

KOKORO

THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITY
SAN MATEO CHAPTER JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE DEC 2005
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.

NOTICE TO THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP: APPROVAL OF 2006 BUDGET AND SLATE OF OFFICERS

On December 8, 2005, a General Meeting of the Japanese American Citizens League, San Mateo chapter, will be held from 7:15-7:45 p.m. at the Community Center for the purpose of approving the 2006 budget and incoming slate of officers for the board of directors. Notices are posted as of November 10, 2005 online, on the San Mateo JACL website, and at the Community Center.

The regular board meeting will commence after the General Meeting is adjourned.

IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER NEWS

Starting in January 2006, *Kokoro* will be electronically sorted and addressed. In the past, we have relied on volunteers to help get this newsletter to you. We would like to thank past volunteers, and current helpers: Shizuko Ogawa, Miki Ojima, Yukie Nakagawa, and Toshiye Takahashi. We also appreciate having done business with Allegra Printing for many years. We hope that the modernized production and delivery system will represent an improvement for us all.

In the past, some individuals received the newsletter but have not renewed their Associate Member dues. We will mail the December issue of *Kokoro*; however, we ask that Associate Members make a payment in January of \$45 [made out to San Mateo JACL] for your newsletter subscription for the year of 2006. Send your check c/o Steve Katayama, JA Community Center, 415 S. Claremont Street, San Mateo, CA 94401. Thank you for your support.

ASIAN LAW CAUCUS ARTICLE: CITYWIDE POLL REVEALS ASIAN AMERICAN VOTERS UNITED IN OPPOSITION TO STATE BALLOT INITIATIVES

A citywide exit poll revealed that Asian Pacific Islander voters overwhelmingly rejected all four of Governor Schwarzenegger's ballot proposals and disapproved of the Governor's performance. On the Governor's priority proposal, Proposition 76, 83% of all Asian Pacific Islander respondents in the poll taken on Election Day stated they voted against the Governor.

The poll also found strong discontent with the Governor himself. Less than ten percent of Asian Americans polled said that they approved of the governor's overall performance. "Even many of those who supported some or all of the governor's proposals told us they disapproved of the governor's performance," said Gen Fujioka, Executive Director of the Asian Law Caucus. "It is striking that this disapproval cut across generational, neighborhood, and ethnic lines."

David Chiu, president-elect of the Asian American Bar Association, assisted in organizing the poll. He noted that "while Asian Americans are often perceived as being more conservative than other San Franciscans, in this election, Asian Americans voted against the Governor with equal fervor as the rest of the city."

"Asian Pacific Islander voters, like most California voters, went to the polls asking how any of these initiatives would solve priority issues such as the economy and education," said Stephanie Ong of Hope Road Consulting. "They decided that the proposals failed to address these primary concerns."

Asian Law Caucus organized the exit poll as a tool to help community-based organizations in future voter education efforts. "Asian American voters are too often overlooked by public officials and political campaigns," said Fujioka. "We hope to develop community based exit polling as another way for minority voters to be heard."

The project trained bilingual teams of community members to conduct the surveys at polling places. Over half of the Asian respondents completed the poll in Chinese. "Polls taken of our community generally undervalue the need to conduct bilingual interviews," said David Ho, a staff person at Chinatown Community Development Center who helped train the poll takers. "This poll eliminates any language bias."

The poll was conducted in part with support by the San Francisco Foundation and with the participation of other community based non-profit agencies.

Results of All Asian Pacific Islander Respondents

Prop 74 [Teacher Tenure] YES: 23% NO: 77%

Prop 75 [Public Employee Union Dues] YES: 22% NO: 78%

Prop 76 [State Spending & School Funding Limits] YES: 20% NO: 80%

Prop 77 [Redistricting] YES: 17% NO: 83%

SAN MATEO JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY CENTER NEWS

The Community Center's garage roof was in dire need of repair due to severe leaks. The Community Center approached Izmirian Roofing and Sheet Metal of San Mateo, a well established contractor, for the repair. Izmirian gladly and promptly repaired the roof at no cost to the Community Center. Thank you, Izmirian!

The Community Center needs drivers to help those who are unable to drive to medical appointments, etc. Please call the Center at 343-2793.

REMEMBERING ROSA PARKS: SOME BEAUTIFUL WORDS

Note: Rosa Parks passed away at her home in Detroit, Michigan, at the age of 92. Many years ago, she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man; in so doing, she took a stand against the institutionalized racism of our country. JACL and other organizations honor Parks's commitment to social justice and mourn her loss. Below is a statement from the San Francisco Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender Community Center and the Hoover Institution.

Rosa Parks was a hero and a pioneer for the idea of equality for all Americans. She has left us with a powerful legacy: that everyone must be able to choose to participate fully as citizens -- as full participants in society.

My parents loved Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the many heroes in America's struggle for civil rights in the 50s and 60s. I grew up hearing about these heroes, and they instilled in me a strong sense of social responsibility. I grew up believing that activism does matter, it does have an effect, and it does make a difference. Icons like Rosa Parks provided me with examples for the ideal that it is possible for one person to make a difference and that the impact of one person acting out of a sense of what is right can have a tremendous, permanent effect on the future.

