a JA community. For me, working with other youth was a refreshing experience. Working on historical research helped me realize that JAs have always been a dynamic and changing population. The expe-

See KAWAMURA/Page 80

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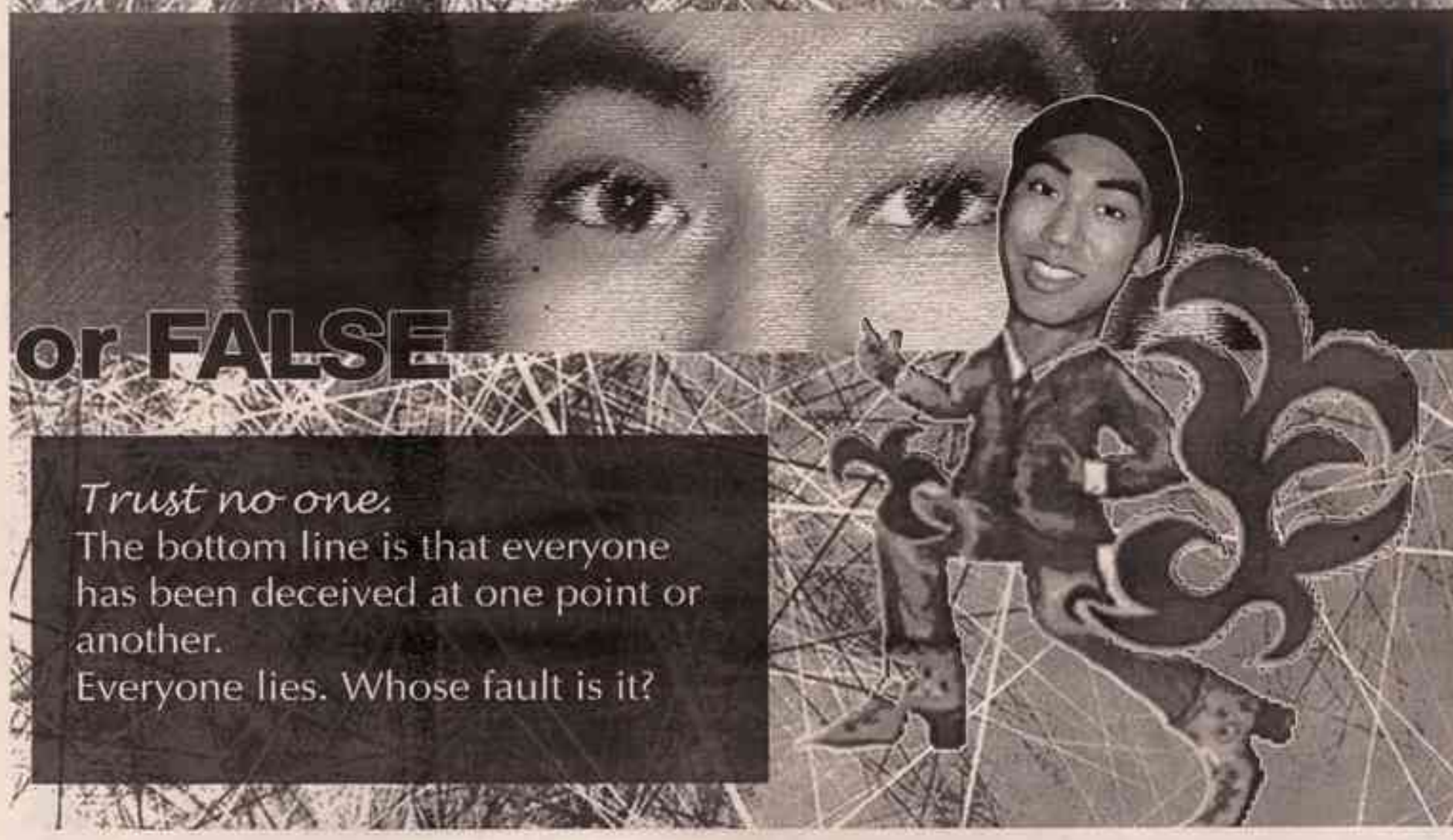
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The 58 Millennium Club members and spouses extend Holiday Greetings and may 2007 be a healthy and prosperous year to the JACL Family.

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If you are interested in joining this financially dedicated group of JACLers, annual membership is $1,000. for more information, please contact Edwin Endow, VP Membership & Services – National Board or the JACL Membership Dept at 415 921-5225 Ext. 26 or mbr@jacl.org.

The Below Statements are True or FALSE



By GREGORY KIKKAWA

The below statements are true.

FACT: we live in a society saturated chock full of lies.

This statement is undeniable. Take a look at the person to the right and to the left of you, or if you happen to be on the computer, the first two people on your buddy list. It's borderline guaranteed that one of them has lied to you about something in the past, or is currently lying to you about something in the present.

I would further prove this point with statistics and cited sources, but it's also well known that these impartial numbers can lie even more effectively and legitimately then an unsupported argument with a simple skewing of information.

If we re-examine the recent past, even our government knowingly withholds information from the public, and our representatives deceive the citizens of the populace to further the interest of their own affairs (WMDs?). Rousseau and Locke would be ashamed to see this frail shadow of their social compact in place of their democratic views, but nevertheless, the public continues to be misinformed or have omitted responses due to the privacy of national security, since safety clearly is not a priority of the masses. The media also lies to us by selectively reporting, and dictating information, while spewing biased accounts to the public, continuing this trend of the malnourishment of public knowledge.

The bottom line is that everyone has been deceived one point in his or her lives and any outliers are exceptions rather then the norm.

With all of these lies surrounding us, can anyone really blame anyone else for deception?

As A-Rab says in "West Side Story," "Society's played (us) a terrible trick." Due to the environment we know as society, the proper social norm allocated to a direct question seems to expect a retort that deflects unpleasant and secretive things that would upset people, or label you as an individual.

This is entirely acceptable because, well, everyone does it and if someone managed to summon up the courage to confront a blatant lie, one can shift the blame towards society and quote Dr. House and his favorite Houseism, "everybody lies."

So no, it's not really your fault.

It's your girlfriend's fault for inquiring the extent of gravity's love towards her, or that reporter's fault for trying to piece together our current war-time situation, or that nosy Susie Derkins for butting into your daily affairs and nefarious plans.

But should society be more truthful?

First, in retrospect, lying is not always full of malicious intent, but also is not consistently benevolent in nature; the entire underlying motivating factor behind lying is polarized. Parents fabricate elaborate stories to protect children from overwhelming information potentially dangerous towards the development of their psyche, and the government may conceal certain truths to protect the people from making rash decisions.

Simultaneously, certain Congressmen actively conceal child predatory attempts, while girlfriends and boyfriends weave stories to their significant other in attempts to hide suspicious one-night disappearances. Inventive misdirection occupies a gray area in the sea of black and white, where deceit is both necessary and superfluous to interact with others one simply may dislike, distrust, or even love.

Creating a hypothesized society without lies is virtually unimaginable. Lying has become a social norm so powerful that even many "friendships" can be based on nothing more then mere exaggerated tolerance, or relationships can be based on false qualities. But, often this web of deceit becomes a reality, causing the perpetrator to foster connections that could not exist without covering someone else's eyes. Think Cinderella.

I am neither justifying nor arguing against lying, merely proposing that it may be a tad bit overused in everyday situations. Even though a smidge of dishonesty is a valuable ingredient in our banal, mediocre lives, the truth should not be discarded like the shell of a raw egg. The shining rays that trickle through a canopy of green are beautiful sights to see, just like the occasional straightforward truth in many situations.

And maybe it would be nice if some of us would push away the excess greenery.

The above statements are false. ❄

Gregory Kikkawa currently attends the University of California at Irvine.

Liars or Victims?



JACK "It's on Me" ABRAMOFF

Did the lobbyist pay off Congress members or was he a patsy?



TAN "No Vote 4 U" NGUYEN

The threatening flier came from his office. He said he didn't do it.



