JAs and African Americans collaborate in S.F.’s redistricting process.

Female sumo wrestling is working hard to catch up to the boys.

“Comic Book Men’s” Ming Chen is the go-to guy on the show.
SPRING CAMPAIGN

MAGNIFYING THE VOICE OF JACL MEMBERS

By Paul Niwa

One of the things I remember about my grandfather, Henry Fukuhara, was the magazines on his coffee table. When I became a college student, I started a habit of digging through that stack of papers to pull out the latest edition of the Pacific Citizen. During my grandfather’s frequent naps, I would read the Pacific Citizen, learning about the activities of JACL.

Just before my grandfather moved into a nursing home, I asked him why he subscribed to the Pacific Citizen. He had not been to a JACL event for decades. Yet, he continued to pay membership dues.

My grandfather told me that he joined JACL in the 1920s, and he described how much fun it was to meet other Nisei who could relate to being an immigrant’s son. He said the early days weren’t about politics. JACL held grand gatherings where young Japanese Americans could meet, dance and sing. When the weekend parties ended, the Pacific Citizen was the way members kept in touch between social affairs.

My grandfather died two years ago, shortly after I was given the privilege of serving on the Pacific Citizen editorial board. This newspaper still links JACL members, both of my grandfather’s generation and mine. It continues to be a place where Japanese Americans explore the possibilities of their shared identity.

And it is a forum for members, both active and inactive, to communicate informally to the leadership and staff of JACL.

But, this newspaper can magnify the voice of its members only if its readers continue to treasure it.

The Pacific Citizen is JACL’s most successful program, and it has always been a faithful financial steward. JACL’s contribution basically covers the salaries of the two Pacific Citizen editors and business manager.

Advertising revenues and funds raised from their annual Spring Campaign pay for the printing and mailing of the Pacific Citizen and the cost of gathering the news and putting the newspaper online for a younger generation. The Spring Campaign has also paid for the printing and mailing of the Pacific Citizen’s version.

During the past few years, we, the readers of the Pacific Citizen have shown in the past how much we value the Pacific Citizen through our generous Spring Campaign contributions. And I hope you will join me in supporting the Pacific Citizen again this year.

Paul Niwa is a journalism professor at Emerson College. He is the current Eastern District representative on the Pacific Citizen editorial board.

‘This newspaper still links JACL members, both of my grandfather’s generation and mine.’

COMMENTS

UPDATE ON STAFF REVIEWS AND BELLEVUE CONVENTION

By Gail Sueki

As the national JACL vice president for general operations I am also the personnel committee chair. This year the committee had a critical job to perform: providing a recommendation to the national board for the selection of a national director. The outcome of the efforts of the personnel committee and the national board has resulted in the hiring of our new National Director Priscilla Ouchida.

Kudos to the personnel committee because there were many behind the scenes tasks that allowed us to complete our assignment. The committee had the board rank the attributes of a national director, then created job descriptions and job announcements. Recruitment was done using a variety of methods including word of mouth, newspapers/media and online posts. Through these efforts, we received and reviewed applications from many qualified individuals. A subset of the personnel committee screened and conducted phone interviews for the most qualified candidates. Based on these results, the personnel committee made a recommendation to the national board.

The board conducted a final interview and came to a decision.

The expenses for this process included teleconference calls for the personnel committee, the personnel interview committee, and the online posting. As personnel committee chair, I’d like to thank the personnel committee whose members include: Pacific Citizen Executive Editor, Carol Aoyagi-Stom; staff representative, Bill Yoshino; National Director Floyd Mori; Governor’s Caucus Chair Chip LaRouche; at-large delegates, Miyoko Yoshino, Judith Aono and Betsy Sato; and non-voting members President David Kawamoto and Legal Counsel Floyd Shimomura.

Reviews

Reviews were due at the end of 2011. At the end of 2011, I received the Pacific Citizen executive editor’s review and confirmation that the P.C. staff reviews have been completed. To date, the national director’s review and confirmation of the completion of the staff reviews are still pending. As stated in the personnel manual, the president and the v.p. for general operations review the P.C. executive editor and the national director annually and confirm that staff reviews are completed.

Convention

I have just returned from Washington where I had the opportunity to tour the Hyatt Bellevue again as well as attend the PNW district meeting. Thank you to the Seattle chapter and the PNW district for all their hard work. Plans are moving along and the convention will be here in no time.

Convention information may be found at www.jacl.org/2012.

It’s an election year convention, so we hope to see a large turnout as we elect our leaders for the next biennium. As a national board officer, I feel that the national convention is one of the main avenues by which we can have an opportunity to hear the voice of our membership. We need to keep working together to make improvements and continue to build a strong and vibrant organization.

As we prepare for our trip to the JACL convention in Bellevue, Wash., please think about these items as you may want to discuss them at your convention.

>>See SUEKI pg. 6

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E-mail: pc@pacificcitizen.org
Online: www.pacificcitizen.org
Tel: (213) 620-1767
Fax: (213) 620-1768
Mail: 250 E. First Street, Suite 301
Los Angeles, CA 90012

STAFF

Executive Editor
Caroline Y. Aoyagi-Stom
Assistant Editor
Lynda Lin
Reporters
Nalae J. Ko
Business Manager
Staci Hikayasu
Circulation
Eva Lau-Ting

The Pacific Citizen newspaper (ISSN: 0030-8579) is published semi-monthly (except once in December and January) by the Japanese American Citizens League, Pacific Citizen, 250 E. 1st Street, Suite 301, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Periodical postage paid at LA, CA

POSTMASTER: send address changes to National JACL, 1785 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115

JACL President: David Kawamoto
National Director: Floyd Mori
P.C. EDITORIAL BOARD
Judith Aono, chairperson; Paul Niwa, EDC; Kevin Miyazaki, MDC; Roberta Barton, CCDC; Mark Kobayashi, NCWNPC; Hugh Burleson, PWNDC; Gil Asakawa, IDC; Cindi Harbottle, PSWDC; Sonya Kuki, Youth

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Periodicals paid at Los Angeles, Calif and mailing office.

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Residents and concerned citizens of San Francisco’s Japantown fought to keep J-town in District 5.

By Nalea J. Ko, Reporter

San Francisco’s Japantown stakeholders credit the collaboration with the African American community for their success in getting their concerns heard during the redistricting process.

“The redistricting task force was not aware of where key institutions were located and what members of the community considered to be part of Japantown,” said Jon Osaki, JCYC’s executive director. “And so I think once we got engaged in the process and were able to increase awareness amongst the task force members I think they were very receptive to making sure that Japantown would stay whole.”

The two communities coming together was significant in the sense that it revealed how much San Francisco’s African American and Japanese American communities still live connected to one another,” said Dr. Justin Morgan, an African American family physician with the San Francisco Department of Public Health. “When I asked African American merchants and community leaders who in the Japanese community to call, they knew what numbers to dial from their list of old friends.”

Japanese immigrants first arrived in San Francisco in the late 1800s, and moved to the area now known as Japantown after the infamous 1906 earthquake. After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the Japanese community was unjustly removed from the neighborhood and incarcerated. Many African Americans moved to the vacated Japantown to seek employment.

“The Japanese American and African American communities in particular shared,” said Karen Kai, a 28-year-old Haruka Roudebush, chairman of Nakayoshi and fellow JACL secretary of the San Francisco JACL chapter. “I would say that I don’t anticipate significant shifts in changes. Again you’re focused in particular on District 5, but there are a number of other issues across the city that we’re still working to address,” said McDonnell. “So will there be some modification to the current draft? I would say: yes. Will they be significant? I would say: probably not.”

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PHOTOGRAPHER PAUL KITAGAKI CHRONICLES WWII INCARCERATION WITH BEFORE/AFTER IMAGES

With so many elderly former internees passing on, tracking down photo subjects is becoming increasingly difficult.

By Christine McFadden

Paul Kitagaki Jr. was sitting in his high school history class in San Mateo, Calif. in the 1970s when he first learned about the incarceration period, a subject he would research in-depth years later through photography.

Kitagaki, who is now a senior photographer at The Sacramento Bee, left his classroom and went home to ask his parents for more information.

The Japanese American learned that part of his family was in fact documented in the incarceration history itself.

“My uncle told me that Dorothea Lange photographed my family,” Kitagaki said about the famous photographer who documented the World War II internment camps. “They were in the photograph with their friend, saying goodbye to them.”

His grandparents, father, and aunt were waiting for a bus in Oakland in 1942 when Lange snapped the image.

