KOKORO

THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITY
SAN MATEO CHAPTER JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE OCT 2006
<WWW.SANMATEOJACL.ORG>
INQUIRIES: MARY JO KUBOTA-ARCARESE, CO PRESIDENT, 650.593.7358

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.

IMMIGRANTS' GALLERY OPENS AT COUNTY MUSEUM

Photo from Immigrants' Gallery, San Mateo County History Museum

USS HORNET MUSEUM IN THE ALAMEDA

"You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice and won."—About the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team, President Truman

The USS Hornet museum dedicated to the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service opened this summer, with a grand opening that focused on telling the World War II stories of the 442nd in Europe and the MIS in the Pacific. The exhibit is curated by Brian Shiroyama. The USS Hornet is one of 24 Essex-class aircraft carriers built during and after World War II and is one of the most decorated ships of the U.S. Navy, having received the Presidential Unit Citation and nine Battle Stars.

There were one day special events, one for the 442nd veterans and one for MIS veterans, where they could bring historical items captured on the battlefields, such as German handguns, a Japanese flag, and pieces of shrapnel. One veteran, Lawson Sakai, 82 years old, drove up from Gilroy to Alameda to attend. He observed, "The fact is, most of our veterans are just too old to travel anymore." Sakai remembers the five-day battle to save "The Lost Battalion," a Texas unit that became surrounded in the Vosges Mountains of France in October 1944. After the 442nd took the city of Bruyeres, they had orders to save the Lost Battalion. Sakai says, "It was head-to-head, hand-to-hand, combat in bad conditions. It was muddy, wet, foggy, and you couldn't see." After reaching the Texans, both units were ordered into Germany. The 442nd lost 800 men.

L.A. Chung, who covered the opening of the USS Hornet Museum in her article, "The Summer of Farewells" [*San Jose Mercury News*, August 5, 2006], described how Sakai was caught by shrapnel "raining down from the artillery, hitting trees." Sakai said, "Tree bursts go in every direction. All I remember is that it hurt like hell." Sakai still has shrapnel in his back today.

The curator, Shiroyama, is a Vietnam veteran and airman, born in the Manzanar internment camp. He also tends an exhibit dedicated to the 442nd in Morgan Hill. Of the Japanese Americans who served in the MIS unit which persuaded soldiers to surrender, interrogated prisoners, and translated documents, Shiroyama says, "People say, 'Gee, I didn't know that.' These are soldiers who fought against Japan."

In contrast to the storied achievements of the 442nd, the primarily Nisei regiment that is the most decorated unit in US military history (18,000 individual decorations, 21 Medals of Honor, and 9,500 Purple Hearts), the MIS may be less well known. One of the reasons for this is that these interpreters, linguists, and interrogators were sworn to secrecy for five decades of service to the MIS. Only in 1972 were their contributions in WWII made public. As President Nixon said, upon lifting the secrecy on MIS activities in 1972, "These silent warriors did their job and did it well in the face of tremendous odds and at great personal sacrifice.

We thank these veterans for their service. See www.uss-hornet.org for more information. I was able to personally thank Mr. Lawson Sakai, and he responded with a gracious nod.

BEING PROACTIVE AGAINST HATE CRIMES

Before the opening of Oliver Stone's 2006 movie, "World Trade Center," co-president Mary Jo Kubota-Arcarese sent the following letter to San Mateo County Chief of Police Susan Manheimer. Chief Manheimer was helpful to the Japanese American community when "Pearl Harbor" opened in 2001. She also participated in our forum, a community education event after the events of 9/11, co-sponsored with College of San Mateo. The event included speakers who addressed the Japanese American and Italian American internment, as well as cultural and religious perspectives by a Muslim scholar.

The San Mateo Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (SMJACL) is deeply concerned about the recent hate crimes in California targeting Jews and Muslims. The conflict between Israel and Lebanon and the Iraq war are undoubtedly part of the reason for these escalating racial and religious tensions. We are aware that the movie World Trade Center will open next week and fear that it may exacerbate these tensions.

In light of these current events SMJACL is asking that you continue your vigilance and strong work in Hate Crime Prevention in the community. We pledge our continued support of the San Mateo Police Department and want to go on record as being part of our local hate crime network ready to respond if the need arises.