BARRY "My Big Head" BONDS

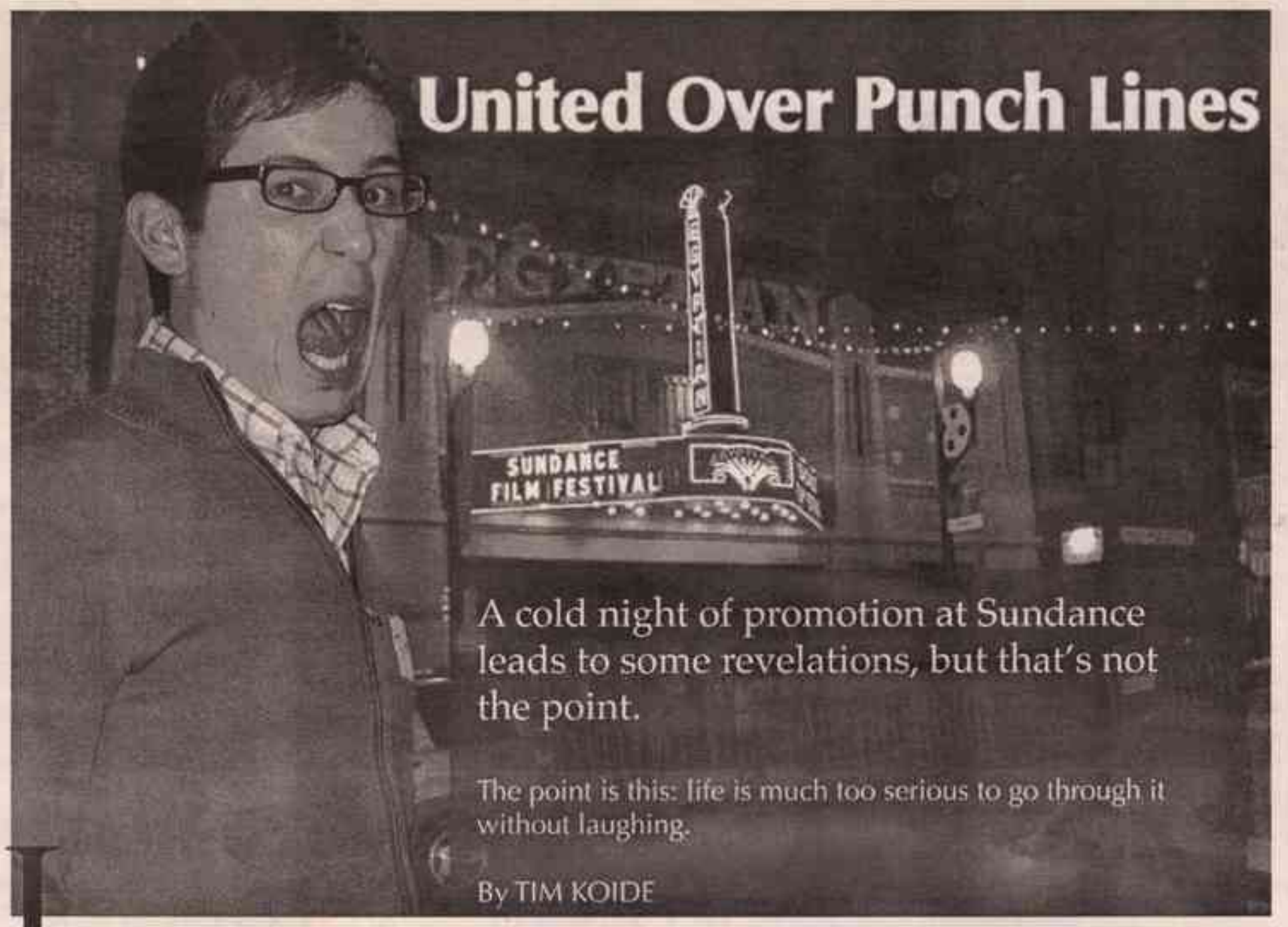
Juice or no juice? That is the question.



MARTHA "Trade Me" STEWART

She dropped shares of ImClone like a hot potato. Did she lie?

United Over Punch Lines



A cold night of promotion at Sundance leads to some revelations, but that's not the point.

The point is this: life is much too serious to go through it without laughing.

By TIM KOIDE

IT WAS A COLD NIGHT — the kind that can be expected in Utah in the middle of January. Snow was piled up on the sides of the roads, but there were people everywhere. It was the Sundance Film Festival after all.

Filmmakers, actors, and other celebrities, as well as film enthusiasts were out in full force despite the frigid alpine climate. That night was a special one for me. Under the stars of Park City, there would be two experiences that solidified a lifetime of conditioning and helped to reveal what my generation had become.

The first experience was well thought-out and required the assemblage of a large group of people. Hours were spent in preparation. It was the year of a controversial new movie, and we wanted to let our friends in the film community know how we felt about it. The plan? Lots of MySpace-ing and text messaging in order to mobilize the hands and mouths that would reveal the truth behind the film. Oh, and about 500 tennis balls.

Main Street in Park City was packed. About 100 of us began combing it up and down passing out fliers as we went. The fliers connected the new movie's plot to the life story of a famous tennis player. Our intent was not to belittle or humiliate this tennis player — I, in fact, happened to be a fan. Yet our access to the event, the controversy of the film, and the ridiculous parallels found in the life of the star, were too much to just stay at home and watch a movie.

After intriguing the crowd with our literature, we gathered and posing as the director's nephew, I began spewing a nonsensical speech about the truth behind the film. Did people believe us? Absolutely. However, that wasn't the point. At the end of my speech we charged across Main Street and released the tennis balls. It was beautiful. That wasn't the point either.

I'm not sure that my generation created the controversy or whether or not we even cared, but we definitely took notice of it, and despite a lack of real interest we still found enough motivation to take issue with it. I really don't think that there is any generation more comfortable with confronting controversy than mine. Civil disobedience is so institutionalized that it has almost become trivial.

How many generations can claim that free speech demonstrations, and anarchists marching on the state capitol, were either applauded or disbanded without incident, and that they took part in both without any real motivation? Further, I really don't think any other generation takes issue with more things than mine.

See TIM KOIDE/Page 67





'I really don't think that there is any generation more comfortable with confronting controversy than mine.'

JAPAN CAM: Tim *(top, center)* throws up native signs in Shibuya flanked by friends Kenji and Kaoru. *(left)* Tim takes in the nightscape of Shinjuku with friend Peter Frandsen.

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Dr. Sanbo Sakaguchi

Michelle Malkin, The Midterm Elections, and Why JACL Should Take Note

With the recent victory of the Democrats in both the House and Senate, the national JACL board should increase its support for Lt. Watada.



By CONRAD OHASHI

Last June, on her blog, conservative columnist Michelle Malkin described a National Take Action Day in support of 1st Lt. Ehren Watada as "National Celebrate A Coward Day." Mind you, this is the same woman who defended the Japanese American internment for a cheap publicity stunt and some spare change. In a book she wrote and sold, she trumpeted the noble idea that national security should come first over civil rights. Lt. Watada's refusal to deploy to Iraq goes against her particular thesis statement.

Just a couple weeks ago, I read an article in the *Pacific Citizen* about the national JACL board's hesitance to take a stronger stance in support of Lt. Watada. I urge the national JACL board to reconsider in light of this recent news headline: the Democrats took the House today.

The American people made the statement today that America cannot "stay the course" any longer. The American people made the statement that they recognize that the nation is not safer and Iraq is no more stable than it was before the war. Most importantly, the American people made the statement that Lt. Watada may have been right.

'It's not too late for the JACL to issue a stronger statement in support of Lt. Watada. In fact, now is probably the best time than ever to do so.'



The Japanese American community has no reason to argue any different. If anything, this community now has a stronger reason than ever to stand behind Lt. Watada. Here is why.

Lt. Watada made a bold statement in saying that the Iraq war is unlawful. Now that the Democrats control the House and the ability to issue subpoenas, it is very likely that Lt. Watada will be proven right.

I hope that the national JACL board takes advantage of this situation. The election results make this idea pretty clear: that the American people are open to investigating Lt. Watada's claim. More than anything, it just irks me to think that this woman who defended the JA internment be given even the slightest blessing from one of the strongest voices of our community: the Japanese American Citizens League.

It's not too late for the JACL to issue a stronger statement in support of Lt. Watada. In fact, now is probably the best time than ever to do so. The election results tell me that the American people would agree. I think the JACL should too. ❄

Conrad Ohashi currently attends UC San Diego and is a former participant of the Nikkei Community Internship program.

TIM KOIDE

(Continued from page 65)

As a result, we have to find release. We just can't take life too seriously all the time. You see we're kind of schizophrenic. At the same time that we have created a standard of social elitism through taking stands and raising awareness on pretty much anything, we are also very conscious of our overall well-being and are quite simple-minded. We need to laugh. When the news media exposes us too aggressively to the world in which we live, we turn to John Stewart and Stephen Colbert.

Thus, when I say that we took issue with this movie, I don't think convention will be able to define our position. The sides drawn over the controversy, and even the controversy itself became subordinate to the humor and release found in celebrating our access to it, which brings me to my second experience.

This experience was not deliberate at all, and perhaps is more indicative of the deeply engrained principles that were illustrated in the previous anecdote. Walking and mingling with the crowds during the Sundance Film Festival gives the average person access to the ideas and personalities of a very diverse array of minds. I really enjoy that type of free-access to interpersonal interactions, and that night I happened to run into a guy that personified the generational essence I am trying to articulate. He was a documentarian and his film was about moustaches. His purpose was as lacking as the hair on my face. Perhaps that was the point.

The irony behind the film was as stratified and complicated as the irony behind the moustache. Like many things that have become chic recently, the moustache was not cool at first. It was mocked and laughed at. That was until some cool people who grew them as a joke persisted in wearing their jokes until the lines between serious/funny/ironic/sarcastic were so blurred that acceptance had to be decided by popularity, and popularity was wearing the moustache. Well, we still laugh about them at the same time we grow them. That was about the gist of the film. We didn't take each other seriously at all, but we both took very seriously our prerogative in being able to make such a ridiculous documentary. Sure, the film didn't serve any didactic purpose really, but that wasn't the point.

