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National Publication of the Japanese American Citizens League

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B.B. Chung King
—page 5

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Friday, February 7, 1992



PATRICIA SAIKI



ELAINE CHAO

Redress roles

Patricia Saiki and Elaine Chao are instrumental in many White House policies regarding Asian Americans—most recently the \$250 million budget request for redress payment.

Special to the Pacific Citizen

WASHINGTON—Bush administration insiders give two Asian American women a large part of the credit for heightening White House concerns about Asian American issues, the latest being the \$250 million budget request for redress payments.

The two are Patricia Saiki, director of the Small Business Administration (SBA) and former Congresswoman from Hawaii, and Taiwan-born Elaine L. Chao, director of the Peace Corps. Chao is former chairwoman of the Federal Maritime Commission and former deputy secretary of the Department of Transportation.

In preparing its budget the Justice Department, responsible for the redress program, consulted Saiki. She confirmed that estimates of the number of surviving evacuees had been too low and as a matter of simple justice money was needed to complete redress

payments as quickly as possible. Despite heavy pressure to reduce government spending, the full request of \$250 million for redress payments was included in the \$1.5 trillion budget presented to Congress for the next fiscal year.

However, inclusion of an item in any administration's budget is only the first step toward an appropriation. Congress has the final word on what funds will be provided and observers are uncertain about the fate of the redress request.

Saiki is consulted regularly by the White House staff on Asian American matters. Last December she was in the presidential party with Bush on his Air Force One flight to the Pearl Harbor memorial ceremonies. Asked to review Bush's speeches before they were delivered in Hawaii, she was able to correct some unintended discrepancies.

See ROLES/page 2

JACL nominations for offices open

SAN FRANCISCO—Looking ahead to Denver and its national convention, the JACL announced opening of nominations for national office positions.

Nominations are being accepted for the following elected positions: national president; vice president, general operations; vice president, public affairs; vice president, planning and development; vice president, membership services/1000 Club; and secretary/treasurer. The national youth chair and national youth representative, elected by the National Youth Council at each biennial convention, also serve as national officers.

Elections will be held during the JACL national convention, scheduled Aug. 3-8, 1992, in Denver. Candidates for national office must attend the JACL national convention.

Official nomination forms and campaign guidelines are available through the national JACL headquarters. Forms must be completed and postmarked no later than May 1, 1992, and submitted to: Nominations Committee, c/o National JACL Headquarters, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA. 94115-3297.

See CONVENTION/page 3

DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

For the Japanese American community, 1992 marks the 50th anniversary of Executive Order 9066 that forced the relocation and internment of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans into camps across the country. To commemorate that event and the internment experience, JACL and other organizations have scheduled a variety of events, exhibits, symposia, entertainment, and other activities throughout the year. Pacific Citizen provides this partial calendar of the many Nikkei and non-Nikkei organizations sponsoring the various Day of Remembrance (DOR) programs.

Through Saturday, Feb. 15

SAN FRANCISCO—"Images Behind Barbed Wire" (camp art exhibit), JCCNC, 1840 Sutter St. (415) 567-5505.

Monday, Feb. 10-Friday, Feb. 21

SAN FRANCISCO—"Children of Detention Camps 1942-46" (exhibit), City Hall National Japanese American Historical Society, (415) 431-5007.

Friday, Feb. 14-Sunday, Feb. 16

LA MIRADA, Calif.—42nd Annual Nisei VFW Reunion - DOR Program-Exhibit, Gateway Plaza Holiday Inn; Vince Okamoto, Saturday dinner speaker, (714) 457-3688, 992-5461.

ONTARIO, Ore.—Snake River Valley DOR display and cultural events, E.O. 9066, West Park Plaza, (503) 889-6493.

Saturday, Feb. 15

LOS ANGELES—Japanese American Internment D.o.R. program, Japan America Theatre: 10 a.m.-Interfaith Program, 11:30 a.m.-NCR Retrospective; 8 p.m., Cultural Tribute: Night of Remembrance, (musicians, artists, dancers, DOR Band) \$20 orchestra,

See DOR/page 6



HISTORY—Among the many events commemorating the internment experience will be the film 'Manzanar,' scheduled for Sunday, Feb. 16, and Saturday, Feb. 22, in Los Angeles.

'Buy America' controversy hits San Francisco

SAN FRANCISCO—As in Los Angeles, the "buy American" fervor has caught up with San Francisco's Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) rail system.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, BART officials have to decide whether to favor the American company Morrison Knudsen over Japanese bidders. Morrison Knudsen was the only American bidder in the Los Angeles Transportation Commission's controversial decision to cancel the contract with Sumitomo Corp. of America to provide driverless

cars.

