

# KOKORO

THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITY  
SAN MATEO CHAPTER JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE JAN 2006  
[WWW.SANMATEOJACL.ORG](http://WWW.SANMATEOJACL.ORG)  
INQUIRIES: KATE MOTOYAMA 650.574.6676

SAN MATEO JACL IS DEDICATED TO PROMOTING THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE AND TO PROTECTING AND ADVANCING THE HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS OF OUR MULTI-ETHNIC SOCIETY THROUGH EDUCATIONAL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS.

Articles must be submitted before the third Friday in electronic format [Microsoft WORD, New York font] to [katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com](mailto:katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com).

## HR 1492, CAMP PRESERVATION BILL: SAN MATEO CHAPTER'S PLEDGE

The letter below was sent to Kenneth Inouye, president of National JACL's board, on December 9, 2005. In light of the passage of HR 1492, the camp preservation bill (which includes preservation of the 17 assembly centers), San Mateo chapter is compiling research material to secure more appropriate commemoration of the Japanese American experience at the assembly center at Tanforan.



The bronze plaque at Tanforan. Image on next page shows plaque in perspective.

*We celebrate the passage of HR 1492, the camp preservation bill, in the U.S. House of Representatives [November 16, 2005]. Representative Bill Thomas (R-Bakersfield), chairman of the Ways and Means Committee and principal sponsor of HR 1492, joined by House colleagues Mike Honda (D-San Jose), Eni Faleomavaega (D-Guam), Doris Matsui (D-Sacramento), Ed Case (D-Hawaii), and other supporters, spoke ardently in the bill's behalf. Prior to this, when HR 1492 was first introduced and went through a hearing sponsored by the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands, JACL's Floyd Mori testified in support of the bill.*

*HR 1492 authorizes broad funding for the physical preservation of World War II confinement sites used to imprison and detain Japanese Americans. The legislation creates a grant program to fund public-private partnerships that will purchase and restore confinement sites so that future generations can learn the lessons of the internment. It authorizes up to \$38 million in federal funds to preserve and restore 10 internment camps, including Tule Lake near the California-Oregon border and Manzanar in the eastern Sierra. The bill includes the preservation of 17 assembly centers, including San Bruno, Sacramento, Salinas, and Stockton.*

*In light of the passage of HR 1492, San Mateo JACL requests National JACL's resources and assistance and informs you of our commitment to preserve and commemorate the historic site at Tanforan in San Bruno.*

*In July 2003, our chapter expressed concerns to National JACL about whether the bronze plaque at Tanforan Shopping Center was an appropriate commemoration of the unconstitutional and forced removal of Japanese Americans during World War II. San Bruno's Tanforan racetrack, used as an assembly center for persons to be evacuated from the Pacific Coast military area, has historic value to the community and nation. Yet the plaque was easy to miss. Tanforan Shopping Center, now known as The Shops at Tanforan, still displays the bronze plaque (as well as three other plaques and a statue of Seabiscuit); see attached images.*

*In 2003, National JACL stated that it would engage in discussions about the plaque. Our board did not receive updates or pursue the matter and, quite frankly, we had forgotten about the plaque until the successful passage of HR 1492.*

*In light of new opportunities created by HR 1492, our chapter has the long-term goal of working toward mutually agreeable solutions that are in keeping with the letter and spirit of the camp preservation bill. We will begin, first of all, by compiling historical documents, oral histories, archival photographs, and other research to create a dossier on Tanforan Assembly Center. This will serve as an information packet that could be used to educate people, particularly students and community members, about the importance of the site at Tanforan. From there, our chapter will work to build understanding, support, and consensus among all stakeholders as we envision how to best preserve and honor the site.*

*The internment of U.S. citizens and immigrants of Japanese ancestry was one of the worst constitutional violations in our country's history. The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians reported to President Reagan and the Congress in 1983 that the denial of constitutional rights of Japanese Americans during WWII was attributed to "race prejudice, war hysteria, and the failure of political leadership." With this letter, San Mateo chapter pledges to work to memorialize the site at Tanforan.*