And so it is with respect and reverence that we take the time today to honor the memory of Rosa Parks and to call for members of our community to follow her example by being involved in whatever way suits them best. Your involvement can take whatever form you find most comfortable - voting, writing letters to the editor, attending protests, or simply expressing your opinion of what the future should hold.

The San Francisco LGBT Community Center.

When listening to Mrs. Parks' memorial service, I thought about something, perhaps unintended, that she taught us: that the power of one" is remarkable. In a world where mass movements-political, social, cultural, and so on--often steamroll the individual, the greatest movements are sparked by one person. And strangely enough, those who emerge as leaders are often the very last people you would suspect. They don't tend to be generals, captains of industry, or celebrities; often, the weakest emerge as the most powerful.

Mrs. Parks' example is what I find so hopeful--or worth hoping for--in America. In this country, where slavery and racism are our original sin, there are still opportunities, even for the most downtrodden among us, to lead us into better times and better ways. Whether it's in the wake of a storm such as Katrina or a hotly contested election, we often hear that it is America's history and destiny to build and feed upon oppression. This is inaccurate. Some people may choose this trough of a system gone bad. Thankfully, others choose different, more significant and lasting routes that allow them not only to rise above but also to pull everyone else up along with them.

It is because our country is able to acknowledge an individual's cry for justice above the cruel din that we are able to recognize our stains and sorrows and, eventually, right wrongs. The actions of Rosa Parks enabled our country to fully realize its promise . . . and keep it.

YOUTH MEDIA COUNCIL ASKS FCC TO REVOKE CLEAR CHANNEL'S LICENSE

The Asian Law Caucus reports that Clear Channel and WYLD 94.9 have continued to refuse to respond to petitions and letters requesting a meeting with management. They are nonresponsive to community concerns and, therefore, are in violation of a core requirement imposed by the Federal Communications Commission.

Clear Channel has, in the Bay Area, hired Rick Delgado at WYLD 94.9. It stated that it wished to build a "people's station;" yet, Delgado has been fired twice for racist and sexually indecent production decisions—the first time for airing a couple having sex in St. Patrick's Cathedral. Recently, Delgado was driven out of New York hip hop station HOT 97 because of his role in creating and airing the infamous "tsunami song" which mocked the tragic deaths of Southeast Asian people and reinforced stereotypes about Asians and African Americans.

Youth Media Council is organizing a campaign to revoke Clear Channel's broadcast license. If you would like to support the campaign by sending an e-letter to the FCC, go here: <http://action.youthmediacouncil.org/index.php?s=3>

STAR TREK STAR GEORGE TAKEI COMES OUT

Actor George Takei, best known as Mr. Sulu on the classic TV series *Star Trek*, comes out of the closet in the new issue of *Frontiers*, a biweekly magazine covering the gay and lesbian community. In the interview, the 68-year-old actor also discusses his childhood in a Japanese-American internment camp, his long and committed relationship, his siblings' inability to accept his homosexuality, and the upcoming Los Angeles production of *Equus*, in which he stars as psychologist Martin Dysart.

The current social and political climate also motivated Takei's disclosure, he said. "The world has changed from when I was a young teen feeling ashamed for being gay . . . The issue of gay marriage is now a political issue. That would have been unthinkable when I was young." The 68-year-old actor said he considers himself as "having been out for quite some time." Takei and his partner, Brad Altman, have been together for 18 years.

Takei, who lived in a U.S. internment camp from age 4 to 8, said he grew up feeling shameful about his ethnicity and sexuality. He likened prejudice against gays to racial segregation. "It's against basic decency and what American values stand for," he said.

Takei broke the color barrier on television and film. He now takes a stand in declaring his total identity as an out gay Japanese American.

"FROM THE DUST BOWL TO THE SALAD BOWL: THE QUILTS AND QUILT MAKERS OF THE DEPRESSION ERA MIGRATION TO THE SALINAS VALLEY"

The National Steinbeck Center is presenting "From the Dust Bowl to the Salad Bowl: The Quilts and Quilt Makers of the Depression Era Migration to the Salinas Valley," a special exhibit that will be open for viewing in its Gabilan Gallery through February 26, 2006. Admission prices are \$10.95 for adults (\$10 for group), \$8.95 for seniors over 62 (\$8 for groups), \$7.95 for youth 13-17 (\$7 for groups), and \$5.95 for children 6-12 (\$5 for groups). Call 831.796-3833 for more information.

The National Steinbeck Center is the gateway to Steinbeck Country in Monterey County. It has a \$15 million, multi-sensory museum, seven themed theaters with film clips, and a new Valley of the World Agricultural Wing that shares the stories of Salinas Valley agriculture "from field to fork" through interactive displays, films, and hands-on exhibits.

The National Steinbeck Center is located 3 miles from Highway 101 on California's Central Coast, 105 miles south of San Francisco, 75 miles south of San Jose.