However, unlike in Los Angeles, because the BART cars will be partially funded with federal money, 55 to 60 percent of each car has to be American-made, according to Richard White, BART deputy general manager.

BART wants to initially order 50 cars at a cost of more than \$2 million with an option to buy 200 more.

BART Director Michael Bernick said, "I am getting the same reaction from my constituents and labor leaders in San Francisco. They want to know

why we can't find an American firm." Bernick added that despite growing pressure to contract with an American company, BART's obligations are "to get the best deal for the public, and this means the best rail cars in terms of reliability, safety, and price."

In March, the members of the BART board are expected to approve a company following secret bidding and based on recommendations by BART staff.

The two BART bidders from Japan are Kinki Shayro/Citoh and Kawasaki/Mitsui.

Murders started out as military game, teen says

PHOENIX—The brutal slayings of nine people Aug. 10, 1991, at the Wat Promkunaram temple started as a game of military strategy, according to statements made to police by a 17-year-old charged with nine counts of first degree murder.

According to the Phoenix Gazette, the teen-ager, along with three other youths, went to the temple to try to breach the sensor security system. But robbery became a motive as the group,

clothed in paramilitary gear, rounded up the monks and ransacked the living quarters. The incident turned violent after one of the intruders was recognized by novice monk, Matthew Miller. "It was supposed to be a joke... that went downhill," the teen reportedly told Maricopa County police during questioning into his involvement.

Court hearings began Jan. 27 to determine if the 17-year-old was to stand trial for the mur-

ders. Defense attorney Peter Balkan claims that the teen was coerced and given promises of confidentiality during interrogation.

A second youth, who is 16-years-old, awaits determination whether he will stand trial on the charges. His hearing begins Feb. 25.

Earlier, the charges against four men arrested in the case were dismissed because of insufficient evidence. A number of them filed suits claiming that their confessions were coerced by the police.

Study: Few television roles for minorities

Minorities, including Asians, are nearly invisible on television.

That's the conclusion of the Media Image Coalition of Minorities and Women (MIC) in its study evaluating the portrayal of minorities during one week of the current prime time network television season.

The MIC study, conducted the week of Oct. 28 through Nov. 3, found that Asians, Latinos, Arab Americans, Native Americans, people with physical and mental disabilities, gays and lesbians were extremely under-represented in TV programming.

At a scheduled announcement of the findings Feb. 7, MIC called on network executives and television producers to develop programs that better reflect the diversity of people who make up the American scene today.

The MIC is a coalition of professional media organizations, unions, civil rights groups, academicians and concerned individuals formed in association with the Los Angeles County Commission on Human Relations.

CONVENTION

(Continued from page 1)

The following are a listing of awards to be handed out at the JACL National Convention:

● **George J. Inagaki Chapter Citizenship Award**—Established in 1968 in honor of George Inagaki, a past National JACL president, the purpose of this award is to recognize JACL chapters that participate in social, civic, educational, environmental, or legislative activities, which result in the betterment of society as a whole.

The awards are as follows: \$800 to the winning chapter, and an honorable mention award of \$400. All chapters are encouraged to submit applications.

● **Edison Uno Memorial Civil Rights Award**—Named after the late Edison Uno, a strong and vocal advocate of human and civil rights, the civil rights award was established at the JACL 29th biennial National Convention. Pre-

sented to a national civil rights organization or to individuals for outstanding activities or leadership in the field of civil rights, the 1990 recipient of this award was Ralph Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference for Civil Rights, an umbrella civil rights group based in Washington, D.C.

Each JACL District Council, with input from its respective chapters, may nominate one candidate; the nomination, however is not limited to the geographical area of the District Council.

● **JACL'ER of the Biennium**—The recipient of this award is a JACL member who has done the most for the strength and growth of the national organization during the past biennium (1990-1992). The recipient receives an inscribed gold medallion and special scroll citation.

While the National JACL Awards and Recognitions Committee makes recommendations for the award, the final selection is determined by the National JACL Board. Further, the Na-

tional Board, with the exceptions listed below, is not precluded from nominating and selecting a candidate of its own choosing. While length of service within the JACL is a consideration, it is not the major factor.

Selection for this award is based on the following criteria:

1. All nominations shall be submitted on a JACL form, together with a supportive JACL sponsoring chapter recommendation, photograph, etc., to your District Governor or District Council Awards and Recognitions chairperson, and then on to the National JACL/Awards Recognition Committee.

2. Nominees shall have made outstanding contributions to the strength and growth of the JACL during the past biennium (1990-92).

3. Such contributions at a national, district and chapter levels are to be consistent with the purposes of the JACL.



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4. Any JACL chapter may submit more than one nominee at the district level. Each District Council may submit up to three nominees and a ranking of them, if so desired, to the National Awards/Recognition Committee for final determination by the National Board.

