

KOKORO

THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITY
SAN MATEO CHAPTER JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE DEC 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 first Friday (one month prior to publication) and in electronic format [Microsoft WORD, New York font] to katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com.

GENERAL MEETING AND REGULAR JACL BOARD MEETING

On Thursday, December 14, 2006, San Mateo JACL will hold a general meeting at 7:00 pm at the Japanese American Community Center. We invite you to attend. At that meeting we will finalize the roster of officers and board members for 2007. This year we have only a few board members and they have served for many years. We need some new members keep our chapter viable. There are many exciting activities and projects coming up in 2007 such as scholarship, visiting scholar, golf tournament, the Art in the Park Burger Booth, Fulbright Scholar in Residence, and Day of Remembrance. Plus, there are also a couple of huge projects. One is the reenactment of the evacuation of Japanese Americans and their incarceration @ Tanforan, scheduled for May 19th; the other is AACP's fundraiser and Asian Pacific American Heritage Month program on May 12th.

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining us, please call Mary Jo (650) 593-7358 or Steve at (650) 574-2641. If we are short the necessary number of board members, we will have to change our by-laws and scale back our activities and programs considerably. We are eager to hear from you and meet you at the December JACL meeting! Bring a friend! Happy Holidays!

Mary Jo Kubota -Arcarese and Steve Okamoto, Co-Presidents

GALA OPENING OF IMMIGRANTS GALLERY



Diana Okamoto and Mary Kubota

The gala opening of the new Immigrants Gallery took place on Saturday November 4, 2006 at the San Mateo County Historical Museum in Redwood City. The event began with brief remarks by Mitch Postel, Museum President, and Umang Gupta, Museum

Board Member and a major contributor to the Immigrants Gallery. Then Mr. and Mrs. Gupta and the Deputy Consul General of Japan celebrated the new exhibit by participating in the "kagami wari" or Sake Keg Breaking Ceremony. After that, ceremonies moved to the newly refurbished courtyard in front of the museum. The Deputy Consul General of Japan and other dignitaries addressed the assembled guests.

Afterward the crowd was treated to a show which included Lion Dancers, Taiko, Irish, Italian, and Portuguese Dancers and several other ethnic performances. In the museum rotunda, visitors to the event could try crafts, art projects, and games from the immigrant groups represented in the gallery. On the second floor wonderful food from all the cultures was available to taste. Visitors paused to enjoy sushi, tonkatsu, Irish soda bread, lumpia, char siu bao, sweet bread, antipasto, burritos and a variety of delectable treats.

Many people from the Japanese American Community were in attendance at this exciting event. Be sure to plan a trip to the newly renovated museum and visit the Immigrants Gallery on the second floor! It is well done and very interesting.



Dr. Sats Hane and Kitty Hongo

THE FIRST BATTLE: THE BATTLE FOR EQUALITY IN WAR-TIME

The Japanese American Museum of San Jose (JAMsj) will present *The First Battle: The Battle for Equality in War-Time Hawai'i*. *First Battle* is a public television documentary by writer/producer Tom Coffman, and will be shown on December 7, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at Wesley United Methodist Church.

Have you ever wondered why 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry on the Mainland were wrongly interned while 160,000 people of Japanese ancestry in Hawaii were able to go about their lives during World War II? This film explains why. The majority, if not all, of Hawai'i's residents of Japanese ancestry were targeted to be forced into internment camps after the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. Mass internment could very well have happened, according to historical filmmaker and author Tom Coffman, if not for a few twists of fate, and the foresight and bravery of a small network of men in Hawaii. Come see this compelling film.

PEACEFUL AND HEALTHY SENIORS

Mr. L became sick and had to stay at a hospital. He had no children or spouse. Mr. L's niece and nephew came to the hospital and forced him to give them his apartment key. They went to his apartment and changed the address of his bank accounts. Mr. L lost control of his assets. Mr. L later found out his niece and nephew had withdrawn all the money from his account.

Ms. X was sponsored by her daughter to come to the U.S. Shortly after her arrival, she was verbally abused and isolated by her daughter. She was not allowed to use the phone, write to relatives in her homeland or go to English classes. Five years later, Ms. X was approved for SSI. Her daughter cashed the SSI check by forging her mother's signature and only gave her mother a monthly allowance of \$20. Her daughter refused and claimed the SSI money was for both of them because she had sponsored her mother to come to the U.S. Ms. X came to Self-Help for the Elderly seeking assistance. The daughter realized that Self-Help was supporting her. She bought a one-way ticket for her mother to return to her homeland.

According to the Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, elder abuse comes in many forms, but some forms are:

Neglect, when a caretaker does not provide necessary food, clothing, or shelter, or does not protect a senior for health and safety

hazards. This includes isolation, such as preventing a senior from having visitors, telephone calls, or receiving mail.

Emotional or psychological abuse that humiliates, demeans, or threatens a senior. This includes manipulating or intimidating a senior.

Financial abuse is when someone takes or hides a senior's money or property. This includes using a senior's money without permission or forging a senior's signature on checks or other documents.

Physical abuse is the non-accidental use of physical force that results in injury, pain, or impairment. This includes hitting, pushing, arm twisting; sexual abuse; prolonged deprivation of food, water, or medication.

A PROFILE ON NIKKEI CUBANS, continued—excerpted from Tsukimi Kai's paper

Most of us know little about Nikkei Cubans and so *Kokoro* is featuring excerpts from a Tsukimi Kai paper on the subject. Tsukimi Kai's goal is to explore and celebrate the parallel histories of Nikkei in Cuba and the U.S. The word "tsukimi" suggests the circumstance of people divided by distance yet appreciating the beauty of the same bright moon. The paper is titled, "Nikkei Cubans: Facts and First Impressions."