After Oakland, the next stop for his family was the Tanforan Assembly Center and eventually the Topaz Camp.

In 1984, Kitagaki decided to search for those images of his family.

“I went back to the National Library of Congress and I found the pictures,” he said. He then decided to photograph his family at the same location in Oakland, 60 years after the original photo was taken.

That photo shoot with his family eventually evolved into a larger project to track down other JAs in photos taken by Lange and the War Relocation Authority and capture their present-day images.

For eight years Kitagaki has been tracking down and taking photos of former internees in the same place where the original WWII photos were taken, or areas nearby.

Kitagaki’s goal is to show through contrasting photos how Executive Order 9066, which authorized the unjust incarceration of some 120,000 people of Japanese descent, altered the family life.

And his search continues. Kitagaki is looking for more former internees, who were photographed during World War II. Photos of the unidentified Japanese Americans he is searching for are available on The Sacramento Bee’s website.

“Just think how it changed everybody’s life,” he said. “They’re in the prime of their life and they have that all taken away. Once you get out, what do you do because everything you worked for your whole life is gone? How do you start over?”

Kitagaki started his journalism career after graduating from San Francisco State University in 1978, where he studied broadcast journalism. After college, he freelanced and worked for the San Francisco Progress, the San Mateo Times, the San Jose Mercury News, The Oregonian, among others, and eventually found his current job at The Sacramento Bee.

“I did some stories about the internment,” he says. His current project, however, is done entirely on his free time.

The process of tracking down the photo’s original subjects

is far from easy. Kitagaki begins by going to different towns and churches and “asking people if they know the people in the photos,” but often ends up at the National Archives.

Now living in Houston, Texas, Natalie Ong says she happened to be visiting Seattle in 2006 when Kitagaki was also there. Kitagaki recreated the famous photograph with Ong and her mother, Fumiko Hayashida.

Ong, 71, lived on Bainbridge Island when her family was removed and evacuated to Manzanar. She is the sleeping baby cradled in her mother’s arms in the well-known 1942 photograph.

“I was happy to do it because that’s a period of time where I don’t really remember anything because I was an infant,” Ong said of recreating the 1942 photo. “I was just saying that that picture I really appreciated because it’s one of the few pictures of me as an infant.”

In addition to taking photos, Kitagaki takes audio narratives of his subjects — when he is able to find them. Making his task even more difficult is that most of the pictures do not have any names on them.

Other subjects in the photos have since passed away. When that’s the case, Kitagaki turns to taking photos of their relatives.

One woman Kitagaki located and photographed, Donna Nakashima, is the daughter of a 442nd Regimental Combat Team veteran Ted Miyata, who had previously volunteered for military service in July 1941 before Pearl Harbor. Miyata’s funeral was in 2001.

Nakashima is photographed in the same field where her grandmother once farmed strawberries before the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The original photo shows Miyata and his mother, Nami, while he was on furlough to help his family prepare for the evacuation.

“She has her dad’s flag from when he was buried, and his Army hat,” Kitagaki said.

Some of the JAs Kitagaki contacted like Satsuki Ina, a psychotherapist and retired professor at Sacramento State, have more than one relative that was captured in historical photos. Both of Ina’s parents were photographed.

Her mother, Shizuko, was photographed by Lange in 1942 in San Francisco. Satsuki’s father, Itaru, was photographed in the Tule Lake camp jail before being sent to the Department of Justice camp for enemy aliens. Both parents answered “No” to “loyalty questions No. 27 and 28” and renounced their American citizenship.

“I thought, wow!” said Ina, who was born in Tule Lake. “A picture is worth a thousand words — to grasp the trauma of innocent people facing imprisonment and the passage of time captured in the then and now photos was so compelling.”

In 2006 Kitagaki contacted Satsuki to replicate the photo in Ina’s father’s same cell.

“So as I stood in the cell where my father had been held I reflected on all of his possible emotions at the time — anger, humiliation, despair,” she said.

Ina, an Emmy award winning producer, was able to make an educated guess about which cell was her father’s through research. Her award-winning documentary “From A Silk Cocoon” was based on her parents’ life in camp.

Kitagaki’s efforts to find, photograph, and interview surviving photo subjects is a constant one. But those who’ve participated in the project say Kitagaki’s work is important.

“You don’t want to rush a good project and I think he’s taking his time,” Ong said. “I think it’s wonderful.”

His original photographs were published in The Sacramento Bee in February. Kitagaki has since found five more people in the photos he is hoping to replicate.

“I do this all on my own time, at my own expense, whenever I can get the time,” he says. Kitagaki is currently coordinating schedules with a woman photographed at Topaz who now lives in New Jersey.

Kitagaki says one photo he is hoping to eventually recapture is an iconic photo from Manzanar of a grandfather and a child on his shoulders that he has spent a long time searching for, to no avail.

Kitagaki is continuing to search for more people or relatives of people in the photos. In the interim, Kitagaki’s work is being displayed at the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District on April 28, from 10 a.m. to noon at a reception at the San Bruno BART Station.

The San Bruno station is next to what once was the Tanforan Assembly Center, where Kitagaki’s own family once stood.

Kitagaki hopes to collect a big enough body of work to someday create a multimedia display, perhaps telling the photographer’s history in the person’s own voice with the audio histories he has collected. His end goal is to have 30 or 40 photos.

“I want to have a longer story,” he said.

To view unidentified/unknown incarceration photographs that Kitagaki is trying to find the identities for, follow:


To provide Kitagaki with photo identities, contact: pkitagaki@sacbee.com
FEMALE SUMO WRESTLERS STEP UP TO THE RING

Although the popularity of women sumo wrestling is a recent phenomenon, it has taken some tough American competitors to tournaments around the world.

By Christine Fukushima, Correspondent

As the only girl in a set of triplets, Natasha Ikejiri grew up fighting with her brothers for everything from the television remote to the last serving of dessert — literally and physically.

Now, as a national champion sumo wrestler, Natasha applies the lessons she learned from living room wrestling matches to sumo rings around the world.

“Bigger girls, I’ll hit them straight on and honestly, it looks like a head-butt,” said the 21-year-old with a laugh from her home in Los Angeles. “I’m trying to push my head into their diaphragm so they can’t breathe. They start freaking out so they stand up and that’s when I have full control.”

A natural athlete, Natasha’s main sport growing up was basketball. Though only five foot four, she competed in her local Japanese American basketball league and was known to muscle her opponents to the hoop. When she started college at California State University, Northridge, she also joined the ROTC, which put her on a strict exercise regimen. But the thought of one day being able to utilize her athletic abilities in a sumo ring never, ever crossed her mind, she says.

That changed when a friend saw her wrestling with one of her brothers, George, and invited both of them to a sumo practice. Although Natasha, who is half Japanese and half Portuguese, had taken Japanese language courses for over a decade, sumo wrestling was one aspect of her cultural heritage that she knew almost nothing about.

Curious, Natasha and George attended the practice. After learning the rules in “about five minutes,” both won their first matches right off the bat, she recounts.

“From there they would call us and be like, ‘Hey do you guys want to do this tournament? We’ll feed you and it’ll be cool!’ said Natasha.

She continued to win more and more tournaments and eventually she went to nationals and won. In 2010 she took part in the SportAccord World Combat Games in Beijing.

In China, Natasha and over 1,000 other athletes representing the best in combat sports from all five continents competed in the same stadiums used during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games. In Natasha’s stadium, she remembers being told that there were up to 10,000 people watching in the stands.

“When I went out there I was like, ‘Oh, my gosh!’ There were just so many people, like a sea of people. You couldn’t even make out their faces,” she said. “There were flashes like crazy and I was just standing there thinking, ‘This is insane.’”

She was disqualified during her first match for breaking her opponent’s elbow, but Natasha still enjoyed putting on a show for the crowd during the rest of her matches, where she was up against much bigger and more experienced wrestlers than herself.

Although the SportAccord competition allowed sumo wrestlers to compete on an international level, the chances of sumo becoming an Olympic sport anytime soon are very slim, says Andrew Freund, the director of USA Sumo.

“The next Olympic games, zero percent. The one after that, zero percent I would say the first viable possibility would be 2020 but even that is a long shot,” he said.

To become an Olympic sport, sumo would have to undergo a lengthy and difficult admission process; among other criteria, it must be “widely practiced around the world.”

Furthermore, it must follow the Olympic Charter, which states that all sports seeking inclusion to the games must include women’s events.

With that criterion in mind, the international sumo community has been encouraging female participation in sumo, starting with the first major women’s-only tournament held in 1997.