5. Nominations shall be open to all JACL members, except for members of the National JACL Executive Committee (National President, National Vice Presidents, Secretary/ Treasurer, Governor's Caucus Chairperson and the National Youth Council Chair).

6. For the purposes of administrative action, nominations for this award must be postmarked no later than May 1, 1992.

● **Japanese American of the Biennium**—The Japanese American of the Biennium Award, the highest public award of the National JACL, is presented to individuals whose achievements in various fields of endeavor have received regional, national or international recognition, and whose contributions have added to the sum of human knowledge and/or enhanced the quality of life in our society.

Since 1950, the National JACL has recognized outstanding Americans of Japanese ancestry at each biennial national convention. An engraved gold medallion

and personalized scroll citation will be awarded to at least one, and up to three individuals, in recognition of distinguished achievement or community leadership.

Candidates may be from any of the 50 states and its territories. A candidate need not be a member of the JACL. Key consideration will be given to the extent to which the candidate's contributions or achievements have made an impact upon society and/or influenced an area of American life.

Nominations may be submitted from chapters, districts or by an individual JACL member with appropriate documentation. Nominations should be accompanied by a statement, not more than one-typed page, from the nominator stating:

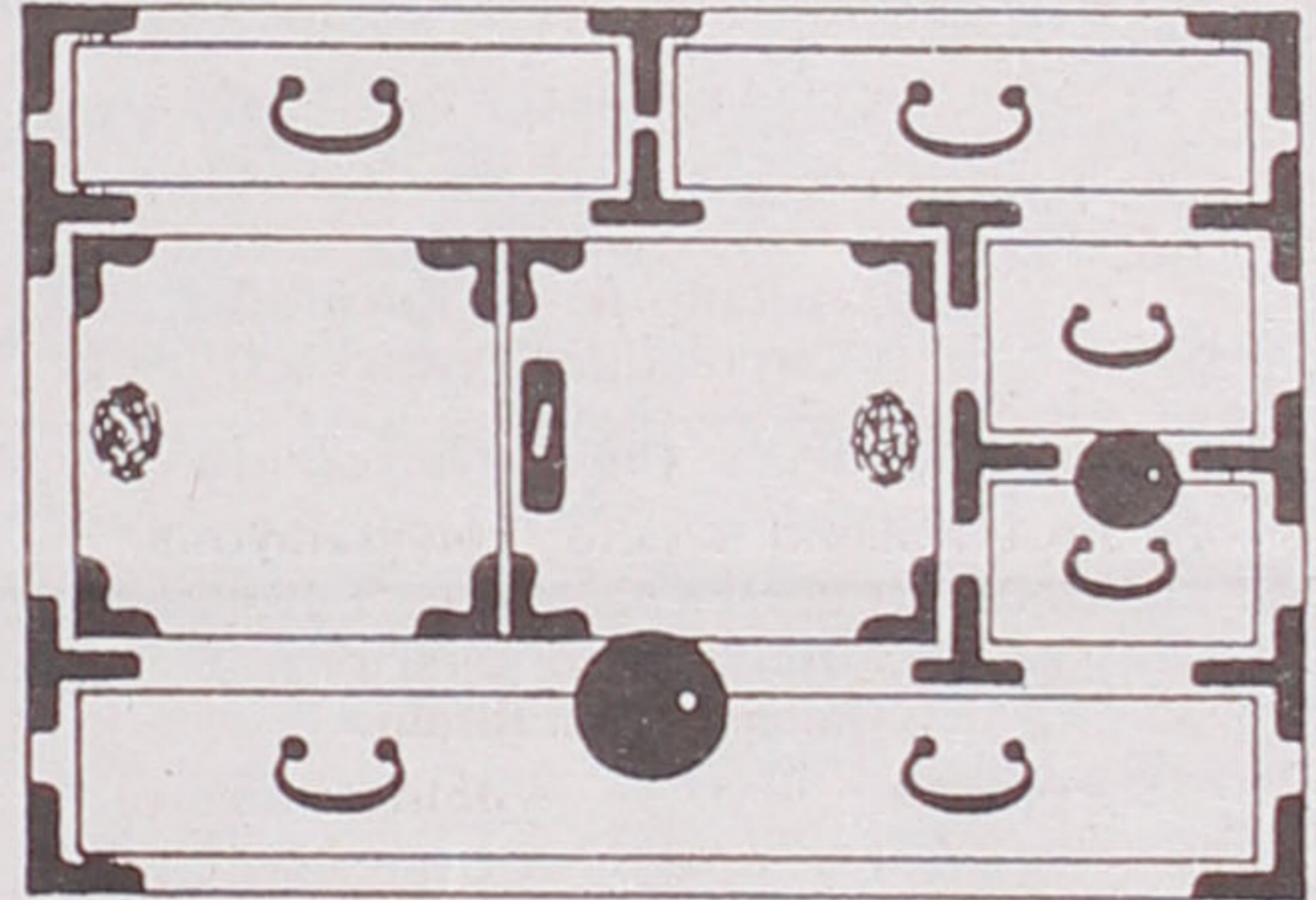
1. Qualifications of nominee not contained in application form.