The plaque as it exists is an insignificant reminder of a gross violation of constitutional rights

*Electronic copy sent to: The Honorable Ed Case, Thaya Mune Craig, The Honorable Eni Faleomavaega, The Honorable Mike Honda, Yasuko Ito, Richard Inokuchi, The Honorable Karyl Matsumoto, Floyd Mori, Patty Wada. Paper copy to: The Honorable Doris Matsui and The Honorable Bill Thomas*

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION: CAMP PRESERVATION BILL PASSES HOUSE VOTE

With a voice vote on the floor of the US House of Representatives on November 16, 2005, HR 1492, the Camp Preservation Bill, was approved by the members of the House.

Rep. Bill Thomas, chairman of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee and principal sponsor of HR1492, spoke with emotion as he described the injustices of the WWII internment of Japanese Americans and the need to preserve the government's camp sites as a reminder to Americans about one of the darkest periods in this nation's constitutional history.

Rep. Thomas was joined by House colleagues Mike Honda (D-CA), Eni Faleomavaega (D-Guam), Doris Matsui (D-CA), Ed Case (D-HI) and others in support of the bill.

"Obviously, we're very pleased to see the passage of this piece of legislation," noted Floyd Mori, JACL Washington Director. A close friend and former roommate of Rep. Thomas when they served together in the California state Assembly, Mori called on Thomas to sponsor the legislation.

"I'm especially indebted to Bill Thomas for his skillful leadership in getting this bill passed in such quick order and for bringing the weight of his authority to ensure passage of this bill," Mori added.

## INFORMATION ON FEDERAL PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM FROM JACL HEALTH BENEFITS TRUST—READ BELOW:

Seniors who have the JACL Health Benefits Administrators plan can ignore the new Federal prescription drug program (Medicare Part D). Although the new Medicare Part D plan has a lower up-front cost, it also has only limited overall drug coverage, with potential out-of-pocket expenses of up to \$3,600/year. Also, the Medicare plan has limited drug choices, meaning some drugs may be covered, while others may not be covered. Our JACL plans have unlimited prescription drug coverage, and do not limit drug choices to any formulary (brand name drugs are covered).

We (*meaning JACL Health Benefits Trust*) just sent out our renewal letter for 2006 [*I believe this was in October 2005—editor*] which included the wording below. Please note that this message is only for those enrolled in the JACL Health Benefits Administrators plan.

"As you may be aware, starting January 1, 2006, new Medicare prescription drug coverage will be available to those eligible for Medicare. This coverage is called Medicare Part D. It has been determined that the prescription drug coverage offered under our plans is expected to pay more than the standard Medicare Part D plans. Therefore, you are encouraged not to enroll in Medicare Part D at this time. You will be receiving a notice from Blue Shield stating that the prescription drug coverage for your plan is considered "creditable coverage." Since your plan provides creditable coverage, you will not be penalized if you choose to enroll in Medicare Part D at a later time, so long as Medicare's enrollment guidelines are followed."

As for those not in our plan, obviously we cannot advise them. Hope that this helps.  
--Stephen Divizich, Administrator

## 2006 JACL NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The 2006 National JACL Scholarship Program's information brochure and applications are now posted on the National JACL website (jacl.org). The scholarship categories are Freshman, Undergraduate, Graduate, Law, Creative & Performing Arts, and Financial Aid.

All Freshman applications must be submitted to the Chapters and postmarked by March 1, 2006. Each Chapter must forward, postmarked by April 1, 2006, their "outstanding" applicants to:

2006 Scholarship Program  
National JACL  
1765 Sutter Street  
San Francisco, CA 94115

In the past, the Chapters were asked to forward up to three (3) applications but this limit of three was found to be too restrictive on Chapters in large metropolitan areas. To reduce the number of applications for review by the National Freshman Scholarship Committee, the Chapters are still asked to review and screen the applications, but are not limited in the number that can be forwarded.

The Undergraduate, Graduate, Law, Creative & Performing Arts, and Financial Aid applications must be mailed, postmarked by April 1, 2006, to:

2006 Scholarship Program  
c/o San Diego JACL  
1031 25<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite C  
San Diego, CA 92102

All applications must be on the 2006 application forms that are found on the JACL website (jacl.org).

