

Civil Liberties Celebration

by Arlene Oki, President

The Seattle Chapter JACL was honored to be one of the sponsors of the Civil Liberties Celebration on May 5th. It was a memorable day for over 1,000 Nikkei and friends who streamed into the halls of Seattle Central Community College to hear U.S. Senator Dan Inouye speak eloquently about the Japanese American experience.

His poignant recollections of the Nikkei wartime experience were followed by an appeal to ensure that history does not repeat itself as it relates to the current tensions toward Arab Americans and Muslims. "I know these are difficult times for those who are followers of Islam." He recalled that it was not too long ago that another terrorist attack occurred...one that was perpetrated by a blond, Christian and American man who blew up the federal building in Oklahoma. "Yesterday it was the blacks, then Americans of Japanese ancestry, who knows who will be next?" he asked.

He spoke eloquently about racial harmony when he said, "Being an American is a matter of mind and heart—not a matter of race or ancestry. When I was injured in Germany, I needed 17 pints of blood. It happened that there was an all-black unit nearby who provided that blood—so I can say I have a lot of African American blood in me." His historical recollections reverberated with many in the audience and his words of hope, challenge and reconciliation surely must have inspired many of the younger people.

The day-long event explored civil liberties issues on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the removal and incarceration of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II and provided an opportunity to showcase several projects that have received funds from the Washington State Civil



State Representative Kip Tokuda

Liberties Public Education Fund. The Fund was established by State Representative Kip Tokuda to support educational projects about the Nikkei experience during World War II and its implications for civil rights for all. Offerings included art exhibits, films, student art and essay contests, and guest speakers. Also presented was "Breaking the Silence" produced by Living Voices and Wing Luke Asian Museum, DENSHO, a traveling exhibit from the Japanese American National Museum, a collection from the White River Museum, "American History from a Different Perspective" by Dr. Frank Kitamoto of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American community, and selected panels from the Seattle Chapter's "Pride and Shame" exhibit.

From Hiroshima to Hope

by Dr. Alan Yabui, JACL Board

The Seattle Chapter JACL is again a sponsor of the Seattle "From Hiroshima to Hope" festivities on Tuesday, August 6th. The festivities will be held between 6:30 to 9:30 PM at Green Lake, immediately south of the Bathhouse Theater, located on the northwest shore of the lake. The event is a family-oriented event with music, speeches, and associated festive activities related to peace. As a sponsor, our organization provided funding, and traditionally had members volunteer to set up the stage and booths for the event. The event coordinators are again soliciting volunteers for this event.

This annual event first started in Seattle in 1984, as a remembrance for more than 70,000 people who died on August 6, 1945, when the United States dropped the first of two atomic bombs on Japan. The second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on August 12, 1945. Over 150,000 people perished as a result of the two bombings. This estimate loss of life does not include the additional deaths as a result of radiation poisoning.

The event is culminated with the floating of hundreds of tiny silk-paper and plywood lanterns. Participants of the event will be able to write individualized messages on the lanterns. The lanterns are normally issued out at 6:30 PM for the floating ceremony on Green Lake to commemorate the victims of the Hiroshima bombing. This tradition of floating lanterns on a water body is a traditional Buddhist ritual that was adopted for this occasion.

This event is coordinated through the efforts of the Wing Luke Asian Museum, many local Seattle churches and religious organizations, and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

USDA Bias Targets Somalis

by the JACL Anti-Discrimination Committee

In March 2002, the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) permanently disqualified three Somali grocery stores from participating in the Food Stamp program. Charge letters to the three stores stated that the stores were disqualified due to a pattern of suspicious activity. As a result of the USDA's actions, the three stores are in dire financial trouble, since a substantial percentage of their business comes from food stamp recipients who can no longer shop there.

Since that time, more than four hundred Somali families have been unable to purchase Halal meat (meat prepared according to Muslim requirements) with their food stamps in the Rainier Valley. Though the vast majority of Somalis live in South Seattle depend on food stamps for their daily

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President's Message

by Arlene Oki, President

Civil Liberties Celebration

Kazzie Katayama did an outstanding job recruiting and coordinating the work of many Seattle chapter volunteers at the Civil Liberties Celebration. Our members were everywhere doing a multitude of tasks throughout the day. Many were able to listen to the fine speeches given by Senator Dan Inouye and co-chairs of the event, Kenneth Alhadeff and State Representative Kip Tokuda. They were truly inspiring!

"Making Tracks" Nisei Veterans Appreciation Day

Elsie Taniguchi, Elaine Akagi, Shigeko Uno and I drove to Everett to see "Making Tracks," a rock musical production about the Asian American experience over two centuries. The production was made special when an unknown Nisei veteran donated his cherished Purple Cross to the production so that it could be worn on the army uniform of one of the actors. The cast reported that they were deeply moved by the generosity of the unknown Nisei veteran. Nellie Fujii Anderson did an amazing job organizing a reception for the many Nisei veterans and their families who attended the performance...with only eight days notice!