2. Particular reference as to how the nominator feel the individual fulfilled the award criteria. There should be no more than five supporting letters. The nominee must be consulted prior to the submission of the nomination to avoid any withdrawals during the selection process. Past recipients include Daniel K. Inouye (1960), Ellison Onizuka (1986), and Prof. Ronald Takaki, Congressman Robert Matsui, and Steven Okazaki (1990).

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Opinions



From the frying pan

BILL HOSOKAWA

Thousand Club 'Whing Dings'

Frank Sakamoto, retired optometrist and JACL loyalist, was in town recently to enjoy the company of his grandchildren and to seek respite from the weather of Chicago where he lives. He succeeded in both, but he also had something else on his mind.

That would be the traditional Thousand Club Whing Ding. Sakamoto is making a pitch for giving it a prominent part in the national JACL convention to be held in Denver this coming summer.

On the assumption that both Thousand Club and Whing Ding may not be familiar, let me give you some background.

Back during the war, when JACL was much smaller and more hard up than it is now, there were times when Treasurer Hito Okada didn't know how he was going to pay the rent and phone bill, let alone what was laughingly referred to salaries.

A call for help went out. About a hundred faithful members signed up for what was called the Buck a Month Club. They donated what they could, as little as 25 cents a month, to help keep national JACL head-

quarters afloat. The contribution of a quarter made sense because postage was only 3 cents back then. The membership grew to several hundred, including many servicemen who set aside a dollar from their monthly \$21 checks.

I refer now to the book "JACL in Quest of Justice" to tell the story of the Thousand Club:

"In 1950, about the time JACL was experiencing some of its greatest legislative triumphs, there wasn't enough money in the treasury to pay the staff. Paychecks hadn't been issued for three months. It was at a district convention in Pocatello that Hito Okada, by then national president, came up with the idea for what was to become the Thousand Club. The objective was to persuade each of 1,000 members to contribute \$25 annually, providing the national organization with a dependable \$25,000 for operating expenses."

Good idea but philanthropists were hard to come by. It took nearly 10 years to sign up 1,000 members. Today there are more than 2,700 members, and the minimum contri-

bution is \$60.

One benefit from membership was a party at national JACL conventions. These were fun affairs when serious concerns were set aside for an evening of good food and levity, mostly of the cornball variety. George Inagaki, as "Callahan," with phoney mustache, derby hat and arm garters, presided over a Thousand Club column in Pacific Citizen. Today, I'm afraid, someone would be offended by what would be criticized as insensitive stereotyping.

Harold Gordon, a Chicago attorney and JACL member who had served in naval intelligence during the war, is credited with naming the 1,000 Club party a Whing Ding. His banjo playing was a feature of Whing Dings for many years. I'm not sure how Whing Ding came to be spelled that way, but my Webster says a "wingding" is a wild or lively or lavish party.

That's what Whing Dings were. They were a welcome way to relax when Nisei were younger and livelier. I wish Frank Sakamoto much success in his campaign to restore Whing Dings to their one-time glory.

Letters

PC letter policy

Letters should be brief and are subject to editing. Please sign your letter but make sure we are able to read your name. Include mailing address and telephone number. You may fax letters to 213/626-8213 or mail them to Letters to the Editor, Pacific Citizen, 701 E. 3rd St., Ste. 201, Los Angeles, Calif. 90013.

Praise for Honor Roll

You are to be highly commended for your publication of 10 pages of approximately 13,000 Japanese American, Korean American and Caucasian names containing commingled living and deceased names and titled "Vets Honor Roll."

Today, thanks to the *Pacific Citizen* and the National Japanese American Citizens League, the 100th/442nd/MIS World War II Memorial Foundation (100/442nd/MIS M.F.) concept is correctly and prominently titled as a "Vets Honor Roll."

The 100/442/MIS M.F. announces that it is a producer of projects, one of which is the aforementioned "Vets Honor Roll."

An Honor Roll is donated gratis by grateful citizens i.e. (group, city, county, state or nation) to honor its veterans, living and deceased. It is usually placed in a prominent place of honor, easily viewed by many but not to be confused with a memorial. The honorees (veterans) are not asked to solicit funds nor are they asked to contribute towards their shrine of honor. The veterans are not placed in a position of self-aggrandizement nor elitism. It is done for them by others who wish to bestow honor, praise and gratitude to the veterans. The loyalty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice for their fellow citizens as veterans, places one on the Honor Roll. Under these circumstances, perhaps many veterans will consent to have their names on this new "Vets Honor Roll," away from the First Street North Memorial Monument site reserved for those who made the supreme sacrifice.