Sumo, the national sport of Japan, originated as a form of entertainment for the Shinto gods. The rules are simple: during a match, wrestlers, or rikishi, try to push each other out of a ring, called a dohyo, which measures approximately 15 feet in diameter. Rikishi can also win by forcing their opponent to touch the dohyo with any body part other than their bare feet. Matches are quick, ranging in time from mere seconds to a few minutes.

“It’s really explosive. You come off the line [and] it’s like hit, hit, hit; you don’t even know what happens and you’re on the floor,” said Natasha.

After the first international sumo tournament was held in Japan in 1980, interest in the sport spread to other countries and an international amateur sumo circuit was created.

However, amateur sumo is nothing like pro sumo in Japan, where those who participate consider it to be a lifestyle, not just a sport, says Freund.

From the age of 14 or 15, boys enter sumo schools and are subjected to a “military-like” regimen of training.

“It’s not like there’s an on season or an off season. They have training pretty much the entire year, every week [and] every month,” he said.

Even with the continuously growing interest in sumo in the United States, Freund says that the sport has caught on much quicker in other countries, especially in places like Russia and Mongolia, with both men and women. Unlike the United States many countries also have government-funded sports associations which provide support for athletes, including sumo wrestlers.

Idaho native Natalie Burns, who also participated in the Sportacore Combat Games in Beijing with Natasha, thinks that American women might be turned off to sumo by the impression that sumo wrestlers have to be big.

“In the U.S. I think women are just more self conscious about themselves,” she said.

Plus, “it takes a tough woman. And I’m a lady too but I just thought it would be fun, you know,” said Burns. “It can take you anywhere, really.”

Tiffany Tran, a 27-year-old graduate student, just recently started going to sumo practices at Freund’s gym after watching an exhibition match featuring Yama, the heaviest Japanese pro sumo wrestler (and, according to his website, the “largest Japanese human ever”).

“I’m not even joking, but the next day after my first practice, I was sore from head to toe. I couldn’t even move when I woke up,” she said from her home in Chatsworth, Calif.

But she plans on continuing to do sumo in the future, as she’s found it to be a great way to “expel all [her] stress and aggression.”

Natasha is enthusiastic about female newcomers to sumo like Tran.

“We have just as much potential to make it [as] big here as Europe did,” she said.

“It just caught on over there and we’re still over here going, ‘you don’t have to be fat, it’s okay,’” she added.

‘It’s really explosive. You come off the line [and] it’s like, hit, hit, hit, you don’t even know what happens and you’re on the floor.’
JACl Convention 2012

The Setting: Bellevue, Wash. — Not Too Big, Not Too Small

By Hugh Burleson

As a JACL conventioneer, you’re in for a treat this year. Yes, the Seattle chapter is the host chapter, but the Puget Sound area is blessed with several JACL chapters, and we’re all contributing volunteers, helping to run this convention.

It happened that over a year ago, Convention Chair Elaine Akagi and National Director Floyd Mori found that the Bellevue Hyatt was the best hotel available when the site had to be selected. So, just where is it? Well, not in Seattle but east across Lake Washington in Bellevue.

Google an area map and you’ll see Seattle on Puget Sound — salt water but about 100 miles inland from the Pacific and partly sheltered from Pacific weather by the Olympic range rising to 6,000 to 7,000 feet between Seattle and the Pacific. Seattle is squeezed in-between the Sound and freshwater Lake Washington on its eastern flank. And, on that lake’s east side is Bellevue, accessible to Seattle mainly by two pontoon bridges.

Staying at the Bellevue Hyatt means you won’t have to cross the lake to get there. From Seattle-Tacoma airport you take a shuttle or taxi to Bellevue via I-405 and won’t have to cross the lake to get there. A special treat here is to cross Lake Washington on a clear day and see both Rainier 60-plus miles to the south and Mt. Baker — another inactive volcano — 75 miles to the north. Some 130 miles of the Cascade range, all for free!

Some homes on south Bellevue’s higher hills have that view year round — if it’s not cloudy.

Oh, you’re wondering about rain? Not to worry. Our local ABC weatherman once pointed out that most locals here don’t use umbrellas since most of our rain is “polite rain.” It’s more like drizzle and barely dampens you if you’re just shopping or walking between buildings. Besides, July marks the onset of our least rainy season. Still, not being a Northwest native, I sometimes carry a folded umbrella as a talisman to keep the rain from falling. And then, if it hasn’t rained I may forget the umbrella.

OK, so now you’ve arrived at the Bellevue Hyatt, square in the heart of Bellevue. Plenty of shopping and eateries accessible from the Hyatt by sky bridges. With nearly a fifth of Bellevue’s population being East Asian (our current mayor immigrated from China decades ago), you can easily find Asian ethnic restaurants. Your convention kit of goodies should include a list of the Asian (our current mayor immigrated from China decades ago), you can easily find Asian ethnic restaurants. Your convention kit of goodies should include a list of the Asian

Hugh Burleson is a member of the Lake Washington JACL chapter.

Nominations Open for JACL National Office

The National JACL Nominations Committee is seeking members who are interested in running for a seat on the national JACL board. The initial filing deadline is April 7. After that date, those wishing to submit their names as candidates must run for the floor of the national convention and are subject to additional requirements.

The term of office for this election shall be for the 2012-2014 biennium.

Positions include national president, national secretary/treasurer, vice president for general operations, vice president for planning & development, vice president for membership, vice president for public affairs, national youth/student council chair and national youth/student council representative. A description of the officers and their duties can be found in the JACL Constitution and Bylaws.

The process and procedures for those who wish to run can be found in the Nominations and Election Guidelines. A copy of the guidelines and a candidate application form can be obtained at www.jacl.org.

In every even-numbered convention year, the JACL holds its election of national JACL officers. This year, the national convention will be held July 5 to 8 in Bellevue, Wash.

For more information, contact Nominations Chair Kent Kawai at mkawaiusa@netscape.net.

Continued from pg. 2

chapter and district meetings.

Nominations: There are many opportunities/positions to support and help the organization by running for a board position. Please consider these positions and encourage people to run. (Chair: Kent Kawai)

Constitution and By-Laws: Please think about any constitution and/or by-law changes to be presented. (Chair: Paul Ueyehara)

Resolutions: Please start to work on any resolutions to be presented. (Chair: Tom Nishikawa)

Credentials: Please make sure you are a member in good standing. We hope every chapter will attend, but if not, please consider carrying proxies for those chapters unable to send a delegate. (Chair: Reiko Yoshino)

Strategic Planning (Program For Action): It’s imperative that we hear the voice of our members. We need to identify and rank the programs and areas that are important to the membership. Clear ranking allows us to allocate resources and finances appropriately. We will have a workshop on this critical topic called, “JACL PRIORITIES” so please sign up. (Chair: Gary Mayeda)

Awards/Recognitions: Please think about possible award nominees such as JACLer of the Biennium and begin to collect information. (Chair: Travis Nishi)

Feel free to send me your comments and I can forward them to the appropriate people at voperations@jacl.org.
Kawagoe recently suffered a stroke and subsequently resigned her long-time position as Carson’s city clerk. Still, her legacy in Carson and JACL continues.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** Since 1929, JACL has been a membership-based, grassroots organization that has been instrumental in fighting for change and making a difference. “Why I’m a Jacler” is a special section that highlights members who are making a difference.

By Christine McFadden, Contributor

For Helen Kawagoe, name recognition comes with the territory. As only the second of two former female national JACL presidents, Kawagoe is a household name in the JACL family. Her 37 years as Carson City’s clerk has made her career accomplishments renowned throughout this South Bay city. And in both instances, she's always been known as “Mom.”

“In the City of Carson, we call her the ‘Mother of City Hall,’” said Carson Mayor Jim Dear.

“She cares about those who surround her. She loves them and treats them as her own children,” said JACL National Director Floyd Mori.

Sadly, last fall Kawagoe suffered a stroke and shortly thereafter resigned from her long-time position as Carson City’s clerk. She is currently recovering at home and undergoing therapy and was unable to talk to the Pacific Citizen.

In January the Carson City Council voted to name the City Hall council chambers posthumously after Kawagoe, 84, but the decision was met with loud community protests since many felt the longtime clerk should be honored during her lifetime.

Currently, there is some movement to try to change the city council’s recent decision. According to Mayor Dear, they are just one vote short of being able to rename the chambers as soon as possible in honor of Kawagoe.

“It could very well be overturned,” he said. “I was at a meeting where I was getting feedback that we should go for it.”