REMEMBERING, OR WHY ORAL HISTORIES ARE IMPORTANT: SEATTLE'S DENSHO PROJECT

Tom Ikeda, Executive Director of the Seattle-based Densho Project, an oral history repository of Japanese American narratives, remembers the men who were around when he played basketball at the Nisei Veterans Hall (NVC), ate, and played games at the annual NVC bazaar, or lined up for Christmas presents at the NVC children's Christmas party. At the time, Ikeda didn't really know who they were. None of them volunteered their stories and he never asked. It was only when he was with Densho and purposely seeking out stories of the Japanese American community that he started talking to some of these men. Ikeda recalls:

Over cups of weak coffee or sips of beer I started hearing hushed stories coming out of these quiet, humble men. Each story was unique and precious. The powerful moments came when some shared their pain, their dreams, their fears and their tears. Below are just a few of the moments that are seared in my consciousness.

- *The bitterness of being removed from Seattle and housed where pigs and cows lived only days before.*
- *A solemn father speaking in Japanese telling his son he is American and needs to fight for his country.*

- *A worried mother going barrack to barrack collecting a thousand stitches for a sash to be worn by her son to protect him as he goes off to war.*
- *A Caucasian colonel crying as he sees how few of his men are left standing after the rescue of the Lost Battalion.*
- *A battle-worn soldier coming back to the states and called "Jap" while trying to get a haircut.*

HISTORIC PAPERS FROM 442 RCT'S CHAPLIN

University of Hawai'i Manoa's Hamilton Library has received the official papers, personal correspondence, and other papers of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team Chaplain Hiro Higuchi. The papers document World War II-era activities from Harvard's Army chaplain school to training at Camp Shelby and service on the European front. See <http://libweb.hawaii.edu/libdept/archives/mss/aja>

20 October 1944:

"One of my very good friends—an officer you wouldn't know, was speaking to me not an hour ago—and now I hear that he was killed. That is battle—and we get to look at things the same way—very pessimistic and looking for the worse every time. It's tough—so far I have been lucky—the road I traveled on four iems was shelled as many times yesterday claiming many wounded but I just happened to be traveling at the right time."

21 October 1944:

"So I cross off another day in my diary—another day in which I have gone through living in fear and in sorrow—sorrow to see the boys I have worked with in the army and before the army coming in wounded or killed. The Germans however are taking a bigger loss than we are—I talked with one of the wounded Jerries—he was afraid of me at first but after I offered him a cigarette and asked about his home, he pulled out his wallet and showed me pictures of his home and his mother and father and sisters—and for a moment I forgot the hate that comes over one when he sees his own boys killed."

NEWS FROM THE ASIAN AMERICAN CURRICULUM PROJECT'S NEWSLETTER

Now that Asian Americans have bridged the Pacific, it's time to bridge the community where we all consider home. Since film is an international language, which provides aspects and views of different cultures and customs - Florence [Hongo] has initiated the planning for a film festival to be held in our home of San Mateo. Here's some basic information on the event:

What: Asian Pacific American Film Festival
 When: May 2006 (dates & time TBD)
 Where: San Mateo Century 12 or Central Park
 Why: May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
 Sponsors: AACP, DSMA, NAATA, JAACL, OCA
 Theme: Bridging the Community
 Mission: Educate the public about Asian Pacific Americans

We are in the planning stages for this event, so please kindly contact AACP with your ideas. AACP is in great need of volunteers and big-hearted companies or organizations willing to help sponsor this wonderful community event. So please help - we are eager to hear from you.

AACP is planning on having another poetry day at our facilities next January. If you are a poet or love hearing poetry, please get in touch with us and come to our event. We will fill you in with more details in our next newsletter. You may view the newsletter at AsianAmericanBooks.com.

MOCHITSUKI WITH YAMADA-SAN AT JCCNC IN SAN FRANCISCO

In 1999, Yamada Seika, a manju-ya in San Francisco Japantown, closed its doors after 36 years. Mr. Yamada generously donated the mochi making equipment to the Japanese Cultural and Community Center (JCCNC) in San Francisco. Since his retirement, Mr. Yamada shared his talents and the joy of mochi making with the community through a workshop. You can sign-up to participate or pre-order mochi.

Participants will make mochi and take home one pound of mochi home to bring good luck into the new year. The fee is \$5 for adults/youth and children under 5 are free. There are 6 shifts (30 minute slots) on Tuesday December 27th at JCCNC (1840 Sutter Street), beginning at 3:30 p.m. and ending at 6:30 p.m.

Mochi can also be pre-ordered, with mochi at \$3/pound and *an* mochi at \$4/pound. Please call JCCNC for more information, 415.567.5505. Space is limited and sign-ups must be submitted by Friday, December 16th.

San Mateo JAACL is considering a mochi-tsuki as a family event for January 2006. Are you interested and would you like to participate? Please let us hear from you. We would like to do more cultural programming in the coming year.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR PC AD FUNDRAISER

We are grateful to those who supported the PC Ad fundraiser for San Mateo JACL. Your membership and belief in our organization means so much to us. We hope to work together toward a better world in 2006.



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