The majority of Japanese American veterans prefer that the "Vets Honor Roll" be exhibited in the Japanese American National Museum (JANM). This can be a joint venture of all concerned. A photograph and military biography of each veteran as deemed by the JANM and veterans' organizations can be placed in a memory bank; easily retrieved by anyone on a computer screen. The *Pacific Citizen* and other media could help publicize such an endeavor.

We are most grateful to the *Pacific Citizen*, Editorial Board, for clarification, edification and publishing the "Vets Honor Roll."

It is truly a wonderful, compassionate compromise. We can now move forward as comrades and friends proceed forward on to other future projects.

Please join us in forming a coalition of organizations and individuals to develop funding and construction of a Japanese American Veterans' Memorial. We wish to cooperate with the City of Los Angeles, Barker-Patrinely Development Corporation and all others concerned with the First Street North Plaza Project. We shall announce our first organizational meeting very shortly.

Robert Hayamizu

Chairman, NVCC Memorial Committee

Robert Wada

Chairman, Concerned JA Korean War Vets

Sam Shimoquchi

President, Venice-Culver JACL

Editor's note: The 10 pages of veterans' names were paid for by the 100th/442nd MIS Memorial Foundation.

Defending Hosokawa

In your Jan. 24, 1992 issue of the PC, Paul H. Ito wrote a letter criticizing Bill Hosokawa for his PC column of Nov. 29, 1991 praising the U.S. Military Intelligence Language School launched 50 years ago by four Nisei instructors.

Writer Ito stated that Hosokawa had scoffed at the book *Yankee Samurai* written by the late Joe Harrington as analogous to a telephone book according to some veterans interviewed by Ito.

Hosokawa does not need any protectors but as one of the three national officers of the Pettigrew Press the publisher of the documentary book *Yankee Samurai* along with Harrington and Shig Kihara, former MIS instructor, we know that some readers had complained that the book contained too many names of people interviewed by Harrington.

Unlike the well-known 442nd Regimental

See LETTERS/page 7

Guest editorial

By YUKIO MATSUYAMA

Freedom on trial

America's moral deterioration is a favorite topic in Japan. The author of this editorial, the former chairman of the editorial board of the *Asahi Shimbun* and a distinguished visiting fellow of Harvard university, describes the self-indulgence, declining standard of living and faltering work ethic of America.

American society is in trouble. That's my first impression as a visiting fellow at Harvard University, where I'm pondering changes in Japan-U.S. relations in the post-war era. Japan, plagued by financial scandals, is in pretty bad shape, too.

On a recent taxi ride from downtown Boston to the suburbs, I thought that the driver was going a bit fast and talking a bit much. When I paid the fare, I was shaken to smell liquor on his breath.

Having traveled across the Pacific dozens of times in the past 30 years, I considered myself fairly well-informed about the United States. But now that I am ensconced here again, I often feel that America is a less convenient and pleasant place to live than it used to be. Efficiency, service and courtesy have drastically declined.

Unemployment, homelessness, crime and drug use are rampant. In Cambridge many people ignore traffic signals, while in New York 6 percent of subway passengers reportedly jump the turnstiles and ride without paying.

A Massachusetts locksmith told me that the recession was keeping him so busy that he didn't have time to turn around. Compa-

nies change all their locks when they lay off workers, he said. "Otherwise, former employees would use their keys to sneak in."

There is something wrong with a country that extols "justice" in the Middle East and a "New World Order" but cannot maintain law and order within its own borders.

Despite victories in the Cold War and the Persian Gulf, Americans look dispirited and drawn. It's as if they had survived two serious operations but their blood pressure and cholesterol count were higher than ever. The national mood is a far cry from the exuberance I remember so well after the 1961 Cuban missile crisis.

Of course, the majority of Americans are cheerful, honest and open. They have many qualities worthy of emulation. But I can't understand how these wonderful people have let their country go to the dogs.

The American ideal of freedom has been perverted into "me-ism." Freedom can degenerate into irresponsibility and self-indulgence. Aware of this danger, Benjamin Franklin preached the virtues of diligence and discipline. "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise," he wrote.

Former New York Times columnist James Reston recently said he had come to appreciate the word "modesty." He seemed to be expressing the second thoughts many Americans are having about the excesses of their society.

Triumphant over fascism and communism, the United States has yet to find the happy medium at home between individual rights and the public interest. A kind of Gresham's Law seems to be at work: the bad money of me-ism is driving out the good currency of freedom.