For Kimura, Kawagoe has always been a leader both in her career and personal life. When she thinks of Kawagoe, she always sees her with a grin on her face and of her endless generosity.

“She is more fun-loving than I was,” said Kimura.

In addition to her longtime involvement with JACL, Kawagoe has served on the board of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, the League of California Cities board of directors, and was a past president of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks from 1986-87.

In 1994, Kawagoe was awarded the prestigious Order of the Precious Crown by the Japanese government for her years of service as city clerk and for her work toward cultural exchange. It is one of the highest honors given to individuals in the JA community.

“She’s very energetic,” said Mori, who recently paid a visit to Kawagoe. She is “full of life, and always expressed enthusiasm and a positive attitude.”

Kawagoe is currently undergoing therapy at her home in Carson. Many hope that in addition to all of her community and career accomplishments, her legacy will soon be honored with the renaming of the Carson City Hall council chambers.

“She inspired the whole community: boys and girls, men and women, in particular women — young women who are looking to be professional, young women who are looking to be leaders in their community,” said Mayor Dear.

“I think she is an inspiration to all the people, especially all the young people in Southern California,” said Kimura.

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**JOIN THE MOVEMENT. BECOME A JACLER**

To nominate a Jacler to highlight, send the nominee’s contact information, chapter affiliation and a brief explanation of why he/she is a noteworthy Jacler to: pc@pacificcitizen.org.

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**WHY I’M A JACLER**

**FORMER NATIONAL JACL PRESIDENT HELEN KAWAGOE CONTINUES TO INSPIRE ACROSS ALL GENERATIONS**

CoNTINUES To INSPIrE ACroSS All gENErATIoNS
I happened to catch a terrific documentary last night, “I Am Bruce Lee,” which combines a well-researched biography of the late great martial arts star with interviews with everyone from his wife Linda Lee Caldwell, to L.A. Lakers star (and martial artist) Kobe Bryant who discuss Lee’s legacy and enormous influence on American pop culture.

Much of the documentary focuses on Lee’s efforts to overcome racial stereotypes of Asians that were prevalent in the 1960s and ’70s (many are still with us), and his struggles against a system that was stacked against featuring a male Asian in a leading role.

One segment got me thinking, where the film asserts that the system is still stacked against Asians — even today, there has been no major Asian male star who has the draw of, say, a Brad Pitt.

Sure, Jet Li for a time took up the martial arts mantle, and so did Jackie Chan. But Li’s talent never transcended his action roles, and Chan’s brand in Hollywood is as a comedic lightweight even though he can act in dramatic parts. Plus, once niched into martial arts, you’re always a martial artist. Even Bruce Lee might not have overcome that hurdle, had he lived.

There are some potential future contenders, though: John Cho can hopefully rise above the youth market appeal of the “Harold and Kumar” films and build on his butt-kicking role as Sulu in the new “Star Trek” movies, and it’s possible to imagine Tim Kang (TV’s “The Mentalist”) and Sung Kang (the “Fast and Furious” movies) cast as big budget leads someday.

But I can’t monika too much about the lack of Asian men in star positions. The fact is, we’re doing so much better than just a few years ago in Hollywood, that we should be celebrating.

Less than a decade ago, I was giving speeches on the lack of Asian faces on TV and in movies. I grew up in a generation where Asians played roles that were subservient (Hop Sing, the cook in the TV western “Bonanza”) and silly (Fuji, or “Fook” in the ’60s sit-com “McHale’s Navy”). We were always the sidekicks, the supporting players instead of the star, like Robert Ito, the actor who played the assistant to Jack Klugman’s “Quincy, M.E.” in the ’70s.

Ironically, Bruce Lee played the sidekick role but elevated it to starstatus, as Kato, the martial arts-fighting driver for the Green Hornet in the superhero series that only aired for one season in the late ’60s. He was so dynamic, so commanding a presence, that he helped spark the martial arts craze that exploded a few years later when he began making kung fu movies in Hong Kong. But Lee’s tragedy was that his ambition included an idea for a TV series about a martial arts star that was stolen from him, and turned into “Kung Fu” starring a Caucasian, David Carradine (who was allegedly half-Chinese in the show). And he died before his biggest hit, the Hollywood-financed “Enter the Dragon” was released.

It’s just been in the past few years that Asian and Asian American actors have become commonplace in Hollywood — long after Hollywood mainstreamed African Americans, first with shows like “Sanford and Son” starring Redd Foxx and “The Jeffersons” (a black spinoff of the white “All in the Family”) in the ’70s and “The Cosby Show” in the ’80s. The studios tried an early experiment, casting comedian Margaret Cho in “All American Girl” about an Asian American family, but the show was a disaster, because it was about Hollywood’s image of an Asian American family. The producers told Cho she wasn’t Asian enough, and got her a coach.

But a few years ago, Asians started showing up in commercials, a sign that corporate America was noticing how many Asian and Asian American consumers are out there, and what a valuable demographic (college educated, high-income) we are. Ikea and Target noticeably began including Asians in ads, and in non-ethnic roles too — no “ancient Chinese secret” laundry owners. Verizon is another company today that seems to be including lots of Asians playing non-ethnic parts.

That’s the tipping point that we’ve finally reached. Yes, we may not have a leading Asian male actor to look up to yet, but there are many more Asians on both the big screen and small, and we’re not just playing martial arts masters, and we don’t speak with accents. Veteran actors like Tamlyn Tomita get

Asians Are Finally Making It Into Mainstream Pop Culture  
By Gil Asakawa

Redistricted Koreatown Raises A Hornet’s Nest  
By Harry K. Honda

>>See ASAKAWA pg. 16

>>See HONDA pg. 16
HOW MING CHEN BECAME ONE OF THE ‘COMIC BOOK MEN’

A cast member of AMC’s “Comic Book Men,” Ming Chen de-stresses from the pressure of the comic book store by doing Vinyasa yoga nearly every day.

By Nalea J. Ko, Reporter

When Ming Chen created in 1996 a website out of boredom while working at a computer lab at the University of Michigan to honor one of his favorite movies, he didn’t think the movie’s director would ever see it.

Director Kevin Smith, aka Silent Bob, not only saw the website dedicated to his movie “Clerks,” but phone Chen and left a voice message to recruit him for work.

Chen returned the call at Smith’s office and it was like stepping into one of his movies to interact with Smith’s on-screen sidekick “Jay.”

“I called back and he wasn’t in, but Jason Mewes answers the phone,” said Chen, speaking of the actor. “Now I’m not so starstruck by Jason Mewes, but back then I was. I was a kid in the middle of Michigan talking to Jason Mewes.”

Chen was officially added to Smith’s payroll in 2002 after doing a two-year stint with Live Planet, an interactive production company started by Matt Damon and Ben Affleck, among others.

Working for Smith, the Chinese American has been enlisted to do film appearances like being an extra in “Dogma” and sitting next to actress Selma Hayek while she undressed.

Now Chen does everything from web design, graphics, promotion, event planning and driving eight hours to Maine to hand deliver and watch Smith’s “Red State” with a journalist in her home — well, the latter was a one-time stint. He’s been called the Secret Stash whipping boy.

The latest assignment for Chen landed him on AMC’s “Comic Book Men.” He joined his real life co-workers — Smith, Walt Flanagan, Michael Zapcic and Bryan Johnson — for the reality show that follows their geeky antics at the New Jersey comic shop, Jay and Silent Bob’s Secret Stash.

Season one of the six-part series premiered Feb. 12.

“I’ve had no aspirations of being on TV,” he said. “For me it’s just fun. I kind of fell backward into it. But funny things happen when you hang out with Kevin. That’s for sure.”

The comic book reality show follows the popular zombie series “Walking Dead.” The cast of the comic store reality show dressed up in special effects makeup on the episode “Zombies” to pay homage to the show.

“Draper. Meth. Zombies. This show couldn’t be on a better network. AMC is to television what Miramax was to cinema back when I first got in the game: they’re the premier destination for any storyteller looking to spin an offbeat yarn that no other outlet has the stones to touch,” said Smith in a press release. “And as if I didn’t love them enough, now they’re putting my friends on TV!”

A Chinese American originally from Ohio, Chen moved around a lot because of his father’s occupation as an upstart engineer. His parents were born in China and grew up in Taiwan.

Growing up as a Chinese American in Ohio, Chen says he was made fun of for his height than his ethnicity.