The point is this: life is much too serious to go through it without laughing. Mine is a generation of access. This access has submersed our worlds into a sea of ever-changing issues and conflict that at once can be stimulating and motivating, as well as overwhelming and depressing. I learned on that cold night in January that without proper release of the pressures associated with the rigors of our world, we might just miss the point. If we can unite more over the punch lines, even if we have to go to great lengths in making them, maybe we will be able to be more united over the things that really do matter. ❄

'Mine is a generation of access. This access has submersed our worlds into a sea of ever-changing issues and conflict that at once can be stimulating and motivating, as well as overwhelming and depressing.'



WHERE'S WALDO?: In a sea of human traffic at Shibuya Eki in Tokyo, Tim Koide ponders the meaning of life.

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Happy Holidays
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Happy Holidays and a Healthy 2007
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Nikkei Village Inc., is a non-profit venture by the San Fernando Valley Community Center, providing federally subsidized low income housing. Your inquiries are invited. Further information may be obtained by contacting Ms. Chico Iida, Manager, Nikkei Village Housing Inc., 9551 Laurel Canyon Blvd., Pacoima, CA 91331. (818) 897-7571. And, for information on Nikkei Senior Gardens, an assisted living facility for the elderly, contact Harold Muraoka, (818) 886-2676, or Harry Nakada, (818) 765-9803.

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Valley Judo Dojo	tues 7:30 pm, fri. 6:30 pm
Valley Kendo Dojo	mon, wed 7:30 pm
Valley Karate Dojo	tues 5 pm, thurs 7 pm
Valley Buddhist Temple	monthly TBD sun 10 am
Valley Buddhist Fujin-kai	" sun 10 am
Valley Buddhist Dharma School	" sun 10 am
Kinyu Ginshi-kai, Valley Shibu	thurs 9 pm
Ballroom Dancing	fri 6:30 pm
Computer Class	sun 10 am
Karaoke	first sat 6:30 pm
Shodo	sat 12:30 pm
Shiatsu	sat 9 am
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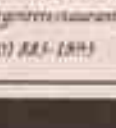


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PEACE, JOY, & HEALTH

KAWAMURA

(Continued from page 61)

rience led me to come back to Japantown to intern with the Japanese Community Youth Council, another organization in Japantown.

> *Although I still love being JA and know it is an important part of my identity, it is not in the all-encompassing or narrow sense that I had when I was younger.*

Most recently, spending the spring semester of my junior year in Tokyo has changed my perspective on being JA. In more than the cliché sense of realizing that I am not Japanese and not American, the experience in many ways led me to think of myself as an individual. Although I still love being JA and know it is an important part of my identity, it is not in the all-encompassing or narrow sense that I had when I was younger.

I want to share my experience not as another instance of some young person having an identity crisis, but as the story of one of many youth growing and changing within the complexity of today's world. I think that the ability of being able to adapt and grow is a strength that has always been part of a JA identity.

From our history of immigration to internment, from resistance to reparations, we have found strength in our diversity and our ability to change. As our community meets the challenges of the future, I hope that we can continue to embrace this part of our heritage.





FORMATIVE YEARS: Young Jessica Kawamura *(top)* in Daruma-no-Gakko, a cultural enrichment program for JA elementary schoolers and years later with peers, Jessica *(far right)* attends an east Asian cultural show.

Jessica Kawamura is a Berkeley JACL member. She is a current Brown University student and the recent recipient of JACL's Kenji Kajiwara Memorial Scholarship.



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'Iris Chang was a Chinese American freelance historian and journalist who became famous at the age of 29 after publishing a historical account of the Nanking Massacre in 1997 ... Her tragic suicide in November 2004 was a shock to the Chinese American and greater Asian American community. As some people have commented, perhaps she was one final victim of the Nanking Massacre.'

YUMI SAKUGAWA

(Continued from page 27)

government, in a vulnerable culture, in dangerous times, able to sell dangerous rationalizations to those whose human instincts told them otherwise." The most important lesson, she wrote, is that "civilization is tissue-thin."

I thought of this when I visited the Killing Fields and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia, which memorializes the two million people who perished under Pol Pot's oppressive regime from 1975 to 1979. While this particular crime against humanity occurred under a different historical context, I was shocked by the similarity of action in man's brutality against man. Pregnant women being beaten to death. Families being separated and starved. Soldiers tossing babies in the air and impaling them with their bayonets. These mental images, along with the mass graves and the black and white photographs of the victims' anguished faces, were all too starkly familiar.

The reaction of the average visitor is numbness, outrage and horror. And this is reflected in the notes scrawled in the museum guest book and in anonymous messages written on stairwells and corners throughout the museum. In different languages from all parts of the world, visitors offer prayers for the victims. They write how visiting this museum changed their lives. They write in bold letters, "PEACE ON EARTH" and "NEVER AGAIN."



Many of these messages also come in the form of a question. "How could we have let this happen within our lifetime?" one person writes. "What have we learned?" another person writes, citing the Rwandan genocide and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Dafur. And then the most common, simplest question of all: "Why?"

I wonder. ❄

Yumi Sakugawa is currently an Art major at UCLA and she writes a regular column, 'Memoirs of a Non-Geisha,' for the Pacific Citizen.



Laura, here with her host mom Akemi during the cherry blossom season, says she can 'never be considered completely American because I'm not 100% white — and yes, the two are still widely equated with one another — and because I tend to deal with most non-life threatening problems in the "Japanese" way, with passive silence and the ability to *gaman*, or put up.'

LAURA MARSHALL

(Continued from page 28)

their attention. "And so *hazukashii*," so *shy*, they add, giggling. Then the inevitable question: "*Is she really American?*"

Their confusion matches Yuta's. He has no idea how to categorize me in terms of race or culture, both of which are usually clearly defined in Japanese society. True, I am an American, not Japanese, and I believe in the "American" tradition of standing up for myself when necessary. Yet on the other hand, I can never be considered completely American because I'm not 100% white — and yes, the two are still widely equated with one another — and because I tend to deal with most non-life threatening problems in the "Japanese" way, with passive silence and the ability to *gaman*, or put up.

So I end up being classified in Japan either as "30% Japanese, 70% American" (my *okaasan*'s choice), or as a "Latin American person" (courtesy of Yuta).

While I don't care what people want to call me, I *do* want to know this: Why is it so important to try to categorize people according to some straight-jacket image of race, gender, ethnicity, or whatever? Why does it even matter which culture(s) I represent? And who decides what defines a culture — or a race or gender — anyway?

So what if I make sushi and practice Buddhism at home in California? Most Japanese college students I've met in Kyoto have never rolled sushi in their lives, let alone participated in anything spiritual other than purchasing good-luck Shinto charms before exams. Is this what being Japanese is now?

So when Yuta gazes into my face, probably on the verge of telling me that I should start using moisturizing cream, I glare at him. Superficiality is *not* a part of the Japanese culture that I want to identify with.

"*Nani*, Yuta," I ask tersely, the hot-blooded (Latin?) American in me bubbling up.

But when I look up at him again, at his carefully shaved eyebrows and his long hair bleached the color of barley tea, he suddenly breaks into a smile.

"Roora-chan, my cute," he begins in his Japanese-English, "you are *too* enough for me! *Ki ni shinaide ne*," he grins, putting a firm hand on my shoulder. *Don't worry*. "I like *you*." ❄

Laura Marshall is currently attending Brown University.

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(Continued from page 34)

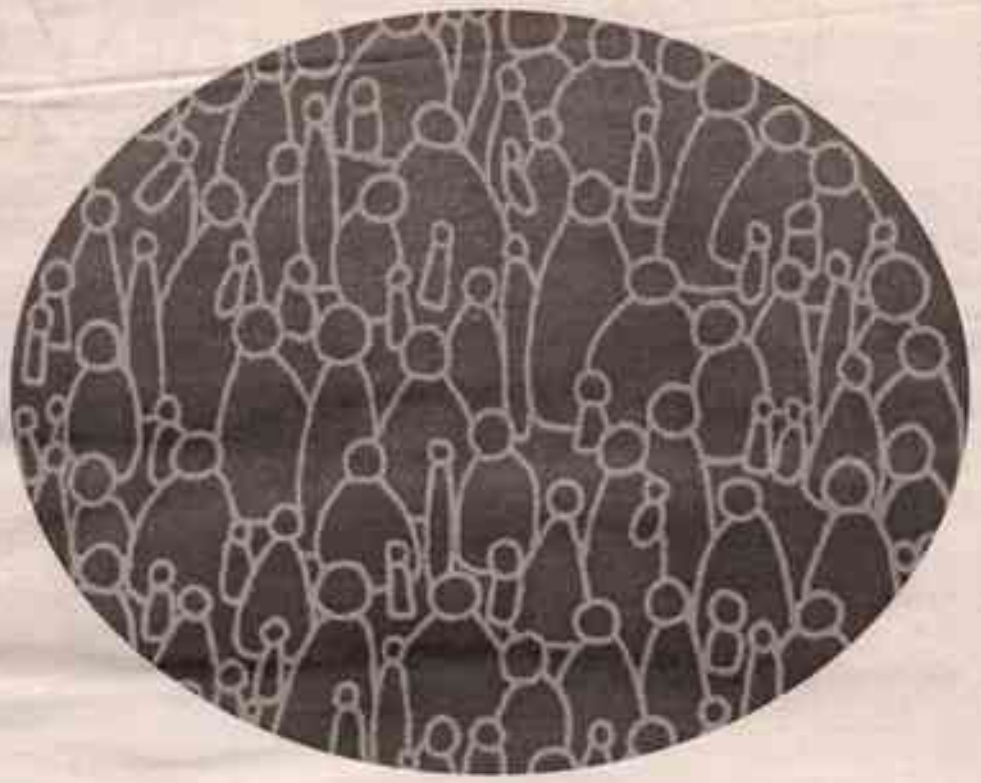
nectedness, you can get more done. Interestingly, social networks benefit not only the actively involved, but passive bystanders as well.

