

KOKORO

THE HEART AND SOUL OF OUR COMMUNITY
SAN MATEO CHAPTER JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE JAN 2008
WWW.SANMATEOJACL.ORG
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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.

SHINNEN AKEMASHITE OMEDETO GOZAIMASU!



Your membership and generous donations help JACL continue civil rights work and cultural programming for the sake of our children and children's children! Arigato gozaimashita!

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA TO ADD MORE CATEGORIES FOR PACIFIC RIM STUDENTS

The University of California's 10-campus system will respond to the increasing numbers of Asian American and Pacific Islander students enrolled across the state. There are currently eight categories to describe the different API students; these categories will change to twenty-three options to indicate ethnicity. At the UC system, the number of API students has surpassed the number of white students. An article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "UC seeks info on Asian students [November 24, 2007, 3B]," by Matt Krupnick, stated that on some campuses such as Berkeley and Irvine, there are twice as many API undergraduate students as opposed to white students.

A "Count Me In" campaign asked for the information, which is optional and does not factor into university admissions decisions.

Many assume that all API students share high success rates, but that is not the case. The article states: "Studies have shown that students from several southeast Asian countries—including Laos and Cambodia—are not as likely to attend college as those from Asian countries with more developed higher-education systems." Moreover, many Southeast Asian students come from families who fled from war, circumstances that would affect education, family income, and readiness for university studies.

The new UC application will include Asian categories for Chinese, Taiwanese, Asian Indian, Pakistani, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Hmong, Thai, Cambodian, Laotian, Bagladeshi, Indonesian, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, and other Asian applicants. Pacific Islander categories will include native Hawaiian, Guamanian/Chamorro, Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, and others.

ISSEI MEMORIES TO BE PUBLISHED

The University of Hawai'i Press is publishing Yasutaro Soga's *Life Behind Barbed Wire: The World War II Internment Memoirs of a Hawai'i Issei*. Originally published in 1948, the book was translated by volunteers at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i.

Soga was the publisher of the *Nippu Jiji* newspaper, one of the two most widely read Japanese language dailies prior to World War II. [Editor's note: Curiously, today, before I adapted this article from the JCCH's *Legacies* newsletter, I parked my car across the street from the Nippu Jiji Building on Maunakea Street and wondered what the name meant! I also scripted and staged a bilingual production of Soga's *tanka*, written in camp, at College of San Mateo and Cañada College.] After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Soga was one of several hundred influential Japanese community members who were rounded up in the absence of charges, detained, and confined.

Soga consequently wrote about his experience behind barbed wire. He had a journalist's eye and recorded what he saw. The article in *Legacies* speaks to Soga's contribution: "Perhaps more significantly, this account from a distinctly Issei perspective provides a vivid contrast to the many existing Nisei-centered accounts. Soga's book will no doubt challenge many of our beliefs and assumptions about the inner life of the interned Japanese Americans."

TRI-DISTRICT CONFERENCE "MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES" —Mary Jo Kubota-Arcarese



Board Installation

The first weekend in November 2007, I represented San Mateo JACL at the Tri-District Conference in Reno. Reports about the conference have been published in the *Pacific Citizen* so this article is a review of the activities I attended and my impressions of the conference.

Saturday morning, at the opening session, I listened to Floyd Mori address the conference attendees. I was glad to hear him speak about new and different ways for JACL to move forward as an organization. He reiterated that message in more detail at the Sunday NCWNP District Council Meeting.

I attended two interesting and thought-provoking workshops. The first workshop, a panel discussion focused on the issue of Lt. Ehren Watada's right to a fair trial and National JACL's support. The panelists were W. Simpich, a civil rights attorney; Karen Kai and Robert Rusky, local attorneys who served on Fred Korematsu's *corum nobis* legal team; and David Forman, co-chair of the NCWNP District Civil Rights Committee. The presentations of panelists were quite interesting. Mr. Simpich had attended Lt. Watada's court martial and provided the group with a gripping, first-hand account of the events of that trial. As I listened the Q & A discussion after the presentation, it was evident that JACL members continue hold a wide range of opinions about the Watada case. My second workshop, "Increasing Nonprofit Effectiveness," was presented by Kim Tucker of 3Fold Communications, a nonprofit development firm in Sacramento. This practical workshop gave me some exciting strategies to help make our chapter more effective in outreach, program delivery, and function. All we need is the time to get to work on implementation.

The Center for Asian American Media hosted an ongoing schedule of documentary films on Saturday. I had time to attend a showing of *The Slanted Screen* by Jeff Adachi. The film was historical, interesting, and hopeful. It contained more than fifty film clips depicting Asian American male characters from Hollywood films spanning almost a century. I had never seen Sessue Hayakawa before, so I enjoyed those clips! In this film, Adachi thoroughly documents the stereotypes of Asian American males perpetuated in television and Hollywood films, then shows the viewers how a younger group of independent filmmakers are changing old perceptions and attitudes.

Sunday morning breakfast was accompanied by a Q & A session. Conference attendees asked questions of the National Board Members. I was impressed by the quality of the questions and with the clear and sincere manner in which National Board Members responded.

Before I headed home, I attended the NCWNP District Council Meeting and election. Floyd Mori also attended this meeting. He addressed the group and I thought his remarks were upbeat. He recounted the positive things that have happened since the National JACL Headquarters relocated to Washington, DC: more exposure, more contacts, possibility of a variety of sources of grant funding, and more influence due to proximity. After Floyd's remarks a new NCWNP Board was installed.

I left the meeting and conference with renewed enthusiasm and pride for JACL and its mission. Most importantly I felt a heightened respect for all the JACL members I encountered that weekend. Their dedication and commitment to civil rights, their communities, and JACL was inspiring.

KARYL MATSUMOTO HONORED AS PERSON OF THE YEAR!



Karyl Matsumoto, former South San Francisco Mayor, now councilwoman, was honored as Person of the Year 2007 at a festive Christmas Dinner Dance hosted by the Italian American Citizens Club (IACC) of South San Francisco. The event was held on December 8, 2007 at the Peninsula Italian American Social Club hall in San Mateo. Members of San Mateo JACL and the Japanese American Community Center attended the dinner to support Karyl, a past president of JACL and an enduring and loyal friend of the San Mateo Japanese American Community.

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Emcee Alvaro Bettucchi shared Karyl's many honors and achievements with the guests. He also spoke about historical parallels of the WWII incarceration experience Karyl and her family endured with the experiences of some of the local Italian American families. Betucci disclosed that Karyl has become quite a bocce player and regularly plays in the IACC morning "Bocce and Donuts" group. As Person of the Year, Karyl was presented with

- * a beautiful plaque with statue and engraved flags of Italy and America along with 2 dozen red and white roses.
- * an Assembly Resolution from Assemblyman Gene Mullin recognizing December 8, 2007 as Karyl M. Matsumoto Day
- * a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Congressman Tom Lantos
- * a Certificate of Recognition for Senator Leland Yee, and
- * a Proclamation from the City Council of South San Francisco.

It was a wonderful evening that ended with dancing to the music of a local Italian band who performed favorite songs in English and Italian!



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