Dr. Alan Yabui: Recipient of Bellevue Community College's 2002 Margin of Excellence Award

It is always wonderful to announce that a Seattle Chapter board member has received recognition for excellence in his or her field of work. Dr. Alan Yabui, speech instructor and program chair of the Arts and Humanities Department, recently received the 2002 Margin of Excellence award from Bellevue Community College for being an instructor who has made a difference. His "Intercultural Communication" class is one of the most popular on campus and integrates the influence of culture on communication styles, language, and non-verbal communication. Congratulations, Alan!

Harry Takagi Memorial Service

Many friends attended a memorial service for Harry Takagi who passed away in Florida earlier this year. Harry was an active JACL'er and was the first commander of the Nisei Veterans

Committee when he lived in Seattle. He and his brother, Cal, both served as presidents of the Seattle Chapter JACL. I learned a lot about the hardships endured by Nikkei of his generation and the courage and strength it took to overcome so many obstacles. We are extremely grateful to Toru Sakahara for providing thoughtful recollections about Harry's many contributions to the Seattle Chapter JACL.



Telephone Bank to Solicit E-mail Addresses

In an attempt to reduce costs associated with mailing newsletters, Seattle Chapter board members recently made calls to our general membership to solicit e-mail addresses so that the newsletter can be distributed electronically. For those who did not receive a call and wish to receive newsletters via e-mail, please leave a message at the Chapter office (206-622-4089) or send us your message electronically (email@jaclseattle.org).

Thanks to Ryan Minato, our web page caretaker, all of our newsletters have been online since the first of the year. You may view the newsletter on the Chapter website at www.jaclseattle.org.

National Convention News

The Bainbridge Island resolution submitted by the Seattle Chapter has been endorsed by the National Convention Resolutions Committee and will be placed on the consent calendar (resolution will pass without debate).

Doug Honma, a member of the Kaizen group, will be added to our delegation as our youth representative. He will have opportunities to attend the convention events, including workshops and activities for youth. Doug will join Tatsuo Nakata and myself who will be delegates and May Namba and Bill Tashima who will be alternate delegates. Others who will be attending the Convention are Elaine Akagi, Shea Aoki, Ryan Chin, Elsie Taniguchi, Shigeko Uno, and Takako Yoda.

Announcements

Thank You

For your generous donations:

Jody Lewis Janice Nakamura
Jon & Lisa Drivenes Edwin Rivera
Tomi and Tosh Mano Taeko Taniguchi
Martha Nakagawa Susan Tomita

Historical Booklet support:

Toru and Kiyo Sakahara (3 booklets)
Kathryn Suyama (1 booklet)
Ted and Toshi Imanishi (1 booklet)
Mrs. Helen H. Takagi (1 booklet)
Chieko Sumimoto (1 booklet)
Harvey and Edith Watanabe (2 booklets)

Bill Tashima
Mary Leno
Mr. and Mrs. George Tamura
Mr. and Mrs. T. Ohashi
Hope Ohashi
Priscilla Wegars

In memory of Harry Takagi:

Calvin & Naoko Takagi
Mary & Paul Uno
Haruko & Sam Shoji
Mae Deguchi
Elaine Akagi (to Aki Kurose Scholarship)
May Namba (to Aki Kurose Scholarship)

Events Calendar

Jul. 13-14 – Annual Chinatown-International District Summer Festival, Hing Hay Park, 7th and S. King St., 11-6 PM, Free. Contact: (206) 382-1197.

July 28 – Pista Sa Nasyon Philippine Celebration, Seward Park Amphitheater, Seattle, 9 AM - 8 PM. Contact: info@pista.org.

Jul. 20-21 – Bon Odori: Japanese Buddhist festival, Seattle Buddhist Temple, 1427 S. Main St., 4-9 PM, Free. Contact: (206) 329-0800.

2002 Scholarship Recipients

by Ann Fujii Lindwall, Scholarship Committee Chair

The Seattle Chapter of the JACL awarded three scholarships in early June to Emily Koyama of Roosevelt High School, Emi Sumida of Roosevelt High School, and My Phan of North Seattle Community College.

Koyama received the Minoru Tamesa Scholarship, Sumida, the Bunshiro Tazuma Scholarship and Phan, the Aki Kurose Memorial Scholarship, at the awards dinner on June 5 at Blaine Methodist Church. About 50 people were in attendance, including Elmer Tazuma and his brother, a family that funds one of the JACL scholarships.