In the summer, the *San Jose Mercury News* reported there was a spike in hate crimes in the month of June in Santa Clara county ["Hate Crimes Prompt Forums," by Leslie Griffy, August 4, 2006]. Whereas there is on average five hate crimes reported per month, in June, there were 13, according to the county's Network for a Hate-Free Community. Santa Clara County was reeling from two violent hate crimes in July 2006. One involved an African American man who was beaten on the streets of downtown Mountain View by two Central Valley men shouting white power slogans. In another incident, a Sikh man was attacked by a man wielding a steak knife because he believed the neighbor was part of the Taliban.

As a result, three meetings were scheduled in Santa Clara County because hate crimes are an assault on the entire community.

SAN FRANCISCO/BAY AREA NIKKEI SINGLES OF JCCCCNC SCHOLARSHIP

One $1500 scholarship is being offered by the San Francisco/Bay Area Nikkei Singles of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC).

An applicant must be a member of a single-parent household and a graduating high school senior or post-secondary student planning to attend or currently attending an institution of higher learning or a business or vocational college in the 2006 academic year. The scholarship will be awarded based on academic talent, social and community affiliation, and economic need.

Deadline for application is October 31, 2006.

Application forms may be requested by writing to the San Francisco/Bay Area Nikkei Singles of JCCCNC Scholarship Committee, c/o Bill Sakai, 316 Creekside Drive, Palo Alto, CA 94306 or by calling 650.493.2406.

FORMER BOARD MEMBER KENMOTSU GRADUATES FROM WEST POINT

Cadeet Derek T. Kenmotsu graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point on May 27, 2006. Kenmotsu graduated at the top 20% of his class of 866 cadets at the Academy, making the Dean's List the past four semester. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in International Relations with a minor in Systems Engineering. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army upon graduation.

Derek attended schools at Audubon and Bowditch Middle School in Foster City before going to Aragon High School and graduating in 2002. He has been a lifelong resident of Foster City since his parents moved there in 1973. He was appointed by Congressman Tom Lantos to attend the Academy. On July 2nd, he reported to Ft. Benning, Georgia for six weeks of Basic Officer Leadership courses and graduated on August 17th. He will continue at Ft. Benning to go to Ranger School and, upon graduation from Ranger School, will be posting in Korea with the 2nd Infantry Division.

The mission of the U.S. Military Academy is to educate, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets so that each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, and Country; professional growth throughout a career as an officer in the United States Army; and a lifetime of selfless service to the Nation.

Congratulations to Derek and his family. We are also grateful to work with Grace Kenmotsu, Derek's mom, who serves with us on the San Mateo JACL Board.

AN UPDATE ON THE I-HOTEL

When more 50 elderly immigrants, most of them Filipino and Chinese workers, were evicted from the three-story International or "I-Hotel" in 1977, the city demolished the single-occupancy hotel with the purported intent to create a more profitable commercial development. Though the eviction resulted in a storm of protest and court battles, the commercial development was never built. The original "I-Hotel," a razed open space, was located at 848 Kearney Street in San Francisco. It remained undeveloped for many years.

Last year, the "I-Hotel" was resurrected as a 15-story building with rooftop views of San Francisco landmarks. The men who were original occupants of the hotel were given priority in returning to live at the "I-Hotel." The hotel, which has 104 studio and one-bedroom units, has images of the protest and evictions in its community center.

The more things change, the more they remain the same. It is important to remember the "I-Hotel" and its lessons from nearly 30 years ago.

MORE INFORMATION ON AB 1492, CAMP PRESERVATION BILL

The Senate has not yet passed HR 1492, the Camp Preservation Bill but it is on the Senate calendar for a vote.

When HR 1492 was passed by the House last year, it was referred to the Senate. The Senate Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on April 6, 2006 on HR 1492 and S 1719, a companion bill introduced by Senator Inouye. At the hearing, there were two witnesses. A National Park Service representative testified in opposition to the legislation. Gerald Yamada testified on behalf the Japanese American National Heritage Coalition in support of both bills. The Senate committee approved HR 1492 with amendments.

There is no known opposition to the bill so we can expect it to pass when it comes up for a vote. It should be voted on in September when the Senate reconvenes. After it is passed by the Senate, it will have to be returned to the House so that the House can accept the Senate amendments. Yamada has already informed Congressman Thomas, sponsor of HR 1492, that the amendments are acceptable to the Heritage Coalition. He further expects that the House will vote on the amended HR 1492 quickly and that the President should sign the bill into law in October.

Once HR 1492 is enacted into law, funding for the program would still need to be sought. It may not be until 2007 that funds become available.

The San Mateo JACL board has already made a commitment to support implementation of AB 1492. We would like to have our district, Northern California Western Nevada Pacific, get involved with supporting AB 1492.