There are two kinds of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding capital is developed between similar people, like those of us in JACL. Conversely, bridging capital is cultivated between dissimilar people. We must invest in both.

A brief overview of social capital and its repercussions over the past century provide valuable insight into our dilemma and its solution. America's political institutions have remained essentially unvarying for over 100 years. In the 1950s and 1960s, polls revealed that about 80 percent of the population trusted the government. Comparing that to a present 19 percent, it is obvious that something has gone awry. Since the institutions have not been severely modified, it is logical to believe that there is another cause.

Ironically, Americans have been able to identify the problem based largely on Italian experiments. In 1971 Italy created new regional institutions. These were identical on paper, but the environments in which they were established differed. Some succeeded, others failed and political scientists were very interested in the causes. They found one strong correlation: the amount of participation in civic organizations was directly related to the success of the regional institutions. Thus Italy affirmed the importance of social capital.

'There are two kinds of social capital: bonding and bridging. Bonding capital is developed between similar people, like those of us in JACL. Conversely, bridging capital is cultivated between dissimilar people. We must invest in both.'



The steady decrease in social capital began in the 1960s. This decrease occurred in both formal and informal organizations. Membership records kept by a variety of clubs show a decline in enrollment. A Chicago-based polling agency gathered information showing that this decrease in capital affected people across the social spectrum. The agency's results show that each year, fewer people entertained friends in their homes or gathered for neighborhood activities. This trend has continued and is paralleled by decreased trust and increased crime rates.

As dismal as this situation is, Americans have survived it before. At the turn of the last century there was a severe lack of social capital, so the people *invented* ways to bond and bridge in their communities. They founded organizations that brought people together and created strong, social networks.

As Generation Plugged-In, we have incredible potential. The tragedy of Sept. 11th affected high school and college-aged Americans in a lasting way. While the amazing nationwide acts of charity began to fade within six months of the experience, the behavior of our particular group has remained, perhaps permanently, changed.

We need to harness that potential and help America. Reach out to those around you, whether similar or different, and participate in your communities. Develop networks that can span the continent and revive the trust Americans once enjoyed.

I have turned my iPod off and set my cell phone to silent. There are amazing people who hike those stairs to campus everyday, and they need to be met. ❄

Kiyomi MacDonald is a Mt. Olympus JACL member and the most recent recipient of JACL's Mr. & Mrs. Takahashi Moriuchi Scholarship.

DEREK FURUKAWA

(Continued from page 38)

- They have always known that 'in the criminal justice system the people have been represented by two separate yet equally important groups.'
- They have rarely mailed anything using a stamp.
- Affluent troubled teens in Southern California have always been the subjects of television series.
- Public school officials have always had the right to censor school newspapers.
- Michael Moore has always been showing up uninvited.
- Disneyland has always been in Europe and Asia.
- They never saw Bernard Shaw on CNN.
- The U.S. has always been studying global warming to confirm its existence.

Startling, isn't it? Are we to say that the college students today are better off or worse off? It's all a matter of perspective and opinion. One thing can be certain — times have changed.

As we move forth into the new wave of students, it is important to remember the things that made us choose to go to college. My undergraduate school prided themselves on "Quality, Diversity, and a Personal Touch." Even though we are dealing with a group of students who are considered "digital natives," we cannot forget about the personal touch. It just may help them see what we all remember as "the college experience."

That personal touch may be through e-mail, text messaging, or Podcasting, but we must make sure that technology does not prevent us from treating each new student as an individual. The world of college has definitely changed and through these graduates, we will see a change in the way we carry out our daily lives. Just take a moment to talk to someone from another generation and one question will continue to emerge: "Really?" ❄

Derek T. Furukawa is currently attending the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. He is also a Las Vegas JACL member and the 2006 recipient of the Rev. H. John Yamashita Memorial Scholarship.



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Activism At Its Best— Students at the University of Illinois at Chicago fight for recognition. After years of protesting and demands the students still do not have an Asian American Studies major program. Even a minor in AA Studies is not currently available.

BRANDON MITA

(Continued from page 26)

engineer. So after joining AACC, I switched to political science. Now, having graduated I wish it had been African American Studies (this is considering that there still isn't an AA Studies program at UIC).

To come full circle on the comparison between the West Coast and the Midwest, practically every school on the West Coast seems to have a fully-developed AA Studies program/department. When you look at us over here, only few schools have programs that are even close. Currently, the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign is the only one close to having enough faculty and courses for a major in AA Studies.

While this may seem like a small step towards victory for AAs, I don't want that one tally mark for APAs to take away from the gravity of the problems that are, in my mind, more pervasive and more distinctive than ever. Since being hired on to work with Bill Yoshino in the JACL Midwest regional office, I have learned an unfathomable amount of information regarding the JACL, its long history and its involvement within various political movements.

In the five months since I've started, I've come to understand with the JACL's assistance and some much needed personal growth that many of the social issues demand more than just a letter, or a resolution, or an article. These issues need strong and able advocates. To clarify, this point is not simply a Midwest, a West Coast, a Southern, or an East Coast dilemma, but rather, it is the stunning truth that we all must take hold of.

When I look at myself in the morning, I see a person of color. But what does it mean when I, as a "person of color," unintentionally label a "hip-hop" radio station as an "African American" radio station? What does it mean when AAs question the integrity of their communities because the people who move in next door or down the street are Black or Hispanic? What does it mean when we as AAs cannot march together with our African American and Latino brothers and sisters for common causes? Be it immigration. Be it urban housing. Be it access to healthcare.

I make mistakes everyday. I fall down twice as hard as and more often than most. But I know when to admit I'm wrong. I know when to pick myself up and shake the dirt off. Because I know what it's like to have been wronged. Because I feel the pain of having been turned away from a job because of the way my last name sounds. Because I die a little each time someone looks at me and says, "Remember Pearl Harbor!"

Because I carry these things with me. Because, yes, I know I am different than the majority, but I am powerful. Because I understand the meaning of social justice. And for this, I have the Midwest to thank. ❄



Brandon Mita is currently a JACL fellow working at the Midwest District office.



> *"It was here where I gained social and political consciousness as well as a sense of self-identity as an AA and a JA. It dawned on me halfway through freshmen year that college is a place to define myself and my goals in life."*

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'What I didn't expect was how much time and sincere thought I would actually put into my work; I wouldn't know what effect this experience would have on my outlook on not only the Little Tokyo community, but also on my own cultural identity as a JA.'







Today's Little Tokyo includes the Japanese American National Musuem (*top photo*) and the Japan Village.

SALLY KIKUCHI

(Continued from page 39)

issues relevant to the Asian American community.

In a sense, it was the job I had expected, but in many other ways, the internship was so much more. It was a learning experience both professionally and personally as I came to see Little Tokyo through a different perspective than I had before.

It was through the subtle aspects of the community that I learned the most. Every little interaction helped me to understand and feel connected to both the Little Tokyo community and the broader JA community. In many cases, I was often asked and could never respond to which internment camp my grandparents were in, or what basketball league I played in, because I hadn't grown up with these activities; but there were many other aspects of JA identity that I could relate to and came to appreciate.

The interns and staff I met this summer became my close friends both in and out of the work environment. In addition, observing the way the community functions in all aspects and taking note of the true effort it takes to maintain Little Tokyo made me thankful to be part of such a community. On one side, talking to small business owners and employees gave me an understanding of the many factors that come into play in order to maintain a successful business. On another note, observing the community council meetings in its complex networks and overlapping issues allowed me to value the way the community functions.

Visiting the Japanese American National Museum and taking the time to walk throughout Little Tokyo allowed me to take note of the historical presentations of culture, public art displays, architectural design, and other beautiful demonstrations of cultural preservation that I was once oblivious to. Realizing that every individual in the community shares the same sincere interest in maintaining Little Tokyo as an established ethnic community with historical and cultural roots was the trigger to my understanding of my role in the JA community.