President Arlene Oki gave opening remarks and President-Elect Tatsuo Nakata was the master of ceremony for the event. Ron Chew, director of the Wing Luke Asian Museum, was the keynote speaker.

The 2002 Scholarship Committee members are: Elaine Akagi, Shanon Doolittle, Ruthann Kurose, Ann Fujii Lindwall, Cathy Lowenberg, May Namba, Bill Tashima, and Alan Yabui.

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nourishment, the USDA has summarily disqualified three local Somali groceries from the food stamp program. Appeals have been filed, but in the meantime, customers at the local stores are going without meat, which is raising a serious health concern. Public health nurses have reported some of the affected children have shown signs of undernourishment at school. Local action has been taken since then by the Hate Free Zone of Washington to send contributions to help support these families.

On Friday, May 24th, administrative appeals were filed for two of the three Somali grocery stores that were the targets of USDA action in March. The appeal clearly shows there is no evidence to corroborate the USDA's charges of food stamp trafficking by the stores. In addition, the USDA's actions have called into question their stated "good faith intent" to ascertain the truth.

"From what we have seen, the disqualifications and the non-cooperation of several USDA officials appear to be examples of the government's new policy: act now and attempt to justify discriminatory actions such as the persecution of Somalis with America's war on terrorism. This is misguided policy and an abuse of civil rights," states Pramila Jayapal, Director of the Hate Free Zone Campaign of Washington.

The Hate Free zone has been coordinating the support of the Somali community and the broad defense of the grocery stores.

Newsletter Sponsors

The Seattle Chapter Newsletter is sponsored in part by these generous donors:

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Recent Membership

Individual

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Janice Deguchi Yee
Norio Harui
Lorraine Hoshibata (new)
Tetsuden Kashima
Saji Kanazawa
Momoko Kido
Joanne Kimura
Ai Handa-Moore

Janice Nakamura
Nyla Nakano
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Robert Okano
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Masako Tamura
Suma Yagi
Harry Yoshimura

Couples and Family

Harry and Sachiko Okazaki
Steve and Joyce Suzuki
Yoshio and Daisy Tomita

Thousand Club

Margaret Yanigimachi

Thousand Club Spouse

Amy Matsuoka (new)

2001 Scholarship Recipient

by Kongkham Panyathong

It was truly a great honor for me to be a recipient of the Tazuma and Tamesa 2001 scholarship award. As I discovered, the JACL sends a strong message as stated in their literature, "...fortunate to be able to annually award scholarships from endowments established in the memory of Japanese Americans who came before us...young Seattle-area Japanese Americans continue to benefit from the efforts of earlier generations." Although I am not of Japanese ancestry, the JACL extended their warmth and allowed me to benefit from their generosity. However, what I gained went far beyond the monetary amount awarded.

July 2001, I participated in the JACL Youth Conference with many young people who learn and teach others about their struggles and experiences in being a young Asian American. What an experience, to be able to relate and discuss our current issues and discover that I am not alone in my struggle. After the conference, I strived to keep up with other events and presentations, so that I could be more community involved.

As the school year came around, I enrolled at Seattle Central Community College. There, I spoke in every class that would allow me to make a presentation, my focus, Asian American stereotypes. One might ask, why take this task upon myself? My reason is this...there are those who either choose to ignore or still perpetuate stereotypes. Re-education is necessary to expose these harmful images for what they are, so outrageous incidents such as stereotyped caricatures and t-shirt slogans can be prevented. This is the least that I can do for our community, my community.

These actions may seem insignificant on a larger perspective. However, I am influenced to do what I never thought I would do and expand my small comfort zone. I am able to see and hear and take part in the issues affecting our community. After being awarded the Tazuma and Tamesa scholarship, I received more than the monetary amount, I was empowered to open many doors for myself and given the opportunity to give back to the community. Again, I am truly grateful and wish to thank everyone at the Seattle Chapter for believing in me.

Mission Statement: The Seattle Chapter JAACL is a non-profit, grassroots civil rights organization dedicated to empowering our local community through high-quality programs and strategic partnerships focusing on activism, education, and youth leadership development. As a chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, we strive to be a leading Asian American advocacy group for civil and human rights while promoting and preserving the values and cultural heritage of Japanese Americans.

Chapter Board Meeting: Our primary means of carrying out our mission is a monthly meeting, held at 6:30 PM on the third Wednesday of each month, except August, at the chapter office, 316 Maynard Ave. S., Seattle. Those wishing to make presentations or be added to the meeting agenda should contact President Arlene Oki prior to the meeting. All are welcome.

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Article and Event Submission: Board members should submit materials to the editor-in-chief (joannnatalia_editor@hotmail.com) by the Friday after the monthly board meeting. Calendar items emphasize chapter or community events not likely to be covered by community newspapers or by other newsletters.

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E-mail address: email@jaclseattle.org

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