

# SEATTLE JACL CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1994

VOLUME 31, NO. 3

## President's Report

by Ray Ishii

*Each time a person stands for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he or she sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance. Few are willing to brave the disapproval of their fellows, the censure of their colleagues, the wrath of their society. Moral courage is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential vital quality for those who seek to change a world that yields most painfully to change.*

— Robert F. Kennedy

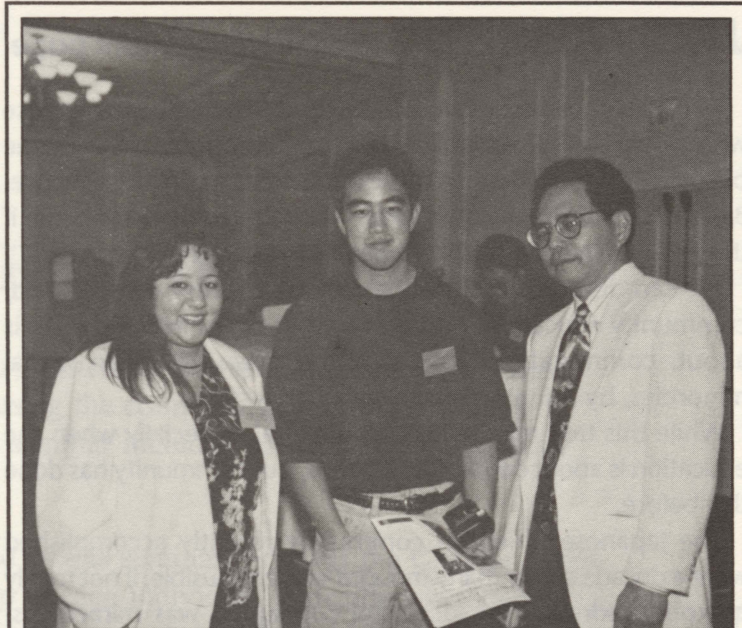
In February, the Seattle Chapter Board voted to assist the Asian Pacific Islander Homophobia/Homosexuality Education Project by agreeing to be the fiscal agent for one grant. The goal of the project is to help prevent the spread of homophobia, and the resulting discrimination, in Asian Pacific Islander communities. Specifically, the project will develop and produce a training curriculum on homophobia and homosexuality that is culturally relevant for Asian Pacific Islander communities.

The issue of gay rights is a difficult one. Just talking about the subject can be uncomfortable. There are questions of morality and values. There are cultural traditions that make it hard for us to acknowledge that some in our own community are gay. There are misunderstandings and misconceptions about gays and lesbians. Is being gay a genetic orientation, or a chosen lifestyle? Are gay rights as important as ours?

## JACL and sexual minorities: a time for cautious optimism

by Robert Shimabukuro, contributing editor

Given the pressing issues of the day, why should Japanese Americans, and in particular the JACL, support gay and lesbian rights? JAs, it is assumed, have higher priority civil rights issues—glass ceilings, discriminatory college entrance quotas, racially-motivated hate crimes against Asian Americans. We have “more important” social issues, such as interracial marriages and children, health care access for our elders and youth, and backlash from the American trade deficit with Japan.



From left: Kelly Wicker, Owen Kikuta and Bob Shimabukuro, three-fourths of Seattle's contingent attending the JACL National Youth Council Leadership Conference in San Francisco, Feb. 4-5. (The fourth was taking this photo.) Report by Kikuta on page 4. —Karen Yoshitomi photo

The request for JACL to assist with this project required the board to answer two basic questions. Are gays and lesbians entitled to the same civil rights as all other people? Should JACL be involved in advocating for these rights?

For the Seattle Chapter Board, the answer to both questions is clear. Yes. The JACL supports and advocates for the human and civil rights of all people. As we have learned, discrimination often has its roots in ignorance and misunderstandings. JACL has spent hours upon hours talking with people, educating them as to who we are, showing them how much we have in common, working hard to correct their misconceptions and overcome their prejudices. The Board looks upon this project as an opportunity to help educate people about a part of our community that is often misunderstood.

By assisting this project, JACL is not endorsing a specific lifestyle. What we are doing is sending the message that JACL is open to all members of our community. We are sending the message that JACL respects and values the rights of all people.

Much to my dismay, those are the arguments I've been hearing recently against the JACL supporting gay and lesbian rights. Admittedly, all of the high priority issues mentioned above are important. But what all of these have in common with the gay and lesbian rights issue is their focus on civil and human rights, equal opportunity and access, and freedom from harassment and abuse.