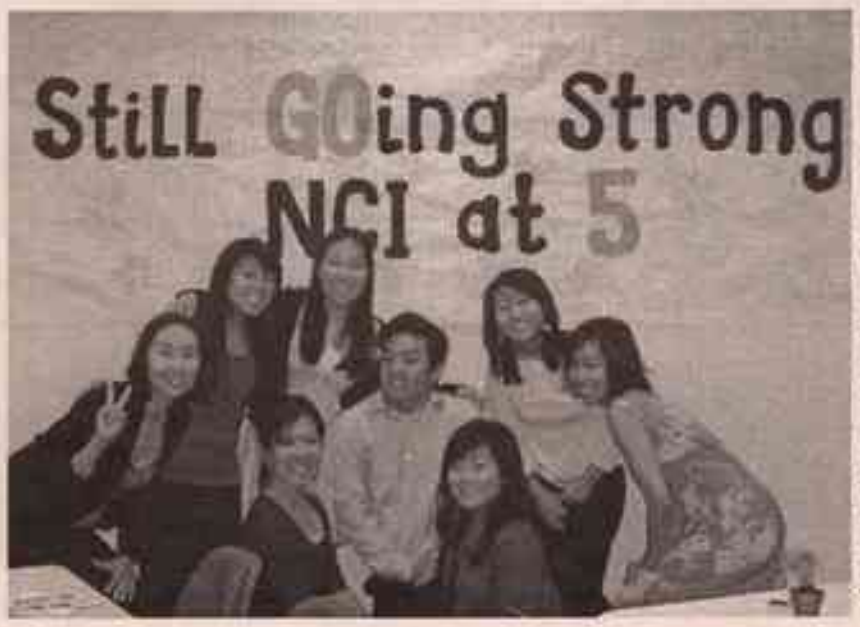
And when it comes to festivals, I have to admit that I can never visit the Tofu Festival in the same way, now that I've actually had the inside look and personal experience of organizing a booth at such a large-scale event. Finally, working as an intern in Little Tokyo has given me a sense of empowerment as youth in providing support and demonstrating leadership as JAs. Beyond just the internship program, my whole experience in Little Tokyo this summer really made me realize that I do feel a connection to Little Tokyo as I embrace my JA culture.

Now that my previous gap with the Little Tokyo community has closed, I've become more aware of the significance of Japantowns and more passionate about the JA presence. I truly care about the community, and I am encouraged to live up to my greatest potential in doing my part to ensure the future of the three remaining Japantowns in the country.

Just as Little Tokyo is no longer a foreign place as it used to seem, my JA identity is strong and I know that the community will always be there for me. I know that Little Tokyo is a place where I can always return and be welcomed. ❄

Sally Kikuchi is currently attending UC Berkeley.

'I truly care about the community, and I am encouraged to live up to my greatest potential in doing my part to ensure the future of the three remaining Japantowns in the country.'



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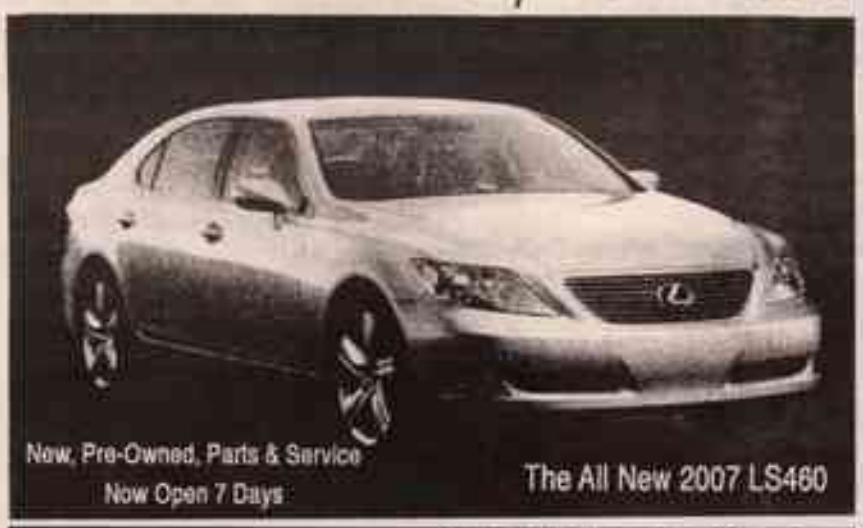
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"We are the key to the future and to the existence of our culture. Are you plugged into yourself? Are you plugged into your dreams?"

- Ken Kanesaka *(pictured here)* as a little boy performing in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

KANESAKA

(Continued from page 13)

1886. I represent a type of fear of the unknown. A fear that has created prejudice and excuses to try to get me kicked out of the kabuki theater as fast as possible. But to those actors, I will not yield and give up because I have the power of dreams.

As far as I can remember, I had always wanted to be a kabuki actor. With my grandmother's wish for her grandchildren to never forget their heritage, I started learning Japanese classical dance. Being Nisei-han (2.5 generation), I was brought up speaking English and never learning Japanese. Through my passion for Japanese classical dance, I found myself becoming more and more interested about the Japanese culture. This passion is what drove me to study aboard for a year at Tokyo University. Little did I know that during that one year, the dream that I had thought was impossible, would come true.

Quitting Tokyo University upon admission to the Kamigata Kabuki Jyuku in Osaka, I set upon another challenge. Not being able to speak Japanese very well, living in Osaka and understanding Osaka-ben (dialect) was like an American trying to understand Greek. But nothing was going to stop me from achieving my dream of becoming a kabuki actor.

During the two years at the Kabuki Jyuku, I stopped speaking English and boycotted watching and listening to English language movies and music. Instead I tried to immerse myself completely in the Japanese culture and language. But I learned that though accents can be fixed, the person you are can never be changed.

I am Japanese American, and the American part of me will never change.

A journalist once wrote an eloquent description of my performance style. He wrote: "The way that Gankyo had expressed happiness and joy is something that I never have seen by any actors before. It was truly American."

From my grandmother's wish sprang my passion and my drive to create a unique identity that is truly a mixture of both Japanese and American. My grandmother also stresses that there is a need for us to continue passing down our heritage to the next generations. If the culture stops with us then what good is it for us to learn it to begin with?

We are the key to the future and to the existence of our culture. Are you plugged into yourself? Are you plugged into your dreams?

Chon, chon, chon. The sounds of the wooden clappers are heard in the distant background. It's five minutes before the curtain rises! I must have dozed off. I take one last peek into the mirror as I rush out of the dressing room towards the stage.

Ken Kanesaka (Nakamura Gankyo) is originally from Hungtington Beach, Calif., but now lives in Japan where he performs with Japan's Grand Kabuki Chikamatsu-za under the watchful eye of kabuki legend Nakamura Ganjiro III.





Ken with his parents.

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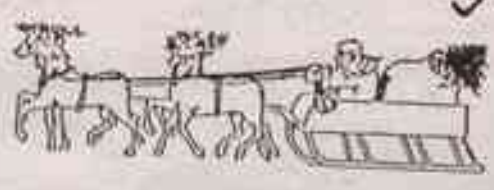
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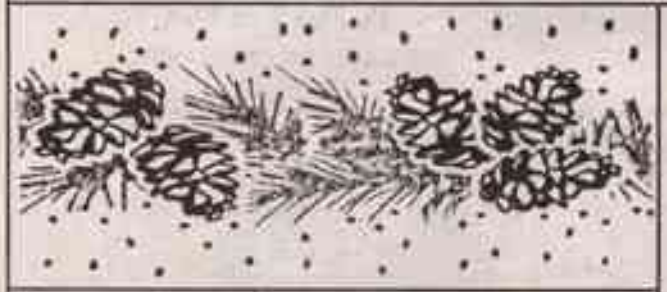
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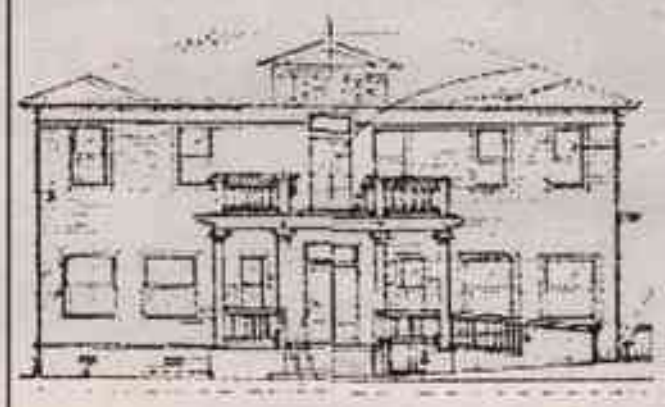
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First Activities of the New Year



Sunday, January 7, 2007, 1pm
Free to the Public

1pm — **Performance**, JACCC Plaza
Mitori Mokimo, Japanese dancer; **Santiago Prechtel**, flamenco guitarist
Awaze-kai koto ensemble; **Majikina Henryu**, Okinawan dance group
Mayu, zen archery
1:40pm — **Kodama Taiko Mochitsuki performance**, JACCC Plaza
1:30-4pm — **Kite-making Workshop**, George J. Doizaki Gallery
12-4pm — **Shikishi Exhibition**, George J. Doizaki Gallery

Ikaino Hanae: First Laughters is the theme for the year's celebration and is reflected in the original performance created by artist and JACCC Artistic Director Hirokazu Kosaka. A koto for the season, the performance uniquely combines the traditional and the contemporary and incorporates a cross cultural juxtaposition unique to Los Angeles, the new Silk Road.