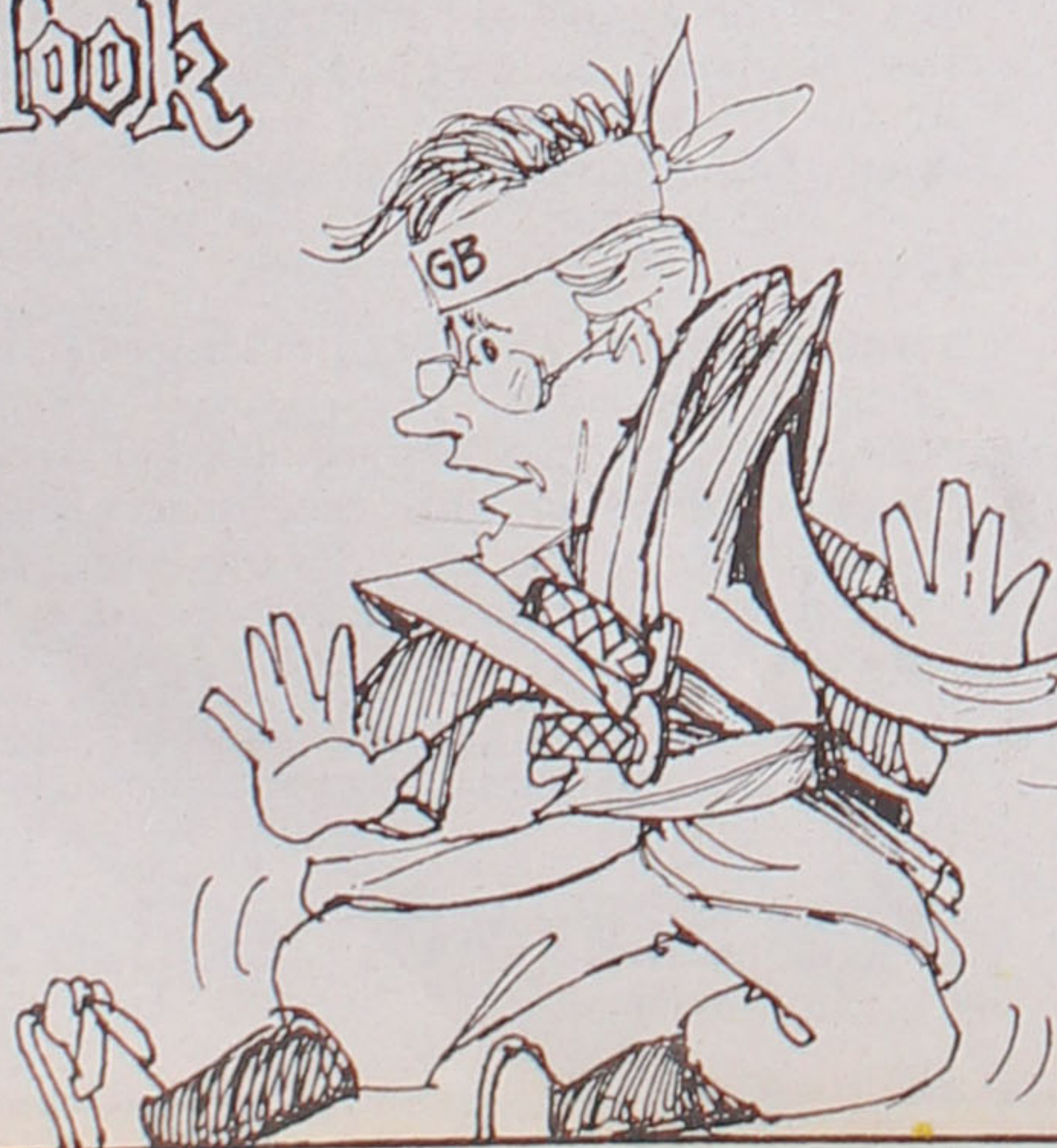
To prevent liberty from turning into license, Americans must at least restrict gun ownership and curb drug use. Surely Miss Liberty wouldn't object.

Japanese have no grounds for smug complacency, either. Although American managers envy the educational level and skills of our work force, there are ominous signs of trouble ahead. The younger generation, for example, turn up their noses at blue-collar jobs.

The endless scandals of recent years show that Japanese politicians and businessmen

See FREEDOM/page 6

BUSH-SAN and Hook



PETE HIROKAWA

2/7/92

B.B. Chung King—risin' and rockin'

By **MARTHA NAKAGAWA**
Special to the *Pacific Citizen*

As usual, B.B. Chung King and the Screaming Buddah Heads (BBCK & SBH) played to a standing-room-only crowd at the Roxy, and no matter how many times you hear them play, their act jumps straight at you with high rolling intensity. Each song is attacked with a fresh approach, and the band only gets better and tighter.