“I’m kind of short. I’m about 5-foot-4. I got called shrimp a lot,” Chen said. “[I] wasn’t really bullied and I didn’t see too much rampant racism that I was aware of in the Midwest where I grew up. You get the usual Kung Fu jokes. People still ask me if I can do karate. I just tell them I can fake it really well.”

New Jersey is where Chen now lives with his wife, Debbie, and two children. They live just minutes from the Secret Stash comic shop, where Chen is known as the employee who will take on tasks no one else will. Chen splits his time between the comic shop and his office, which is behind the store.

With his new celebrity, Chen says he gets recognized at the Starbucks across the street and is possibly getting extra shots of vanilla in his lattes because of his newfound fame.

On Twitter, Chen also gets fan attention.

“I’ve seen a couple of tweets which were kind of flattering until I looked a little closer,” Chen said laughingly. “A lot of 14-year-old girls, so not really appropriate. But if I can reach Bieber status, then so be it.”

Other fans have come to Chen’s defense on Twitter to speak out against the taunting he receives from his co-workers.

“I see a lot of people tweeting Brian like, ‘Hey, lay off the immigrant!’ Somebody actually told him that in a Dunkin’ Donuts the other day,” Chen said with a laugh. “I know they make fun of me a lot, but I know I’m better than them, so I can take it pretty well.”

The show follows the self-proclaimed comic book geeks as they buy and sell comic curios and discuss on their podcast topics like their must-have superhero powers and the comic book character they’d most like to drink with.

Secret Stash employees Michael and Walt display on the show their encyclopedic knowledge of comic books. Chen calls them the “comic book rain men.”

“They can describe the tiniest details of something that happened in a comic 40 years ago,” he said. “They can tell you what issue it came from, who wrote it, who drew it and what the cover looked like. It’s crazy!”

Chen on the other hand says he “fell in and out” of comics. In middle school and high school he returned to comics, reading X-Men. And in college he devoured Image Comics. These days Chen has about 100 issues of comics in his collection. After Chen settled in to his life as a husband and father, he gave back a lot of his comics to the store.

And with the new publicity of the show, Secret Stash is now “mobbed” on weekends with customers.

“The ratings have been going up so hopefully that’s a good indicator that people are digging the show,” he said.

The last episode of “Comic Book Men” aired March 18 and Chen says with the increased ratings he is hoping for a second season.

A cast member of AMC’s “Comic Book Men” features Ming Chen.
INTERIOR AWARDS GRANTS TO PRESERVE WWII JAPANESE AMERICAN CONFINEMENT SITES

JACL is awarded a $150,000 grant for its project, “Passing the Legacy Down: Youth Interpretations of Confinement Sites in the Western United States.”

By Pacific Citizen Staff

The Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program is now in its fourth year and has funded projects in 11 states. This year’s grants program total comes to $2,890,368. Congress established the program in 2006 and since then they have awarded more than $9.7 million in funds. Congress authorized up to $38 million in grants for the life of the program. This year’s winners were chosen through a competitive process that requires applicants to match the grant award with $1 in non-federal funds or “in-kind” contributions for every $2 they receive in federal money.

The program requires that the grants go to the 10 War Relocation Authority camps established in 1942 or to more than 40 other sites, including assembly, relocation and isolation centers. The goal of the program is to teach present and future generations about the injustices of the WWII confinement sites and to “inspire a commitment to equal justice under the law.”

“If we are to tell the full story of America, we must ensure that we include difficult chapters such as the grave injustice of internment of Japanese Americans during World War II,” Secretary Ken Salazar said. “The internment sites serve as poignant reminders for us — and for the generations to come — that we must always be vigilant in upholding civil liberties for all.”

This year’s grant awardees include a documentary film about an isolation center on the Navajo Reservation in Arizona; the return of a former barracks building to its original internment camp site at Granada in southeastern Colorado; and a program to engage high school students in Hawaii in the study of the WWII confinement and equality issues that resonate today. The award amounts range from $24,132 for the University of Idaho to further excavate the Kooaskia Internment Camp site in northern Idaho, to $714,314 to a group in Delta, Utah, to build a museum and education center for the Topaz Relocation Center outside of town. “We are grateful for this NPS grant which helps us tell the Japanese American story, and expands the story to include the similarities of 1941 and 9/11,” said JACL National Director Floyd Mori. “Through the forced evacuation experience of Japanese Americans, Constitutional and due process rights become a present day reality to other cultures such as the Muslim community.”


USC Joins Long List of California Universities Awarding Degrees to Former Nisei Students

Students who attended USC during WWII were forced to abandon their studies because of their forced evacuation to incarceration camps.

By Pacific Citizen Staff

It may have taken close to 70 years, but many Nisei will finally be graduating, at least officially, from the University of Southern California.

In a long anticipated announcement, the Southern California university said they will be awarding honorary degrees and master’s degrees to their former Japanese American students who were forced to abandon their education due to Executive Order 9066.

Setsuko Matsunaga, 90, was one of those students, who along with close to 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry were forced to relocate to various incarceration camps during World War II. She still remembers packing her belongings in a duffel bag and reporting to the Santa Anita Race Track in April of 1942. Many of the students, like Matsunaga, never completed their education at USC. Most finished their degrees in states on the East Coast or in the Midwest.

Matsunaga received permission to leave the incarceration camp and complete her degree in St. Louis. A retired sociology professor living in New York, she is glad that she will be receiving her USC degree – finally.

“For some, this brings about some kind of closure,” she told the Los Angeles Times. “It’s the kind of thing, like ‘Well, finally, that’s it.’”

The announcement by USC comes after a recent slew of universities and colleges held ceremonies to award honorary degrees to their former Nisei students. The awards are a result of a 2009 law creating the California Nisei College Degree Program, a project for the state’s public universities.

So far about 2,500 former Nisei students have been found as a result of the law, but many more Nisei may have attended private universities in California. Private universities, like USC, are not bound by the 2009 law.

Sally Kikuchi, a USC graduate student of public policy, was part of a pan-Asian group of students who worked to raise awareness about the former Nisei students. They put together a petition and got the City of Los Angeles to issue a resolution in support of their efforts.

“I’m very happy to hear that USC has decided to conduct the ceremony this year and go beyond its former decision to issue honorary alumni status,” said Kikuchi. “I’m even happier to see how this effort was able to come out of a campus-wide push that really brought different people of the USC community together.”

In 2008 USC awarded the Nisei alumni status. That same year the university created an Honorary Nisei Student Scholarship and the Nisei were honored at a ceremony at a Trojan football home game.

But USC dentistry student Albert Le said that many of the Asian American students on campus felt that the efforts by the school were not enough. That’s why Le joined the group of students to push for the honorary Nisei degrees and this past summer they were able to submit their nominations package, which lead to the awarding of the degrees.

“It was a long time coming for the honoraries, and it was very satisfying for us as a group to finally get it done despite the obstacles,” said Le. “We put in so much hard work in the face of different competing voices in the community about our chances and willingness to put in the effort to make it happen.”

USC plans to award honorary degrees and master’s degrees to the former Nisei students as part of their commencement ceremony on May 11. The school is currently looking for these former students. Scott Morry of the USC Alumni Association estimates there are only about 100 of the Nisei who are still living.

“We are privileged to honor the accomplishments and the dreams of the Nisei students who are highly deserving of receiving a college degree for the work they have done at USC,” said USC President C. L. Max Nikias. “Through the years these students have been among the most passionate and dedicated members of the Trojan family. We are honored that our Nisei students have an enduring devotion to USC and we want them to know that the university is also devoted to them.”

To register for a USC honorary Nisei degree, go to www.usc.edu/commencement or contact Grace Shiba, senior director of alumni relations at USC, at 213/740-4937 or nise@usc.edu.
AA GROUPS, INCLUDING JACL, CALL FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION IN TRAYVON MARTIN KILLING

By P.C. Staff and Associated Press

Asian American groups are joining a loud chorus of civil rights groups in calling for further investigation into the case of an unarmed black teenager shot to death by a neighborhood watch captain in Sanford, Florida.

The case has become a nationwide sensation and ignited a furor against the police department of the Orlando suburb of Sanford, where 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot last month. It has prompted rallies around the country calling for an arrest of the Hispanic shooter.

At a recent town hall meeting in Sanford, officials from the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Nation of Islam urged residents to remain calm but demanded a thorough investigation into the shooter, 28-year-old George Zimmerman.

“Standing here as a son, father, uncle who is tired of being scared for our boys,” said Benjamin Jealous, national president of the NAACP. “I’m tired of telling our young men how they can’t dance; where they can’t go and how they can’t behave.”