SHIKISHI NEW YEAR GREETING EXHIBITION
In the Doizaki Gallery, tour the Shikishi Exhibit, a collection of more than 200 original and creative New Year greetings inspired by the *Ikaino Hanae: First Laughters* theme.

Other activities include: Kodama Taiko demonstrating the making of traditional rice cakes for the new year; *kagami biraki* (breaking of the sake barrel) and New Year mochi drop as crafts for the kids and new year features.

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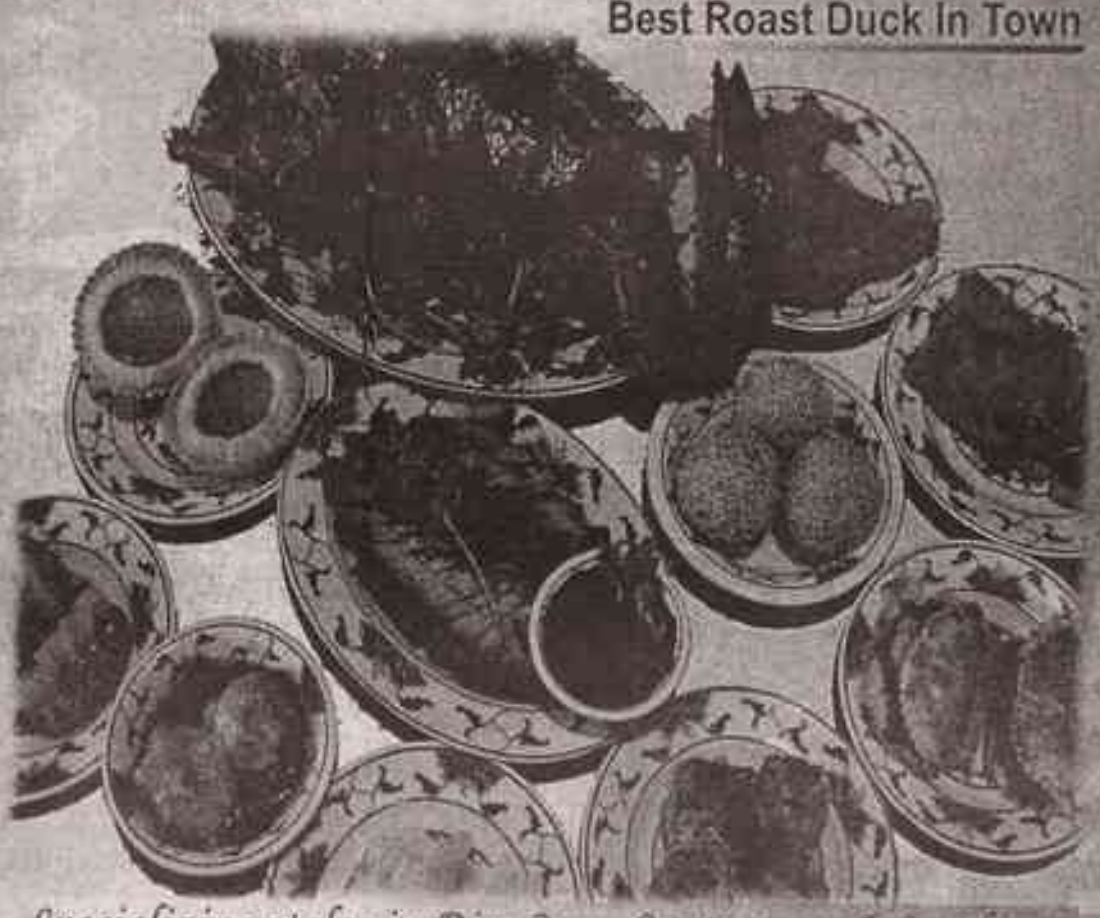
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"See you here in Salt Lake City, Utah 2008"

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HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVAL TOUR ..... FEB 4-12
Abashiri, Sounkyo, Asahikawa, Sapporo, Otaru, Noboribetsu. Ice breaker ship cruise and 5 Snow Festivals.

INDIA HOLIDAY TOUR ..... FEB/MAR
New Delhi, Agra, Bodhgaya, Patna, Rajgir, Varanasi, Lumbini/Kushinagara, Bombay, Aurangabad-Ajanta/Ellora Caves.

COPPER CANYON ADVENTURE HOLIDAY TOUR ..... MAR 25-APR 2
Tucson, San Carlos, El Fuerte, Copper Canyon, Chihuahua, El Paso.

SOUTH AMERICA HOLIDAY TOUR ..... APR 26-MAY 1
Buenos Aires, Iguassu, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo. Extension to Lima, Machu Picchu. Meet Local Nikkei.

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR ..... MAY 20-31
Tokyo, Lake Kawaguchi, Matsumoto, Takayama, Kanazawa, Noto Peninsula, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Matsue, Kyoto.

GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR ..... JUN 24-JUL 3
Tokyo, Hakone, Lake Hamana, Hiroshima, Kyoto.

AFRICA WILDLIFE SAFARI HOLIDAY TOUR bonus deadline Dec. 15 ... AUG 1-13
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OKINAWA-KYUSHU HOLIDAY TOUR ..... OCT 10-21
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Mar. 12 **China** - $2595 - Beijing - Xian - Guiling - Shanghai.

Mar. 26 **Japan Classic** "Cherry Blossom" $3495 - Tokyo - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Takahashi - Hiroshima - Isle of Miyajima - Inland Sea - Shodo Island - Kyoto.

April 5 **Panorama** "Far Corners of Japan" $3695 - Tokyo - Hamamatsu - Yamaguchi - Kagoshima - Beppu - Cape Naruto - Shirahama - Tokyo.

April 16 **New Japan** "Off the Beaten Track" $3695 - Fukuoka - Hirado - Amakusa - Kokura - Kushimoto - Nagoya - Shimoda - Lake Kawaguchi - Tokyo.

April 25 **Vietnam, Cambodia & Malaysia** - $3295.

May 27 **Alaska Cruise** - NCL "Pearl" - From $1444.

June 6 **Branson, Memphis & Nashville** - $2095.

June 19 **American Heritage** - $2295 - Niagara Falls - Penn Dutch, Washington, D.C. - Williamsburg & More.

July 2 **Summer Japan "Family Tour"** $3095 - Child 11 & Under $2795 - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Hiroshima - Miyajima - Inland Sea - Shodo Island - Kyoto.

July 19 **National Parks** - $2295 - Denver - Mt. Rushmore - Heart Mt. - Yellowstone - Tetons - Jackson - Salt Lake.

Aug. 12 **Canada Highlights** - $2395 - Montreal - Quebec - Ontario, Niagara Falls & Toronto.

Sept. 2 **Greece/Turkey Celebrity Cruise** - $3695 - Rome - Mykonos - Rhodes - Santorini - Istanbul - Ephesus - Athens - Naples - Rome. **ALMOST SOLD OUT**

Sept. 26 **New England Autumn** - $1995.

Oct. 8 **Hokkaido/Tohoku** - $3895 - Sapporo - Sounkyo - Saboro - Ainu Village - Hakodate - Aomori - L. Towada - Hachimantai - Matsushima Bay - Sendai - Tokyo.

Oct. 15 **Uranihon "Otherside of Japan"** $3795 - Tokyo - Japan Sea - Sado Island _ Kanazawa - Amanohashidate - Kinosaki - Matsue - Izumo Taisha - Mt. Daisen - Kyoto.

Oct. 29 **Japan Classic "Fall Foliage"** $3595 - Tokyo - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Takahashi - Isle of Miyajima - Hiroshima - Inland Sea - Shodo Island - Kyoto.

Nov. 7 **Okinawa/Kyushu/Shikoku** - $3995 - 3 Days Okinawa, Kyushu - Kuratsu - Nagasaki - Kumamoto - Beppu, Shikoku - Ashizuri - Kochi - Takamatsu - Osaka.

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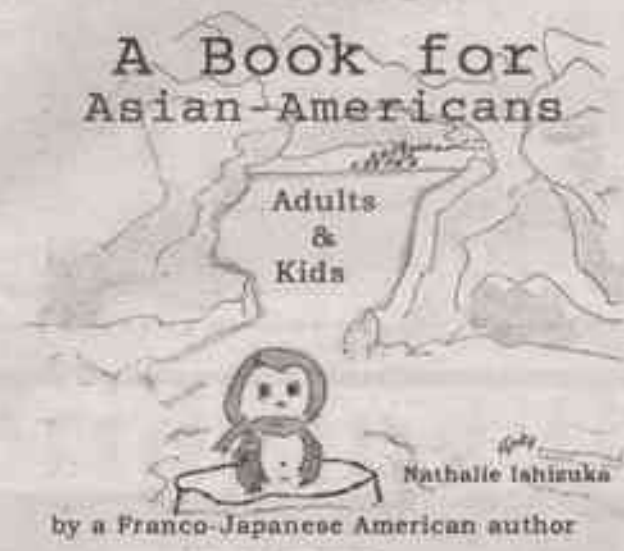


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Book Review

Mom Says, Dad Says, Nat Says: Other by Nathalie Ishizuka, Booklocker **ISBN 1-59113-741-1** $24.95 at www.natsays.com

Dad is Japanese. Mom is French.