Not only are fans flocking to their jam sessions, but so are an array of celebrities ranging from members of Guns N' Roses, Toto, Poison, Utopia, and most recently Hurricane. Hmm... you wonder why the music executives haven't clued into this talent that's rippin' up Southern California.

Currently, they just finished a new video for their song, "Little Miss Lover," with a cameo appearance by Lou Diamond Phillips. This spring another of B.B.'s songs, "Keep It To Yourself," will be featured in a Paramount Pictures' release "My Cousin Vinny," starring Joe Pesci and Ralph Macchio.

A short film, "Face Off," which is now under consideration for an Academy Award, features three of B.B.'s songs. The script evolved after the producer heard B.B.'s "Oneday This World Will Be Kind," and the film is based around this simple yet powerfully inspirational song.

When asked how Alan Miri-



Photo by Jerry Weisbaum

ALAN MIRIKITANI
Rockin' at the Roxy

kitani, the lead vocalist/guitarist/songwriter of the band creates his music, he replied "I write what I feel and from my experience." One particular song, "Government Man," relates to his Japanese American heritage and the injustices of the internment camps during World War II.

As with many Nisei people, B.B.'s parents did not want to talk about their experiences in the internment camps. His father's response was that it happened, they dealt with it, and it's time to move on. Never satisfied with such an answer, B.B. wrote "Government Man" which is a song that asks questions that the Nisei probably

never had a chance to ask openly and that the Sansei must pursue because, as he adds, "It could happen again."

Has B.B. ever been discouraged because he is one of the few, if not the only, lead Asian American blues/rock n' roller currently in existence? As B.B. puts it, "If you believe in what you do and work hard at it, it'll happen."

A word of advice B.B. gives to Asian Americans and to everyone in general pursuing music or other forms of art is "Do what you feel and be who you are. Have your culture and appreciate your background, but if you like rock music, play rock music. If you like blues, play the blues. If you like country western, play country western. Just keep at it." And as their song says, "oneday this world will be kind."

BBCK & SBH are Alan Mirikitani, lead vocals and guitar; Bobby Schneck, guitar and vocals; Mike Stover, bass; Ray Hernandez, drums; and Kellie Cotton, harmonica and vocals.

WHAT: Bud Dry Concert Series.
WHO: B.B. Chung King and the Screaming Buddah Heads.
WHEN: Saturday, February 22, 1992 (3rd year anniversary as a band.)
WHERE: FM Station, 11702 Victory Blvd., No. Hollywood, Calif.
INFORMATION: FM Station, 818/769-2220.

FOR THE RECORD
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Agenda

Nikkei story unfolds at San Gabriel Center meeting

By **HARRY HONDA**
Editor emeritus

WEST COVINA, Calif. — Two personalities long associated with the San Gabriel Valley Japanese American community, Hazel Roberts and Kinu Yamashita, were sentimental favorites of Nisei pioneer Yoshio Sogioka of Chino, in his reflections of the Nikkei story covering the eastern side of Los Angeles County. He and Chiye Taniguchi of West Covina spoke of the 1920-'30s era and the role of Baldwin Park Japanese Language School at the annual installation dinner of East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center Jan. 11 at Reuben's Restaurant.

Lillian Nishihara, program chair, said, "The time has come for the Nisei to pass on their stories to the younger Sansei and Yonsei generations."

And reflecting on the recent years, Fred Oda and Paul Imahara focused on how the center was established prewar at Sunset and Service Ave., adjacent to the San Bernardino Freeway in what is today the West Covina Mall area. Issei had raised funds in 1936 to erect a school house on a plot of farmland donated by Eijiro Machida.

Sogioka recalled that Hazel Roberts, who founded the Cherry Blossoms Girls Reserves in the late 1920s, was a staunch *hakujin* friend of the Nikkei during the war years. She was entrusted with a power of attorney to keep the Baldwin Park Japanese Language School intact. The school was leased to the West Covina school district during WWII to assure against vandalism.

Sogioka added, "The center could not have been revived without Hazel. She was like our second mother. During the war, she

was called a 'Jap-lover,' even by her friends at church."

A Plaque for Benefactors

The names of Roberts and Yamashita, the Pomona Issei pioneer who taught at the *gakuen*, should be emblazoned in a proper way as benefactors at the center, Sogioka suggested. Both are residents at the La Verne Convalescent Home.

What might have been noted at this point were the nearby Santa Anita and Pomona Race Tracks, which were used as a first-stage internment center for persons of Japanese ancestry in 1942. The new daily publication for thoroughbred racing, *Racing Times*, recalled in its Dec. 7, 1991, issue with historic photos that "Racing went to war, too, 50 years ago." And a history professor in Oklahoma is writing a book on the Nikkei who went to Pomona Assembly Center.