All applications must be complete and timely, per the guidelines on the form, in order to be considered.

Students are allowed to apply to ONE CATEGORY ONLY: Freshman, Undergraduate, Graduate, Law, and Creative & Performing Arts. The exception to this rule is that any applicant may also apply for the Financial Aid Scholarship. Also, the program offers a scholarship specifically designated for a student majoring in Dentistry. Dentistry students should note this major on a Graduate Scholarship application and they will be considered for both the Dentistry-specific scholarship and for the general Graduate Scholarships.

Applicants are judged on the basis of their JACL involvement, scholastic achievement, extra-curricular activities, community involvement, personal statement and letter of recommendation.

Requirements:

- JACL Membership by applicant (Individual or Youth/Student)
- Personal Statement
- Letter(s) of Recommendation (only one required)
- Official transcripts
- 2 copies of all application materials

In July 2006, the scholarship recipients will have been selected and electronic notification will be made to the recipients, their home Chapter and the Chapter most proximate to their educational institution. In September 2006, the JACL's national newspaper, The Pacific Citizen, will have its annual Scholarship Edition(s) featuring the recipients.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact David Kawamoto, National JACL Scholarship Committee Chair, via telephone (619) 287-7583, or email ([dhkawamoto@aol.com](mailto:dhkawamoto@aol.com)).

VICTORY FOR PEOPLE OF NEW ORLEANS AGAINST UNFAIR EVICTION PRACTICE
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A Statement from **Ishmael Muhammad**, lead counsel in *Sylvester v. Boissiere*, appearing on behalf of Advancement Project and the Grassroots Legal Network:

The Grassroots Legal Network along with the Loyola Law Clinic, the Advancement Project, the People's Advocacy Center, and New Orleans Legal Assistance (NOLAC) brought suit against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its component Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Orleans

## WHAT WILL WE REMEMBER OF HISTORY?



Fact: President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942.

Fact: Under EO 9066, people of Japanese ancestry were removed from the West Coast; WRA figures show 120,000 were detained in government "relocation centers" such as Tanforan Assembly Center.

Fact: Two-thirds of those interned were American citizens.

Fact: Over half were children or infants.

Fact: Many of those children or infants are now in their 70's and 80's.

## WHAT WILL WE—AND OUR CHILDREN—REMEMBER?

Observe Day of Remembrance on February 19, 2006.  
Appreciate our tradition bearers and build common cause in our community.

QUESTION: *Why did the U.S. Government label Japanese Americans “non-aliens?”*

THINK ABOUT IT: *All U.S. citizens ARE “non-aliens.”*

WHAT IT MEANS: *The nation used language to obscure who we were, turned others and ourselves against us, marginalized us, stripped us of due process—just as the government is doing today.*

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2006  
“DAY OF REMEMBRANCE”

COLLEGE OF SAN MATEO THEATER  
1700 W. HILLSDALE BOULEVARD  
6:00-8:00 p.m.

We will screen SCOTT TSUCHITANI’S “MEETING AT TULE LAKE”  
and listen to MAS YAMASAKI’S first person account.

We have invited as guest speaker IMAM TAHIR ANWAR,  
Director of Religious Services, South Bay Islamic Association.

THERE WILL BE TIME FOR QUESTIONS.

PLEASE BRING YOUR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS

QUESTIONS: CALL KATE 650.574.6676

Parish, and Jefferson Parish on behalf of the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, UNITE-HERE Local 50-2, SEIU Local 21, ACORN New Orleans, and individual tenants being victimized by landlords post-Hurricane Katrina.

Plaintiffs focused their attack on the shabby procedure used by landlords to notify displaced renters of eviction proceedings—by "tacking" or posting up a sheet of paper on the door of displaced person's home. Plaintiffs declared that this notification procedure by "tacking" was not reasonably calculated to actually reach displaced tenants. Plaintiffs declared that this procedure denied them their basic constitutional right to due process and their human right to be able to return to their home.