## JACL/APIHHEP, continued from front page

And all of these issues are intimately connected because those who would deny sexual minorities their basic rights are the same people who would deny us those same rights given half a chance. Backlash is not the main problem. The real problem will begin if the groups working to deny sexual minorities their rights win.

We can disarm these groups with an effective tool at hand, community education. And that is what the APIHHEP project is about: community education about Asian American sexual minorities, by Asian American gays and lesbians.

While this task may seem monumental, especially when the education is about deep-seated beliefs, our community has done this before.

The Japanese American community recently accomplished what a decade earlier many thought was implausible, if not totally quixotic: redress. The successful conclusion was miraculous, given the tasks: the education of enough Americans to convince legislators of the legal claim, and the education of many Japanese Americans who denied that there had been a serious enough injustice to be redressed, in cash and on an individual level.

The redress campaign educated and changed many, JAs included. Those who once saw no injustice, began to recount their long suppressed feelings about being incarcerated. Those who had earlier felt that "yes, it was an injustice, but it best be forgotten," began to see the importance of telling their experience. Those who did not realize what their parents and grandparents had endured, were enlightened by the campaign.

The redress campaign required the help of many groups and individuals, including gay and lesbian Asians, who stood by us, on the streets and before legislative bodies, speaking out for their own community, yet knowing well that had they disclosed their sexual orientation, they would have been ostracized. They

stood with us and other racial minorities, because all of us realized that the treatment was illegal, a breach in our legal system, a threatening precedent for all Americans.

Likewise, the victory of the current campaign being waged against gays and lesbians would represent a threat to all Americans because the very core of our legal system, that all of us are entitled to basic human and civil rights, would be in jeopardy. All Americans, especially those of us who look a little differently, act a little differently, or talk a little differently than most of white America would be in danger of having our rights taken away.

The recent board decision to support the Asian Pacific Islander Homophobia/Homosexuality Education Project is a courageous one. JACL and its members stand to learn much about Asian gay and lesbian attitudes.

APIHHEP members, rather than avoiding Asian American community activist organizations as "out" gays and lesbians have in the past, have decided the benefits of working with a mainstream Asian American organization outweigh the risks. They too will learn much about community attitudes.

For APIHHEP to ask the JACL for support is a major step. Coming out to your own community is never easy. For the JACL to offer its support is another positive step. It's a time for cautious optimism.

### Attention All Golfers!

The Warashibe Kai, a coalition of Japanese community organizations, is hosting a golf tournament at Echo Falls golf course May 13. Entry fee is \$100 per player. Space is limited so sign up now. What a great way to spend a Friday!

To register or for more information, call Lillian Hayashi at 486-8684.

## Chapter Focus

### Chapter accepting scholarship applications for 1994-95 school year

The JACL Seattle Chapter is now accepting applications for its annual scholarships. The JACL is sponsoring three \$650 scholarships for students currently attending or planning to attend college, trade school or any institution of higher learning. JACL members, their children or any American of Japanese ancestry may apply.

Funding for the scholarships is being provided by the Minoru Tamesa Scholarship Fund, the Japanese Baptist Church in memory of Reverend Emery Andrews, and the Tazuma Family, in memory of Bunshiro Tazuma and the Seattle JACL.

Selection will be based on academic achievement and potential, community service, personal statement, financial need, work experience, activities/interests and personal interview.

Interested students can obtain an application for local or national scholarship awards by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to: Ann Fujii-Lindwall, Scholarship Chair, 13056 - 27th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125-4314.

Please include phone number, and indicate whether you are interested in the local or national scholarship. Deadline for local scholarships is Friday, April 15, 1994. For more information, feel free to call Ann Fujii-Lindwall at (206) 367-8749 (home).

### 'Exciting new designs' promised for June 25 fashion show fundraiser

KANOJO usa, the Asian American fashion firm out of southern California, is coming to Seattle to debut its 1994 collection of exciting new designs on Saturday, June 25. The Seattle JACL and the Seattle Adult Buddhist Association are cosponsoring this special show as a fundraising event which will have a unique appeal to the fashion conscious.

Founded by two sansei cousins, KANOJO is a fashion design firm that caters to the special needs of the Asian figure. Career professionals, homemakers, retired women and others who have a hard time finding quality clothing, proportioned accurately, in classic good taste at an affordable price will be excited about the fashion design stylings of KANOJO.