The *Racing Times* writer Jay Hovdey dovetails an interview with Sumiko (Sao) Seki of Long Beach, who was 16 years old at the time from San Pedro. She remembers being in Barn 88 and relates her family "slept in Seabiscuit's stall."

Between April and October, 1942, there were as many as, at one point, more than 18,000 interned there as a result of Executive Order 9066. The track was then turned over to the Army for the duration as a testing ground for military vehicles.

Santa Anita Revisited

Seki returned to Santa Anita with other representatives from a Japanese American group campaigning for redress, requesting a race be named in their honor as part of a day of remembrance in connection with Feb. 19, 1942, the day E.O. 9066 was promulgated.

The management politely turned them down.

"We like to disassociate Santa Anita Park from all that, only because we think it was a sad thing that happened, but also because it had nothing to do with the racetrack," Jane Goldstein, Santa Anita director of corporate communications, explained. "It was taken out of our hands."

Seki smiled and whispered to herself, "Shikataganai. I understood. But we tried, and then we went home."

Postwar, Chiye Hashimoto Taniguchi and Nobuo Sera, original grantees of the Sunset property, deeded the land to the ESGV Japanese American Association, reactivated under the leadership of Kim Hatakeyama, Frank Konno and Sogioka. By Feb. 6, 1951, the association was chartered as a nonprofit corporation to administer the property.

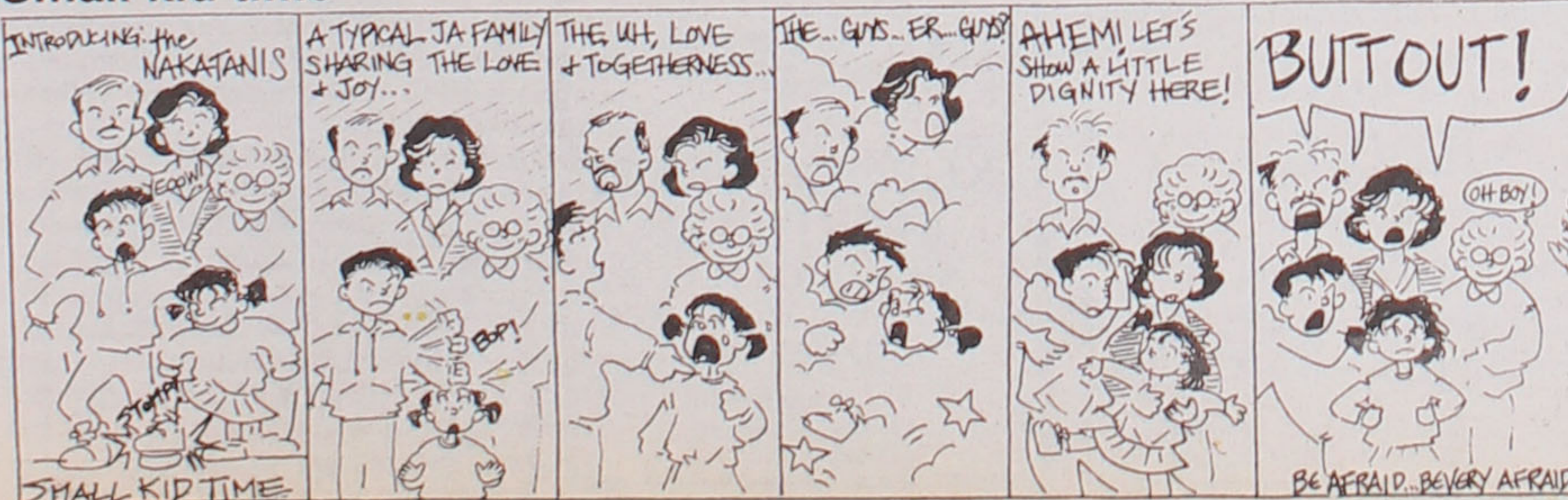
In the face of West Covina's redevelopment in 1966, the center was moved to its present site at 1203 W. Puente Ave., where a social hall for the Lutheran Church was converted to house a Japanese language school. In 1972, through a building project chaired by Henry Miyata, three major buildings were constructed, including a gym. An annex was later added to the social hall.

Future of JCC

The outgoing 1989-91 president Dr. Roy Takemura stressed, "The center needs more room, more parking space and more community liaison as the Nikkei population increases in San Gabriel Valley." He raised the ever-present question: "Where are we going?" Incoming president Raymond Takai responded by assuring the question will be seriously studied during his term of office.

by Gwen Muranaka

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