Zimmerman has not been charged in the Feb. 26 shooting and has said he shot Martin — who was returning to a gated community where his father’s fiancée lives, after buying candy at a convenience store — in self-defense after Martin attacked him. Police said Zimmerman, who was found bleeding from his nose and the back of his head, told authorities he yelled for help before shooting Martin.

“The JACL is deeply troubled by the Sanford Police Department’s indifferent response. The case has exposed the burden shouldered by young black men in our society, who are tainted by assumptions of being suspicious, criminal and dangerous,” said the JACL in a statement. “Justice must be served in this case because our country cannot abide the continuing specter of a society that causes young black men to feel the oppression of fear rather than the safety of knowing that they are free to be who they are.”

The JACL also stated that they were encouraged by the investigations being launched by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the FBI, the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division, and Florida Governor Rick Scott’s appointment of a Task Force on Citizen Safety and Protection that will study the state’s ‘Stand Your Ground’ law. This law allows people to defend themselves with deadly force and does not require a retreat in the face of danger.

An online petition urging local authorities to prosecute Zimmerman has drawn more than 2,000,000 signatures at website Change.org as of March 30.

Sanford city commissioners recently adopted a “no confidence” motion over their police chief’s handling of the shooting. The commission voted 3-2 against Chief Bill Lee Jr. Prosecutor Norm Wolfinger has said a grand jury will meet April 10 to consider evidence in the case.

“This case is a chilling reminder of the ongoing specter of racial prejudice and discrimination — and that justice is often elusive for those who are considered ‘suspicious’ or ‘other,’” the Asian American Center for Advancing Justice said in a statement. “In 1982, against the milieu of fierce economic competition with Japan, Vincent Chin, a Chinese American man celebrating his upcoming wedding was beaten to death with a baseball bat by two white autoworkers who presumed Chin was Japanese. The perpetrators never spent a day in jail.

“We call upon federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to devote the full extent of their resources to investigate and prosecute the killing of Trayvon Martin so that history does not repeat itself. While there was no justice for Vincent Chin, 30 years later, we demand justice for Trayvon Martin.”

JACL/OCמה HOSTS SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT

The popular summit was once again sponsored by State Farm.

The JACL, in partnership with OCA national, hosted 30 participants in another successful JACL/OCма D.C. Leadership Summit in the nation’s capital.

The three-day intensive training from March 10-13 allowed participants to enhance their leadership and coalition building skills by becoming familiar with the political process while learning critical issues that affect the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. Participants met with AAPI leaders in Congress, the Administration and partners from the social justice community.

“This year’s Leadership Summit was one of the most inspirational ever,” said Floyd Mori, JACL national director. “Our speakers were right on message with the issues of the day and instilled a sense of urgency for each participant to become a serious advocate for the community.”

A number of distinguished guests spoke at the summit, including U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye, Tina Tchen, chief of staff, Office of the First Lady, Mark Keam, 39 District delegate, Virginia House of Delegates, and Bruce Yamashita, former Marine Officer.

“State Farm is proud to be associated with the JACL/OCма Leadership Summit. Ensuring the continuity of leadership talent is essential for sustaining two outstanding civil rights organizations dedicated to the well-being of Asian Pacific Islander Americans,” said Leslie Moe-Kaiser of State Farm Public Affairs. This year’s Leadership Summit was again sponsored by State Farm.

This year’s participants included: Amy Watanabe (JACL-PSW), Cecilia Pham (OCA-Greater Houston), Christopher Loo (OCA-Hawaii), Curtis Suyematsu (JACL-PNW), Donna Hansen (JACL-IDC), Dora Quach (OCA-Greater Los Angeles), Elaine Akagi (JACL-PNW), Esther Choi (OCA-New York), Gary Chiu (OCA-Dallas-Fort Worth), Hanako Watatsuki (JACL-IDC), Harvey Dam (OCA-Utah), Jacee Mikulance (JACL-NCWNP), Jeffrey Wu (OCA-Great Washington, DC), Jessica Moy (JACL-IDC), Kelly Honda (JACL-NCWNP), Kenjiro Lecroix (JACL-MDW), Kevin Mori (OCA-Orange County), Laura Ng (JACL-IDC), Lily Li (OCA-Eastern Virginia), Lisa Drake (OCA-Las Vegas), Lynn Longfellow (JACL-PNW), Marissa Kitazawa (JACL-PSW), Matthew Asada (JACL-IDC), Reenuka Mishra (OCA-Tucson), Shon Cong (OCA-Saint Louis), Stacy Matsura (JACL-CCDC), Susie Wong (OCA-Sacramento), Terese Chao (OCA-Georgia), Yoon Yim (OCA-Central Illinois) and Yuka Ogino (JACL-PNW).

“I am so overjoyed that I had the chance to listen to phenomenal AAPI advocates and experts from the community, participate in a well-organized summit and network with amazing participants around the nation,” said participant Matsura.

LOCAL SAN JOSE CEREMONY HONORS GOLD MEDAL WINNERS

In total, 159 veterans or their family members received the honor.

By Leon Kimura

“My P.C.” Contributor

For those World War II Nisei veterans who were unable to receive their Congressional Gold Medals last November in the nation’s capital, a local San Jose ceremony made sure the heroes were still honored.

With more than 750 people watching, 65 Nisei veterans, 44 widows, and 50 family representatives were able to receive their replica Gold Medals in a ceremony that spoke of their courage and valor.

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian award bestowed on civilians. The Nisei veterans of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service received the award for their heroics during WWII.

In all, some 159 individuals were honored at the local ceremony in San Jose, Calif. recently. The chapters of the NCWNP district helped to ensure they located the veterans and their families for the ceremony held at the San Jose Buddhist Church Annex in the heart of Japantown.

Co-Masters of Ceremony were Wendy George Zimmerman (left) fatally shot Trayvon Martin on Feb. 26.
APPLICANTS NOW AVAILABLE FOR MASAOKA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP

By Pacific Citizen Staff

One of the most popular JACL programs, the Mike M. Masaoka Congressional Fellowship, is now accepting applications for the period 2012-2013.

The successful applicant will be placed in the Washington, D.C. Congressional offices of members of the U.S. House of Representatives or the U.S. Senate for a period of six to eight months. The major purpose of the Masaoka fellowship is to develop leaders for public service.

The current Masaoka fellow is Mackenzie Walker, who is working in the office of Congresswoman Judy Chu of California.

“The Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship is a wonderful program which gives young people the opportunity to work in the office of a member of Congress and to learn the workings of government firsthand,” said Floyd Mori, JACL national director. “The friends of Mike Masaoka had great foresight in establishing the fund for the fellowship to develop leadership.”

The Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship Fund was established in 1988 to honor Masaoka for a lifetime of public service to the JACL and the nation. He was the JACL’s national secretary, field executive, national legislative director of the JACL’s Anti-Discrimination Committee, and the JACL Washington, D.C. representative.

Masaoka worked tirelessly to advance the cause of Japanese Americans during his lifetime. He was instrumental in the formation of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and for the abolition of various discriminatory laws against Asian Americans. He passed away in 1991.

The fund was set up by the good friends of Masaoka. Dr. H. Tom Tamaki of Philadelphia administered the program for the JACL for 20 years since its inception in 1988. The JACL D.C. office now administers the fellowship.

“We encourage young members of the JACL who are college graduates to apply for this fellowship which offers a unique experience for service in the nation’s capital,” said National JACL President David Kawamoto. “We anticipate that these young people will be our future leaders in the JACL.”

For more information and an application, go to the leadership section of the JACL website (www.jacl.org). Applicants must be current members of the JACL. Applications should be submitted to the JACL D.C. office as per instructions on the website.

The deadline for applications is May 20. The announcement of the selected fellow is expected to be made by July 1.

JACl’S COLLEGIATE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE WILL TAKE PLACE JUNE 7-10

This year’s JACL Collegiate Washington, D.C. Leadership Conference, an intensive three-day leadership development program that introduces Asian Pacific American student leaders to the national policy-making arena, will take place in the nation’s capital June 7 to 10.

Participants will be briefed on legislative issues affecting the Asian Pacific American community and examine the role Asian Pacific American civil rights organizations play in affecting public policy in the nation’s capital. They will also have the chance to meet and work with student leaders representing colleges and universities from throughout the country and learn ways to effectively address issues and create positive social change on their own campuses and beyond.

Applicant must be an Asian Pacific American undergraduate freshman, sophomore or junior class student attending an accredited college or university on a full-time basis. The program will select 12 participants to attend the conference. JACL will cover airfare, lodging, meals and transportation during the conference for all participants.