Nat, she is a, Amerasian, a Hapa, Nisei, or more simply put an 'Other'.

This heartwarming book shows us highly effective strategies that help us enjoy an identity crisis, a different physical appearance (Nat had spent hours pinching her nose to make it less flat with little success), a strange sounding name, language diffences (looking Japanese did not mean Nat spoke Japanese) and countless other critical moments in life.

"Other helps us look beyond individual differences..." --James Sutterlin, ***former Director of the U.N. Secretary General***

"A wise and charming book for international, intercultural families" --Dugan Romano, ***author Intercultural Marriage***

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Aug. 16	Romantic Danube: Budapest to Prague
Sept. 6	Northern Japan: Hokkaido & Tohoku
Sept. 18	New England & Eastern Canada Cruise "Golden Princess"
Oct. 5	Korea Highlights & K-Drama "HALLYU" Tour
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floydshimomura@charter.net

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1133 Woodland Meadows Dr.
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Helen KAWAGOE
21207 S. Avalon Blvd. #109
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from
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of
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KONDO, Isako & Ito	3701 Shallow Brook Dr, Bloomfield Hills 48302
KURASHIGE, Scott & Lawan, Emily & Tula	University of Mich. - Asian/Pacific American Studies
KUWAHARA, Frank & Agnes	42354 Beverly Way, Clinton Township 48038
MORIMOTO, Richard	5136 Dunewood Dr, Toledo, OH 43623
O'NEIL, Ann	3414 Linden, Dearborn 48124
O'NEIL, Miyo	13191 Ford Road, #317, Dearborn 48126
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SEICHI, Hitoshi & Asae	4455 Pine Tree Tr, Bloomfield Hills 48301
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From the Wine Country

Sonoma County JACL

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Year of the Boar

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From members of the
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KANEKO, Terrie, 3312 Todd Way, San Jose 95124
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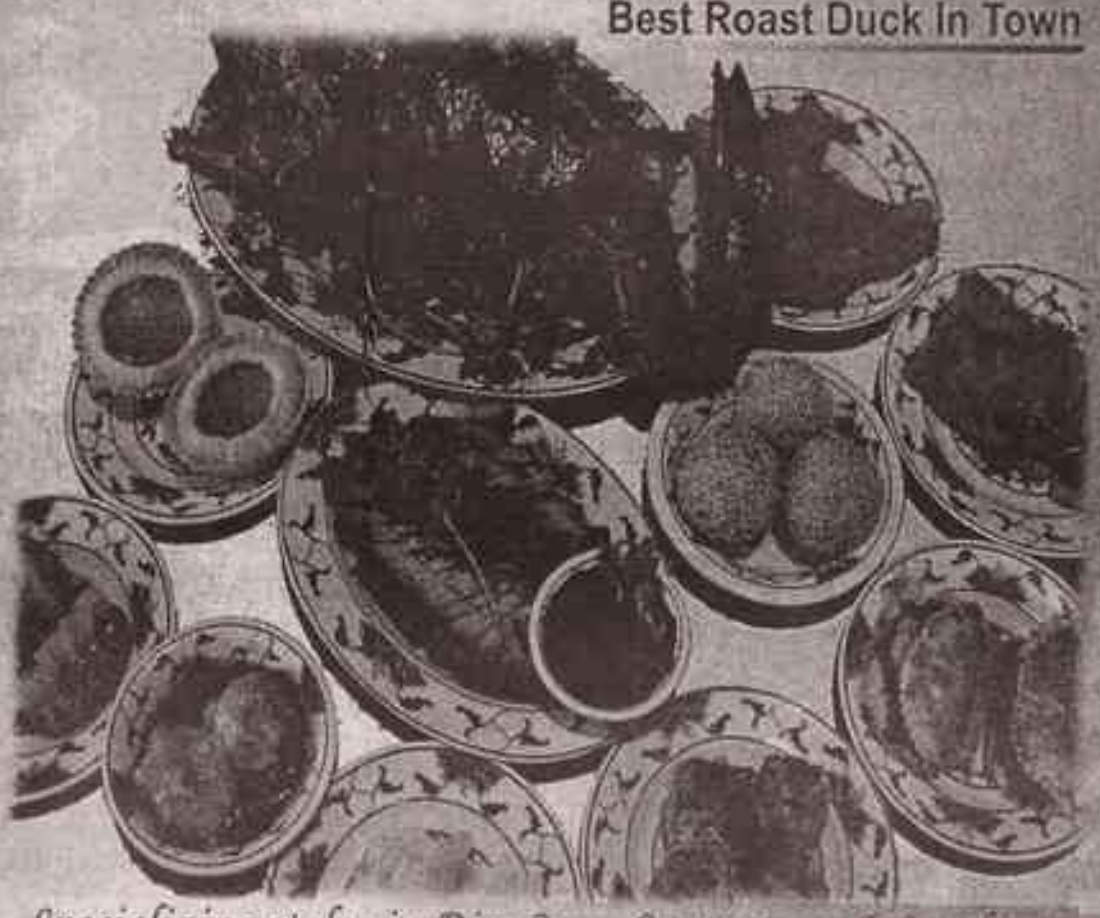
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&
Happy New Year

Ho!
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Ho!

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Ho!
Ho!
Ho!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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HIRANAKA, Dan & Grace ..... 18015 SE 240th St, Covington 98042
HIRANO, Betty ..... 4603 S 125th St, Seattle 98178
KAM, Calvin & Julie ..... 16012 SE 172nd Pl, Renton 98058
KANDA, Tedi ..... 514 Kenosia Ave, #C105, Kent 98031
KATO, Masaru & Amy ..... 21639—98th Ave S, Kent 98031
KATO, Tad & Lilly ..... 9204 S 239th St, Kent 98031
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HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVAL TOUR ..... FEB 4-12
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INDIA HOLIDAY TOUR ..... FEB/MAR
New Delhi, Agra, Bodhgaya, Patna, Rajgir, Varanasi, Lumbini/Kushinagara, Bombay, Aurangabad-Ajanta/Ellora Caves.

COPPER CANYON ADVENTURE HOLIDAY TOUR ..... MAR 25-APR 2
Tucson, San Carlos, El Fuerte, Copper Canyon, Chihuahua, El Paso.

SOUTH AMERICA HOLIDAY TOUR ..... APR 26-MAY 1
Buenos Aires, Iguassu, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo. Extension to Lima, Machu Picchu. Meet Local Nikkei.

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR ..... MAY 20-31
Tokyo, Lake Kawaguchi, Matsumoto, Takayama, Kanazawa, Noto Peninsula, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Matsue, Kyoto.

GRANDPARENTS/GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR ..... JUN 24-JUL 3
Tokyo, Hakone, Lake Hamana, Hiroshima, Kyoto.

AFRICA WILDLIFE SAFARI HOLIDAY TOUR bonus deadline Dec. 15 ... AUG 1-13
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Mar. 12 **China** - $2595 - Beijing - Xian - Guiling - Shanghai.

Mar. 26 **Japan Classic** "Cherry Blossom" $3495 - Tokyo - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Takahashi - Hiroshima - Isle of Miyajima - Inland Sea - Shodo Island - Kyoto.

April 5 **Panorama** "Far Corners of Japan" $3695 - Tokyo - Hamamatsu - Yamaguchi - Kagoshima - Beppu - Cape Naruto - Shirahama - Tokyo.

April 16 **New Japan** "Off the Beaten Track" $3695 - Fukuoka - Hirado - Amakusa - Kokura - Kushimoto - Nagoya - Shimoda - Lake Kawaguchi - Tokyo.

April 25 **Vietnam, Cambodia & Malaysia** - $3295.

May 27 **Alaska Cruise** - NCL "Pearl" - From $1444.

June 6 **Branson, Memphis & Nashville** - $2095.

June 19 **American Heritage** - $2295 - Niagara Falls - Penn Dutch, Washington, D.C. - Williamsburg & More.

July 2 **Summer Japan "Family Tour"** $3095 - Child 11 & Under $2795 - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Hiroshima - Miyajima - Inland Sea - Shodo Island - Kyoto.

July 19 **National Parks** - $2295 - Denver - Mt. Rushmore - Heart Mt. - Yellowstone - Tetons - Jackson - Salt Lake.

Aug. 12 **Canada Highlights** - $2395 - Montreal - Quebec - Ontario, Niagara Falls & Toronto.

Sept. 2 **Greece/Turkey Celebrity Cruise** - $3695 - Rome - Mykonos - Rhodes - Santorini - Istanbul - Ephesus - Athens - Naples - Rome. **ALMOST SOLD OUT**

Sept. 26 **New England Autumn** - $1995.

Oct. 8 **Hokkaido/Tohoku** - $3895 - Sapporo - Sounkyo - Saboro - Ainu Village - Hakodate - Aomori - L. Towada - Hachimantai - Matsushima Bay - Sendai - Tokyo.