COMMUNITY CENTER NEWS

The Raffle/Potluck luncheon on Saturday, August 26th, was a pleasant, relaxing event with 50+ enthusiastic friends enjoying dishes from appetizers to desserts. The colorful and elegant exhibits of Ikebana and Bunka made it festive as well. The winners of the raffle drawing of E-bonds were: 1st prize, Masayuki Mimoto; 2nd prize, Hidemi Morioka and 3rd prize, Earl Kobayashi. Other prizes included a gift certificate from Fukuya Japanese Restaurant in Foster City, won by Sayoko Kakehi, and two other gift certificates donated by the Community Center were won by Kaoru Yoshifuji and Satoshi Bourbonnais. Thank you all very much for your generous contributions.

Thanks to the Community Center, we were again able to enjoy an afternoon at the San Francisco Opera. We carpooled to San Francisco and were treated to a dress rehearsal of "Die Fliedermaus." It was a great afternoon of wonderful singing and acting.

The Community Center is currently in the process of interviewing applicants for the position of Executive Director. The position will be a part-time, approximately 18 hours a week. Inquire with Sats Hane, Chair of the Board of Trustees at 650 588-5597; and Fred Sakamoto, Vice-Chair at 650 574-2110 for details.

If you plan to send a gift (omiyage) to Japan, please contact the Community Center at 650 343-2793 for "Oritz" ordering forms. Your purchase cost will be the same, and the Community Center will receive a percentage of the sale.

SMJA Community Center is having annual clean-up on October 7th, Saturday, beginning at 9:00 am and finishing around noon. All those frequent the Center & Gardeners Hall are invited. Please join the clean-up crew.

INFORMATION ON THE PENSION PROTECTION ACT

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 is designed to encourage giving, saving and fairness as Americans recognized as the world's most generous people – help each other. For those who itemize their taxes, it enables them for the first time to shift assets from an individual retirement account (IRA) to a charity without incurring a tax liability. The new law includes a couple of wrinkles donors should be aware of.

First, direct transfers may only come from a donors' IRAs – not from 401(k)s or other retirement plans. Funds in 401(k)s and other retirement plans may be converted to IRAs with the assistance of the plan administrator or custodian, and then transferred to charity. Second, donors who are older than 70½ have had to make required minimum distributions (RMDs) from their plans, whether they need the money or not. And, prior to this law's enactment, RMDs were taxable. Now, however, if the donor makes a direct transfer from an IRA to charity, the law allows the transfer to be considered their RMD, and it isn't taxed. Obviously, this provides an enormous incentive for those at least 70½ with one or more IRAs to contribute their RMDs to support their favorite charities and avoid paying taxes on them.

The big difference for the donor under the Pension Protection Act – and ultimately for U.S. charities – is that donors can leverage their IRA regular required minimum distributions to make meaningful gifts to charity, and avoid having that distribution included in their taxable income. The Pension Protection Act makes charitable giving even more appealing.

"NIHONMACHI: THE PLACE TO BE!"

Lucky people were able to enjoy the world premiere of a new musical, "Nihonmachi: The Place to Be!" presented by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California and the Grateful Crane Ensemble. The production is especially festive as it is held in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of San Francisco's Japantown.

Last year, "Camp Dance: The Music and the Memories" portrayed the many sacrifices the Issei and Nisei made so that the generations that followed could live a better life in America. The new production about Nihonmachi, or Japantown, was put together by Soji Kashiwagi and his cast and crew. The show argues for the importance of preserving Japanese American history and telling our stories in entertainment and performing arts. The story is about a manju maker owning his 99-year old family business.

The show was dedicated in memory of Mako, a distinguished actor whose career was filled with Academy Award and Tony Award nominations. The Grateful Crane Ensemble included this tribute to Mako:

To live—It's like taking a journey,
There is no end to this road.
You keep the person you love near you,
And bring them along on the journey.
And along the way, you search for your dreams.

--from English trnslation, "Kawa no Nagare no Youni"

San Mateo Japanese American Community Center

Holiday Boutique and Bake Sale

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2006

10 am to 4 pm
San Mateo Gardeners Hall
503 East Fifth Avenue in San Mateo

- **Holiday gifts, arts and crafts**
- **Homemade baked goods, pies, cakes, cookies, jams**
- **Sushi and other Japanese delicacies**
- **Much much more**

San Mateo Japanese American Community Center
415 S. Claremont Street □ San Mateo, CA 94401 □ (650) 343-2793 □ www.smjacc.org
We are a 501(a) non-profit, civil rights/human rights organization

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