Applications are due May 4 (postmarked or emailed) and should be sent to: JACL Midwest Office, Attn: Collegiate Leadership Conference, 5415 N. Clark Street, Chicago, IL 60640 or midwest@jacl.org.

Applications are available through the JACL website at www.jacl.org, or by request at midwest@jacl.org.

For more information, email midwest@jacl.org or call 773/728-7170.

The JACL Collegiate Leadership Conference is sponsored by UPS and Southwest Airlines.

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4/13 Fri ~ 4/15 Sun
Hawaii Doris Duke Theatre (Hawaii)
5/19 Sun
James Armstrong Theatre (Torrance)

4/21 Sat & 4/22 Sun
Japan Society New York (New York)
6/2 Sat & 6/3 Sun
Woodbridge Movies 5 (Granada Courts)

5/12 Sat
Camera 3 (San Jose)
6/8 Sat
Gaslamp 15 (San Diego)

<100min, 16:9, color/blackwhite, 2012, USA Japan co-production>

www.mis-film.com
IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK

By Floyd Mori

The JACL was very happy to learn of the awarding of the National Parks Service (NPS) grant to the JACL for our program: “Passing the Legacy Down: Youth Interpretations of Confinement Sites in the Western United States.” The sites to be used in the project are Manzanar, Minidoka and Tule Lake with our Los Angeles, Seattle and San Francisco regional offices. This grant will enable us to continue to teach youth about the internment experience of Japanese Americans during World War II.

“The Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program” was established for the preservation and interpretation of U.S. confinement sites where Japanese Americans were detained during WWII. The law authorized up to $38 million for the entire life of the grant program to identify, research, evaluate, interpret, protect, restore, repair and acquire historic confinement sites in order that present and future generations may learn of this important time in history when the constitution did not protect innocent American citizens.

We appreciate Congress for approving this program and extend our special thanks to former Congressman Bill Thomas, R-CA, who was instrumental, along with many others, in bringing this to pass. It was signed by President George W. Bush. We are also grateful to the National Parks Service, which administers the grant program. Congress must appropriate the funds for these grants each year.

As I mentioned in a report to the JACL membership last year when we were not awarded a grant, these grants do not simply materialize but are the result of a lot of hard work. When we received an NPS grant in 2009 for the Bridging Communities program, which brought together Japanese American youth with American Muslim youth to learn of the camps and our history, Craig Ishii, former PSW regional director, worked hard on writing the grant. For this year’s grant, the application work was done largely by Jean Shiraki, former JACL Inouye fellow in the D.C. office. We thank them for their hard work.

Recently I heard a complaint from a person whose family was held captive by the Japanese military in the Philippines during WWII. He was complaining that Japanese Americans who were interned during WWII in America’s concentration camps were later compensated by the government, and his family received nothing from the Japanese. Again, these things do not just happen, but they are the result of a lot of hard work.

It took over 10 years of concentrated effort by many people to obtain the final result of Redress. The government did not just arbitrarily decide that Japanese Americans deserved an apology and reparations for being forcibly removed from their West Coast homes and incarcerated in desolate camps. They were imprisoned, surrounded by barbed wire and armed guards, and the majority of them were American citizens.

The JACL has done and continues to do important things for Americans of Japanese ancestry and others. It is vital that we keep working hard. Worthwhile results require a lot of work.

‘As I mentioned in a report to the JACL membership last year when we were not awarded a grant, these grants do not simply materialize but are the result of a lot of hard work.’

A WELL DESERVED HONOR

By David Kawamoto

The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest national honor bestowed by the legislative branch of our U.S. government. Though the award has been made since 1776, relatively few have received this honor. Among the recipients are Thomas Edison, the Wright Brothers, Jackie Robinson, Mother Theresa, the Dalai Lama, Rosa Parks and Nelson Mandela.

Our community’s Nisei veterans have now taken their proper place alongside these past recipients.

I am proud of my San Diego chapter sponsored the Congressional Gold Medal commemorative ceremony in their area.

As national JACL president, I’ve had the pleasure of attending several of these Congressional Gold Medal celebrations across the country. I’m always thrilled to see so many of our Nisei veterans in attendance.

It’s also great to see those veterans who are no longer with us being represented by their families. Because, as overwhelmingly significant the accomplishments of the Nisei veterans were, our community had so many other family members who were contributing in their own way back home. So many stayed home to care for parents, children and the infirm. So, I’m glad to see the families share in the recognition.

Because of my national JACL responsibilities, I had originally believed that I wouldn’t be able to attend the ceremony in San Diego. I was so glad that I was able to juggle my schedule and attend. Mainly because it is my hometown and my father, Harry Kawamoto, was among those being honored. I’m so proud of him and I regret never having told him that. Holding events such as the Congressional Gold Medal ceremonies calls important attention to the World War II experience of our community. It is a story of civil liberties denied, race prejudice and illegal detention of U.S. citizens. But, it is also a story of perseverance in the face of adversity, courageous loyalty to the United States, and, eventually, a presidential apology and Constitutional Redress.

This is a story that must be shared with future generations. We can look back proudly at the efforts and accomplishments of our community during those trying times. And, all communities can learn the lessons of liberty lost, and how fragile our freedoms truly are.

On behalf of the JACL and all of our community, I extend a hearty congratulation to our Nisei veterans for their receipt of this well deserved honor. ■

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Polaris Tours: Presents

2012 Tour Schedule

Apr. 12 - Apr. 18 100th Anniversary Cherry Blossoms in Washington DC & Williamsburg
May 05 - May 20 Treasures of Turkey: Where Europe meets Asia
May 24 - May 26 Summertime Las Vegas: Show: Rod Stewart or Garth Brooks
Jun. 11 - Jun. 24 Discover Croatia: Dalmatian Coast & Slovenia
Jul. 03 - Jul. 12 Summer Japan: “Vacation with the Whole Family”
Aug. 04 - Aug. 12 Canadian Rockies & Glacier National Park
Sep. 06 - Sep. 17 Let’s Go Hokkaido
Sep. 29 - Oct. 10 The Legendary Danube River Cruise: Hungary, Austria, Germany
Oct. 03 - Oct. 17 New England Colors & Eastern Canada: Fall Foliage
Oct. 05 - Oct. 09 Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta: New Mexico’s Most Dazzling Spectacle
Oct. 16 - Oct. 25 Autumn Japan: Magnificent Fall Colors
Oct. 22 - Nov. 03 Spectacular South Africa & Victoria Falls
Nov. 01 - Nov. 12 The Best of Kyushu
Nov. 29 - Dec. 01 Holiday in Las Vegas: Show: TBA

We will be happy to send you a brochure!

24 Union Square, Suite. 506 Union City, CA 94587
Tel: 510/848-3560 ext. 102 or email diane@j-sei.org

J-Sei’s 22nd Annual Golf Invitational
EL CERRITO, CA
May 14, 12 noon
Mira Vista Golf & Country Club
7901 Cutting Blvd.
Cost: $200/Entry fee; $50/ Awards dinner

The J-Sei’s 22nd Annual Golf Invitational event includes a tee prize, lunch, snacks, awards and dinner. The event is a fundraiser for J-Sei and will help to expand its home-delivered meal program to Oakland residents. Sponsors are also needed for the event.

info: Contact Diane Wong at 510/848-3560 ext. 102 or email diane@j-sei.org

The 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival at Place Ville Marie, Montréal, Quebec. This annual event celebrates Japanese culture and history in Canada. It features various events, including cultural performances, food stalls, and workshops. The festival takes place on the 1st Sunday of May.

The 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival is held in collaboration with the Montréal Japanese Cultural Association (MCCA), which aims to promote Japanese culture and foster understanding between cultures. The festival attracts a diverse audience, including Japanese Canadians, other Asian Canadians, and community members interested in exploring Japanese culture.

The festival features various attractions, including traditional Japanese dances, music, and martial arts demonstrations. Visitors can also enjoy Japanese cuisine, which includes sushi, ramen, and other traditional dishes.

The festival also includes workshops and interactive activities, allowing visitors to learn more about Japanese traditions and culture. These workshops may cover topics such as origami, calligraphy, and traditional clothing. Many of these workshops are led by local artists and cultural experts.

The Nikkei Matsuri Festival is a great opportunity for people of all ages to experience Japanese culture and traditions. Whether you are a Japanese Canadian or a visitor to Montréal, the festival offers a unique and enjoyable experience to learn about and appreciate Japanese heritage.