The lead plaintiff, Janeice Lisa Sylvester, an Orleans Parish resident, is a displaced tenant who got "tacked." After Hurricane Katrina, Ms. Sylvester was evacuated to LaPlace, Louisiana, but came home to New Orleans on November 4, 2005 to check on her apartment. To her dismay and shock, she found all of her stuff out on the street and a notice for an eviction hearing set for November 3, 2005—the day before she was able to return to New Orleans!—tacked to her door. The worst part of it for Ms. Sylvester was that she had made an effort to tell her landlord where she had been evacuated to, but her landlord did not make any effort to contact her personally—even though her landlord knew where she was!—before going to court and evicting her.

Because of the immense pressure that has been placed on the government and the landlords by the people, Plaintiffs were able to achieve the following result from this lawsuit:

(1) All evictions in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes are immediately stayed—meaning, all eviction proceedings in Orleans and Jefferson Parishes stop immediately against residents who are not in the area and whose whereabouts are unknown to landlords.

(2) Under the judge's order, FEMA is required, upon request, to provide to the Orleans and Jefferson Parishes, current contact information for the tenants who landlords are seeking to evict. Upon this contact information being provided by FEMA, the Parishes have to provide written notice of eviction to the tenants at the tenants' most current addresses. Tenants then have at least 45 days from the date of the mailing of the notice respond to the eviction action.

This victory means that displaced people have an almost two-month reprieve from having to face loss of their personal property and their homes. Winning this stop to evictions for almost two months provides the opportunity for legal advocates and grassroots people to file additional lawsuits for wrongful evictions that deny people their right to return. This victory also provides an opportunity for political and social rights activists to organize with grassroots people to assert pressure on those in power to respect their humanity.

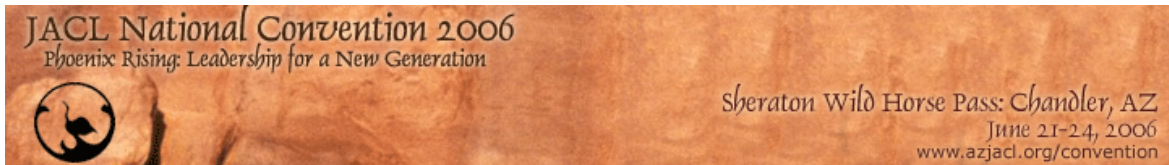
#### NJAHS PEACE GALLERY EVENTS

The NJAHS Peace Gallery has some upcoming events our readers may be interested in attending, beginning with A January 13<sup>th</sup> screening (6 pm - 10 pm) of Hiroshima, a long (3 hours), spellbinding made-for-TV drama that undertakes the narrative from both sides, showing parallels and devastating differences in an event-handed, insightful, and accurate way. A joint Japanese and Chinese production, with the Japanese portion showing effective and authentic characterizations of Japan's Emperor, military leaders, and human cost. The historical scope is riveting, the acting superb.

On January 27<sup>th</sup>, the closing party for Ghosts of Little Boy exhibit will feature poetry from Genny Lim and Nancy Hom and music from Francis Wong, as well as refreshments, beginning at 5 p.m. The screening of Trinity and Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie will begin at 6 p.m. This film is an amazing, emotional, visual and gut-wrenching reaction to nuclear arms. From Hiroshima to the global present, the history of atomic and hydrogen bomb design, production, and testing by the United States on cities, islands, underwater, underground, and in the atmosphere. Rare, archival footage of nuclear bomb tests conducted by Great Britain, China, and Russia are astonishing. Peter Kuran, narrative by William Shatner (1995).

The National Japanese American Historical Society (NJAHS), founded in 1980 in San Francisco, is a non-profit member-supported organization that specializes in sharing historical information of the Japanese American experience for the diverse broader national community. It is located at 1684 Post Street, San Francisco.

## JACL 2006 NATIONAL CONVENTION



The Arizona Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) will be hosting the JACL National Convention on June 21-24, 2006. This biennial event will be held in Arizona for the first time in the seventy-six year history of the JACL, the oldest Asian American civil rights organization in the United States. We anticipate that 500 members from throughout the United States will register for this Convention and bring along family and friends to enjoy visiting with old friends, make many new friends and conduct the business of the JACL.