As of 1943 a total of about 1200 Japanese had immigrated to Cuba, including about 200 Okinawans. However, only 68 women and 345 men remained. Immediately after WWII, some returned to Japan and some left soon after the 1959 revolution.

Since the Spanish American War, Cuba was a nation with an economy and political life inextricably tied to the United States. On December 9, 1941, two days after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Cuba dropped its policy of neutrality, and President Batista signed a declaration of war on Japan and its fascist allies Germany and Italy. On December 12, 1941, Japanese and their descendants were declared "enemy aliens," and all Japanese property was subject to seizure and sale by a Supervisor of Enemy Property.

In April 1942, the Batista regime started incarcerating all adult Nikkei males in the Presidio Modelo (Model Prison) on the Isle of Pines (today called the Isle of Youth). Women and children were left to fend for themselves. A few women were imprisoned in a separate facility for up to six months. In early 1943, the roundup was complete. 341 Issei and 9 Nisei (Cuban citizens by birth) were locked up in the Presidio Modelo. Batista was more selective with other "enemy aliens," incarcerating 114 Germans and 13 Italians, a fraction of all immigrants from those countries.

In Cuba there was no military, political or economic rationale, nor popular pressure for a move against the Nikkei Cubans. They were not large in number and were separated from their ancestral homeland by a continent and an ocean. Like most Nikkei at the time, many maintained cultural practices and celebrated traditional holidays like the Emperor's Birthday and Navy Day, but that did not mean they were spies and saboteurs. In fact, some had left Japan in part to avoid military services. Nikkei Cubans were not a threat to national security. Nor were they perceived as economic competition since they were struggling to survive along with the majority of other Cubans. Also, unlike some other countries, there was no mass hysteria directed against the Nikkei Cubans.

Nevertheless, Batista moved swiftly in cooperation with a larger enemy alien program initiated and paid for by the US government. Accused of being a *potential* threat to national security, over 6,000 persons of German, Italian and Japanese ancestry (both citizens and residents) from 15 Latin American countries were forcibly deported to the U.S. and incarcerated in U.S. Army and Department of Justice camps. These included over 2200 Nikkei men, women and children kidnapped from 13 Latin American countries to be used as hostages in exchange for U.S. citizens caught in Far East war zones. Batista, however, did not hand over the Nikkei Cubans and maintained his own internal detention policies. Today, former internees and groups such as the Campaign for Justice: Redress NOW for Japanese Latin Americans! are working to hold the U.S. government accountable for its key role in these WWII war crimes and crimes against humanity.

JUDY YUNG SPEAKS ON THE ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION EXPERIENCE

Author and historian Judy Yung, UC Santa Cruz professor emerita, has been conducting research for a project involving Japanese who passed through the immigration station at Angel Island. Leonard Chan of Asian American Curriculum Project (AACP) recently interviewed her; the conversation was published in the AACP newsletter; below is an excerpt from the newsletter.

LC: What are you working on now? I've heard you are working on a book about the complete history of Angel Island. Can you tell us anything about it? Is there anything we can help you with - such as people's personal family histories with the place? Could you use any other help with the research? Maybe some of our readers would love to help you. I wouldn't mind. When do you plan to have the Angel Island book finished?

*JY: My next book project is a narrative history of Pacific immigration through Angel Island, sponsored by the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation and co-authored with Erika Lee, Associate Professor of History at the University of Minnesota and the author of *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration during the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. Slated to be completed when the newly renovated immigration site opens in 2010, the book will encompass the experiences of immigrants from around the world, including people from China, Japan, India, the Philippines, Korea, Russia, Portugal, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico, Central and South America. Approximately 400,000 immigrants were processed through the Angel Island Immigration Station, two-thirds of whom were either Chinese or Japanese. While much is known about the experiences of Chinese immigrants at Angel Island because of their long detention there and the poems they carved into the barrack walls, little has been written about the experiences of the other groups. We are particularly interested in finding documents, writings, stories, oral histories, and photographs related to the experiences of immigrant groups other than the Chinese at Angel Island.*

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In a previous issue of *Kokoro*, we described Professor Yung's work, particularly her interest in stories of Japanese arrival at Angel Island. One such story is told by Hisayo Yoshino who, at age 16, left her hometown near Hiroshima in 1910. Yoshino didn't want to marry the husband arranged for her, even if he would inherit his family's wealth as the eldest son—she didn't want to be responsible for the care of his parents—her in-laws. Marrying into a Japanese family meant inheriting in-laws who would sometimes go on to make life with them a daily trial. Thus, Yoshino had her parents break off her engagement. She became a “picture bride” who, through an exchange of photographs, arranged to marry a Japanese man in California. Yoshino ended up detained at Angel Island Immigration Station when it was found she had intestinal worms. After three weeks of treatment, she was met by her husband, Sahei Makimoto, and the two of them began their life on an orchard in Placer County. Life was very hard, and she cried every day for three weeks. However, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle* article, “Fear of a mother-in-law sends Japanese bride to faraway land,” by Charles Burrell, Yoshino survived even the internment camp experience and went on to live to age 97, leaving six children, eighteen grandchildren, and a couple dozen great-grandchildren.

Both Yung and Minnesota Professor Erika Lee are seeking memories people wish to share about the immigrant experience at Angel Island. You may contact the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation at (415) 561-2160 or info@aiisf.org. You may write to Professor Yung at judyvung@sbcglobal.net or Professor Lee at erikalee@tc.umn.edu. Some of the records already collected are available online at casefiles.berkeley.edu. Others can be accessed for a fee through ancestry.com or for free through the National Archives' San Bruno office. Call the archives at (650) 238-3501 or visit www.archives.gov/pacific/san-francisco/index.html.



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