Oct. 15 **Uranihon "Otherside of Japan"** $3795 - Tokyo - Japan Sea - Sado Island _ Kanazawa - Amanohashidate - Kinosaki - Matsue - Izumo Taisha - Mt. Daisen - Kyoto.

Oct. 29 **Japan Classic "Fall Foliage"** $3595 - Tokyo - Takayama - Nara - Kobe - Takahashi - Isle of Miyajima - Hiroshima - Inland Sea - Shodo Island - Kyoto.

Nov. 7 **Okinawa/Kyushu/Shikoku** - $3995 - 3 Days Okinawa, Kyushu - Kuratsu - Nagasaki - Kumamoto - Beppu, Shikoku - Ashizuri - Kochi - Takamatsu - Osaka.

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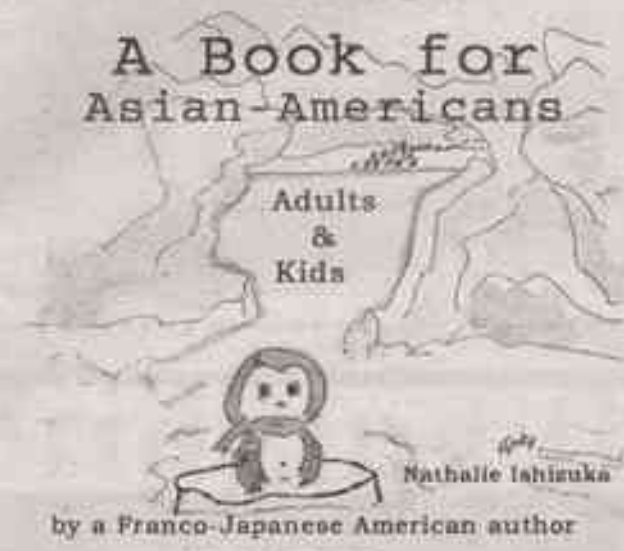


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Book Review

Mom Says, Dad Says, Nat Says: Other by Nathalie Ishizuka, Booklocker **ISBN 1-59113-741-1** $24.95 at www.natsays.com

Dad is Japanese. Mom is French.

Nat, she is a, Amerasian, a Hapa, Nisei, or more simply put an 'Other'.

This heartwarming book shows us highly effective strategies that help us enjoy an identity crisis, a different physical appearance (Nat had spent hours pinching her nose to make it less flat with little success), a strange sounding name, language diffences (looking Japanese did not mean Nat spoke Japanese) and countless other critical moments in life.

"Other helps us look beyond individual differences..." --James Sutterlin, ***former Director of the U.N. Secretary General***

"A wise and charming book for international, intercultural families" --Dugan Romano, ***author Intercultural Marriage***

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May 17	Charleston & Savannah
May 30	Heritage America: Niagara Falls, Washington, D.C.
June 13	Alaska Cruise - Regent Seven Seas Cruise "Mariner"
June 25	Las Vegas - 3 Day Fling!!!
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July 16	Summer Japan
Aug. 2	Great Cities of Europe: London & Paris
Aug. 8	Alpine resorts & Rails: France, Italy & Switzerland
Aug. 16	Romantic Danube: Budapest to Prague
Sept. 6	Northern Japan: Hokkaido & Tohoku
Sept. 18	New England & Eastern Canada Cruise "Golden Princess"
Oct. 5	Korea Highlights & K-Drama "HALLYU" Tour
Oct. 18	Autumn Highlights of Japan
Nov. 8	Islands of "Okinawa & Kyushu" Japan
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Holiday Greetings to My JACL Friends
S. Ruth Y. HASHIMOTO
8810 Horizon Blvd. NE, #238
Albuquerque, NM
87113-1697

Holiday Greetings
Toshi Kadowaki
4374 N. Watercrest Dr.
Toledo, OH 43614

Holiday Greetings
to Our JACL Friends
Naomi & Emi KASHIWABARA
3286 Eichenlaub
San Diego, CA 92117

Holiday Greetings
to Our Friends in JACL
DR. & MRS. ZITSUO KAWASHIMA
Periodontics
175 Cleveland Rd., Apt. 143
Pleasant Hill, CA 94523

Holiday Greetings
HOOTCH & CHERRY OKUMURA
2819 Hummingbird Ln
Humble, TX 77396

Holiday Greetings
Floyd & Ruth SHIMOMURA
Mark & Jamie,
Reina, Lisa, Brian
719 Fairview Dr.
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floydshimomura@charter.net

Holiday Greetings
to Our JACL Friends
Jerry & Dr. Dorothy ENOMOTO
310 Vista Cove Circle
Sacramento, CA 95835

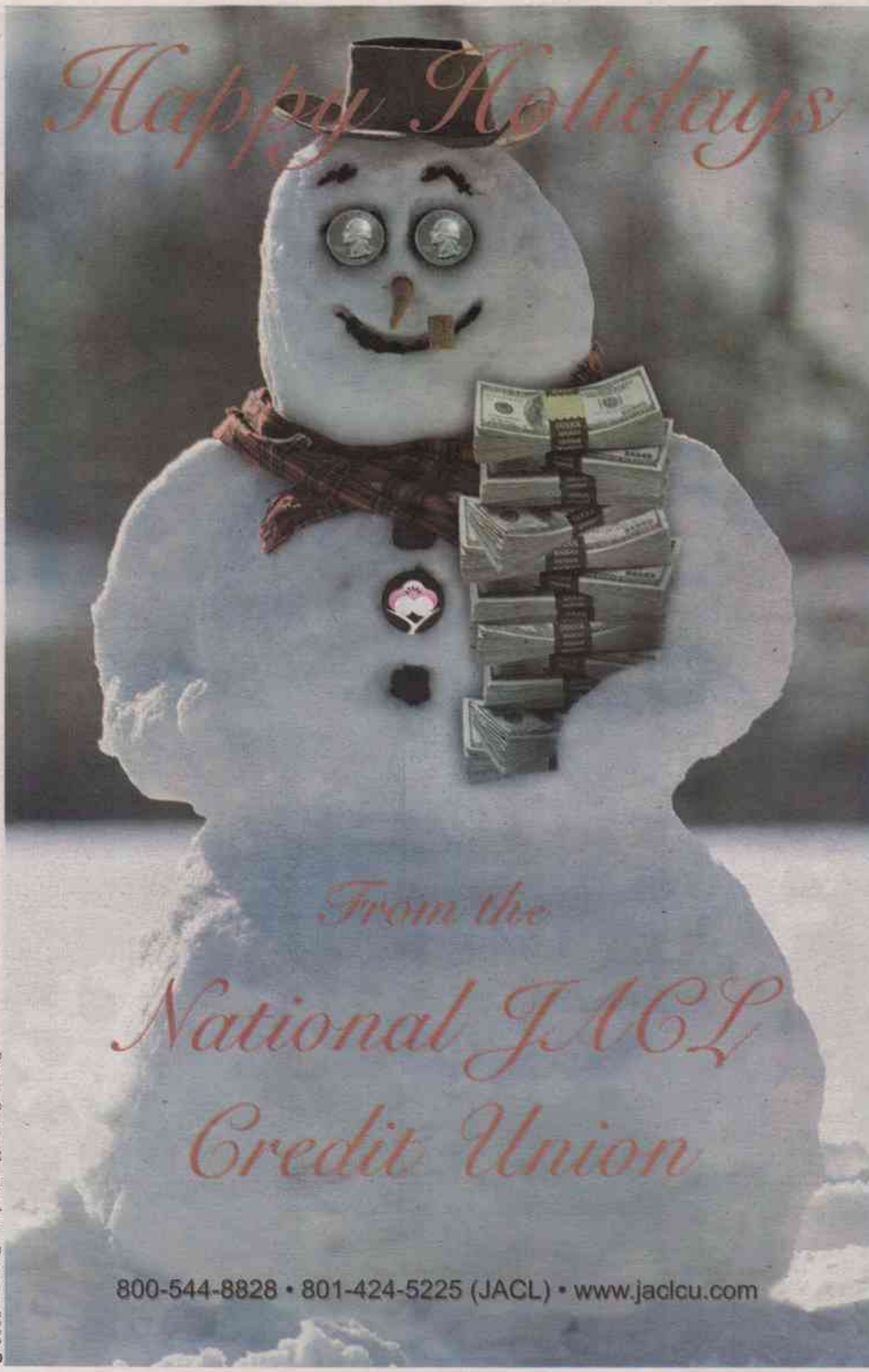
Holiday Greetings
to Our JACL Friends
Joe & Kay ALLMAN
6510 W. Butler Dr., #96
Glendale, AZ 85302

Cheers!
Homer & Miyuki Yasui
1525 SE 107th Ave. Apt. 207
Portland, OR 97216-2467

PEACE & JOY
Hiroshi & Grayce Uyehara
685 Bridlington Way
Medford, NJ 08055

Holiday Greetings to
Our JACL Friends
Don HAYASHI, Deb DUNLOP & Sarah
1133 Woodland Meadows Dr.
Vandalia, OH
45377-1567

Holiday Greetings
Helen KAWAGOE
21207 S. Avalon Blvd. #109
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Happy Holidays
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