Our JACL 2006 National Convention committee is excited about hosting the Convention at the beautiful Sheraton Wild Horse Pass Resort and Spa on the Gila River Indian Community. This four star resort has an award winning spa, five star restaurant, two championship eighteen hole golf courses and is located just fifteen minutes from Sky Harbor International Airport.

## YOUTH WORKSHOP ON JANUARY 29<sup>th</sup>

An upcoming Professionals Workshop will be held on January 29, 2006. The workshop is specifically targeted at high school students -- to identify options and plan for college admission, as well as at college students -- to help soon-to-be graduates identify options for entering the workforce. The workshop will be held at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (in San Francisco) from 10am to 5pm. Registration is \$10 for JACL members and \$15 for non-members, and includes continental breakfast and lunch. For info, contact your NCWNP District Youth Representative.

## RUBY SCHAAR AWARD FOR PLAYWRITING

Seeking applicants who are playwrights of Japanese descent with American or Canadian citizenship, and sponsored by an active member of JACL or a Chapter of JACL. The applicant must have had at least one of his/her plays presented in a public forum, such as established theater, workshop or formal reading.

Manuscripts are restricted to one per applicant and are to be accompanied by a completed application form postmarked no later than April 1, 2006. Applications are available from the National JACL web site ([www.jacl.org](http://www.jacl.org)) or from New York JACL, 75 Grove Street, Bloomfield NJ 07003. Any play theatrically produced before January 1, 2004 will not be considered. Send only a clear copy of the typed manuscript in a professional format. Do not send originals. Send form and manuscript to:

New York JACL  
75 Grove Street  
Bloomfield NJ 07003

The manuscripts will be judged for dramatic excellence and insight into the Japanese American or Japanese Canadian experience. Historical or sociological data should have a factual basis. Manuscripts will be judged by a panel of professionals distinguished in theater arts.

The Ruby Yoshino Schaar Playwright Award is funded by the New York Chapter of JACL. For further information, contact Lillian Kimura at 973/680-1441 or [lckimura@att.net](mailto:lckimura@att.net).

CONGRATULATIONS TO SAN MATEO CHAPTER MEMBER AND  
SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO CITY COUNCILMEMBER KARYL MATSUMOTO



*Joining Karyl at the Installation Ceremony are Kevin Wong, Kate Motoyama, and Bo Yoshimura*

APA COALITION SUBMITS LETTER TO SF POLICE COMMISSION

A coalition of Asian Pacific American community based organizations and individuals will submit this letter to to the San Francisco Police Commission at its meeting on Weds., 5PM, City Hall.

The Asian Pacific American (APA) coalition is comprised of organizations and individuals serving APA communities in San Francisco and the Bay Area. We have come together in protest of the racist, sexist, and homophobic video produced by a member of the City's Police Department. The impact of this video is far greater than past, recent incidents such as the 49er's training tape. This video comes from a City Department that is directly accountable to each resident of San Francisco regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or economic status for their protection and safety. This video vividly illustrates disrespect towards the disenfranchised communities of San Francisco and represents a fundamental breach in the promise of the City's police officers to protect and serve our communities.

This Coalition supports Chief Heather Fong's strong public condemnation of the video and her swift and decisive action to suspend all those involved with the production of this offensive video. While firm disciplinary action against individual officers is critical, this is only the first step. We also seek strong institutional reforms within the Department that will address the underlying disrespect towards women, people of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people that was so clearly manifested in these videos.

Asian Pacific Americans have been deeply involved in the struggles to diversify the Police and other City Departments. We are all too familiar with thinly veiled racist and sexist comments about our inability to manage or to exhibit strong leadership. Thus, we are disturbed by the nature of the personal attacks against Chief Fong, the first woman and only the second Chinese American to lead the Department. Such attacks shift focus from the real problem at hand: how to reform a Police Department so that it respects, protects, and serves all San Francisco residents.

We stand ready to work with the Chief, the SFPD, this Commission and others to create and re-establish trust and respect between the police and the communities they are sworn to serve.