The festival is held annually in Place Ville Marie, Montréal, Quebec, Canada. It is a family-friendly event that caters to all ages and interests. The festival provides a platform for cultural exchange and promotes understanding and respect among communities.

The 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival is organized by the Montréal Japanese Cultural Association (MCCA) and supported by various sponsors and partners. The festival includes a range of events and activities, making it an engaging and educational experience for everyone involved.

In conclusion, the 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival at Place Ville Marie, Montréal, Quebec, offers a diverse range of cultural experiences for visitors to enjoy. The festival is an excellent opportunity to learn about Japanese culture and history while also celebrating the diversity of the Montréal community.

Given the importance of cultural exchange, the Nikkei Matsuri Festival plays a crucial role in promoting understanding and respect among different cultures. It encourages visitors to appreciate and learn from each other's traditions and customs, fostering a sense of unity and shared humanity.

In summary, the 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival at Place Ville Marie, Montréal, Quebec, is a must-see event for anyone interested in Japanese culture and history. The festival provides a unique opportunity to experience traditional Japanese performances, food, and workshops, all set against the backdrop of Montréal's vibrant cultural scene.

For more information about the festival, including event details and a schedule of activities, please visit the Montréal Japanese Cultural Association's website or contact them directly. The festival organizers work hard to ensure that the event is inclusive and accessible to all, so everyone is welcome to attend and enjoy the rich cultural offerings.

If you have any questions or would like more information about the 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival, feel free to contact the Montréal Japanese Cultural Association. They will be happy to provide you with additional details and answer any questions you may have.

We hope you can join us at the 2012 Annual Nikkei Matsuri Festival in Montréal, Quebec, and experience the beauty, richness, and diversity of Japanese culture first-hand. Whether you are a Japanese Canadian, a visitor to Montréal, or simply interested in cultural exchange, the festival is sure to provide a memorable and enlightening experience.
In Memoriam

Abe, Amy Kiyoko, 79, Los Angeles, CA; March 25; wife of Charles K. Abe; predeceased by siblings Doris Kamihara, Robert and George Kawamura; survived children, Dr. John T. (Betty) Abe and Catherine (Bernard) Ziring; siblings, Ernest (Sumire) and Edwin Kawamura, Mavis (Shiro) Taniguchi, Beverly (Ray) Yoshida, and Jane Oshiro, and surviving sisters-in-law; 5 gc.

Hayashi, Melvin, 71, Thousand Oaks, CA; March 11; Mel was born in Hawaii, to Richard and Harriet Hayashi; he became an orthopedic surgeon; he served in the U.S. Air Force leaving in 1972; a year later he began his practice; survived by his wife Vikki; sons Michael and Grant; daughters Brooke (Marc) Fages, Shelley; sisters Dianne O’Hara and Avis Martin; brother Wade Hayashi; many nieces and nephews; 2 gc.

Ishii, Frank, 92, Los Alamitos, CA; March 1; a veteran of WWII; he is survived by his wife, Hiroko Koke; children, Clifford Hideo (Mai) Koke, Cynthia Koke, and Sharon (Wendell) Pitpit; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 2 gc.

Kato, Edmund Hatsuichi, 101, Torrance, CA; March 18; predeceased by his beloved wife, Florence Shizue Kubo; survived by his beloved children, Edward Yasuhiko Kubo (Itsuko), Nancy Takako Kubo Dawson (Stuart) and Alice Masayo Kubo (Gary); grandchildren, Lisa, Rachel, and Yuko; sister-in-law, May Ohta; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 5 gc.

Kubota, N, 95, Hawthorne, CA; March 20; predeceased by his wife, Gladys Tanaka; survived by children, Allen (Shirley), Betty (Larry) Parker, and Phillip (Sue) Kato; grandchildren, Aiko, Robert, and Mark; sister-in-law, Mary Tashiro; other relatives; 2 gc.

Koike, Hideo, 88, Playa Del Rey, CA; March 16; a veteran of WWII; survived by his wife, Akira Koike; children, Clifford Hideo (Mai) Koike, Cynthia Koike, and Sharon (Wendell) Pitpit; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 5 gc.

Koike, Roy, 86, Playa Del Rey, CA; March 16; husband of Kazi Kato; a veteran of WWII; a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley, after being drafted into the Army in 1942; he opened and operated his own shop, the East Side Barbershop, until he retired in 2000; survived by his wife, Roy Akira; children, Ronald, David, and Grace; grandchildren,1 gc.

Koike, Hideo Roy, 88, Playa Del Rey, CA; March 16; a veteran of WWII; survived by his wife, Hiroko Koke; children, Clifford Hideo (Mai) Koke, Cynthia Koke, and Sharon (Wendell) Pitpit; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 5 gc.

Kuromi, Michiko, 77, North Hills, CA; March 7; survived by her husband, Akira Kimura; children, Irene (Dan) Hale and Henry (Barbara) Kimura; siblings, Chieko Uetani, Yasuko (Myoshi) Kako, and Teruo (Kimiko) Kimura; sister-in-law, Miyoko Kimura; many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 4 gc; 2 ggc.

Kuromi, Michiko, 77, North Hills, CA; March 7; survived by her husband, Akira Kimura; children, Irene (Dan) Hale and Henry (Barbara) Kimura; siblings, Chieko Uetani, Yasuko (Myoshi) Kako, and Teruo (Kimiko) Kimura; sister-in-law, Miyoko Kimura; many brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 4 gc; 2 ggc.

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Honor Your Loved Ones

‘In Memoriam’ is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes, which honor the memory of your loved ones with original copy and photos, appear in a timely manner at the rate of $20/column inch.

For more info:
Email pc@pacificcitizen.org

TRIBUTE

Shigeki Hiratsuka
January 14, 2012

Shigeki Hiratsuka, 95, a retired mechanical engineer, spent most of his career with the Department of the Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C. He and his wife, Aiko Tashiro Hiratsuka, raised their family in Arlington, Virginia, and were active members of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the JACL.

After retirement and the loss of his wife, Mr. Hiratsuka moved to Tucson, Arizona, in 1986, and he had 25 years of healthy, active retirement. He made many new friends and kept in touch with old friends through letters and through several cross-country car trips in his 70s and 80s.

Mr. Hiratsuka was born in 1916 in Irvington, California. He graduated from the University of California-Berkeley. During World War II, he was interned in the Amache concentration camp in Granada, Colorado. After release from Amache, he attended the University of Wyoming and received a second bachelor’s degree, in mechanical engineering. He lived and worked in New York, Tokyo, and Okinawa before moving to Washington, D.C.

Mr. Hiratsuka died peacefully in his retirement community home in Sierra Vista, Arizona, on January 14, 2012. A memorial service was held in Tucson, Arizona, and a funeral service was held in Washington, D.C. Survivors include his son, Jon Hiratsuka; his daughter-in-law, Luz Hiratsuka; two brothers, George and Roy Hiratsuka; and his long-time friend, Deanie Allen.

TRIBUTE

Dave Teruo Kawagoye
October 29, 1919 - March 11, 2012

PVT. DANNY CHEN UPDATE

By Stanley N. Kanzaki


The press conference was chaired by Elizabeth R. OuYang, president of the OCA New York Chapter.

OuYang gave an update on the pursuit to seek justice for Pvt. Chen. The Article 32 hearing of Pvt. Chen was subjected to a transparent investigation. The press conference was attended by a large number of people, the press and conducted most efficiently by OuYang. Standing with her at the rostrum was Danny’s parents and relatives.

He was a “local boy” born in New York’s Chinatown to immigrant parents from China and the only child. He graduated from Pace High School before enlistment in the Army. It was sad to see his parents, Yan Tao and Su Zhen Chen, who do not speak English, standing there stoically. One can only imagine what is going through their minds each time they attend an event for him.

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It is most important for all of us to support this movement and bring justice for Pvt. Chen. In the past we Asian Americans in this country have had violence perpetrated against us. We must remember to stick together for “an attack on one of us is an attack on all of us.”

Petitions can be downloaded at: http://goo.gl/xWKNg.

Stanley Kanzaki is a member of the New York JACL chapter.

HONDA

BY CONTINUED FROM PG. 8

I bet the men won’t be far behind, and Bruce Lee will be smiling down on us. Even better, maybe in a decade we won’t be complaining at all about the lack of Asians — men or women — in Hollywood.

Gil Asakawa is a former P.C. Editorial Board chair and blogs at www.nikkeiview.com.

‘I bet the men won’t be far behind, and Bruce Lee will be smiling down on us.’