Mark the date and the place — June 25 at the Seattle Buddhist Church auditorium for an afternoon fashion show of fun, refreshments and open shopping from a selection of 2,000 garments.

More details will be forthcoming from the planning committee: Seattle JACL co-chairpersons May Namba and Elaine Akagi, and Adult Buddhist Association co-chairpersons/committee members Frances Shintaku, Kiyo Takashima, Yoshi Hiroo and Frances Tamekuni.

## Donations

### JACL National Legacy Fund

The National Legacy Fund Campaign Committee announced that the Legacy Fund earnings for 1993 are \$165,817, which will be distributed into four categories: 20% to chapters — \$33,163.41; 10% for grants — \$16,581.70; 5% for reinvestment — \$8,290.85; and 65% for national programs — \$107,781.08. The Seattle chapter's portion of the distribution to chapters will be \$2,173.83.

June 1 is the deadline for grant proposals for the \$16,581 to be used for projects promoting the Program for Action.

As of December 1993, the Legacy Fund has reached a grand total of \$4,390,533.63.

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### Seattle JACL Endowment Fund

On behalf of the Seattle Chapter's Endowment Fund, we thank you for your participation and support. Proceeds from the Endowment Fund interest are used to help chapter programs. Please call 723-6061 if any names have been omitted.

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#### Others

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# JAYS President finds youth conference rewarding

by Owen Kikuta, JAYS President

The youth movement of the JACL is alive! I had the privilege of attending the JACL National Youth Council Conference, "People Envisioning Tomorrow." Nearly 200 "youth," mostly Californian, ages 14-40, gathered at the Miyako Hotel in San Francisco's Japantown. This leadership conference featured workshops on key Asian Pacific American (APA) issues, and provided the chance to interact with other APA youth leaders.

The workshops included: Asians in the Media, Key Issues in Understanding APAs, Hate Crimes, Ethnic Studies, APAs and AIDS, and Political Empowerment. The Hate Crimes and AIDS workshops were informative, yet saddening, because many APAs are uninformed, and refuse to acknowledge the existence of these two issues in the APA community.

These workshops increased my personal knowledge about the issues, I will be able to share with others in the APA community. For example, during the JAYS meetings on the UW campus, I often set up small group discussions about APA issues. Now I have this new knowledge to provide insight. A memorable part of the workshops was hearing other young APAs talk about the issues, which let me know there are others my age who share my concerns.

The most rewarding aspect of this conference was meeting so many influential community and youth leaders from several APA communities. I talked with National JACL President Lillian

Kimura, Bruce Yamashita (the inspirational sansei who successfully challenged his "disenrollment" from U.S. Marine Corps Officer Candidate School on grounds of racial discrimination), and members of the JACL National Youth Council, the future leaders of the APA community.

Honestly, as a 19-year-old who grew up in a community with 95% European American population, I felt "out of my league." Now I realize that I can eventually be included in this company

by continuing to lead the JAYS, and to be actively involved in the JACL and APA community.

For all those who think that the sansei and yonsei don't care about the APA community, I wish you were there to witness the conversations and hear the concerns that the APA youth expressed over the issues and future of the APA community. This experience proved to me that many young APA leaders are out there, and that the future of the JACL and the APA community is in very good hands! To conclude, I'll just proclaim that I'm ready

for the JACL National Conference in August!



Bruce Yamashita (left) speaks with an admirer during JACL National Youth Council leadership conference February 4-5 in San Francisco. — Bob Shimabukuro photo

### CREDITS

The Seattle JACL Newsletter is edited by Bob Shimabukuro and Mayumi Tsutakawa. Proofreading by Alice Ito. Contributors: Shea Aoki, Owen Kikuta, Cherry Kinoshita, Ann Fujii-Lindwall, Ed Suguro and Karen Yoshitomi.

# Seattle JACL — Join us today!

The JACL is the only national Japanese American nonprofit civil rights organization. Our most recent success was the 18-year effort to win redress for Nikkei who were evacuated from their homes and relocated into concentration camps during World War II. We are also involved in cultural events, providing scholarships, and dealing with issues of concern in many areas, including education, affirmative action, leadership training, and more.

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Your membership allows you to attend any or all JACL meetings at your option.

To join JACL, complete the form below, make your check payable to SEATTLE CHAPTER JACL and return it to:

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- Member receives benefits listed above for his/her families

#### Youth membership

- Membership to National JACL and Seattle Chapter JACL
- Seattle Chapter monthly newsletter

#### Booster Club membership

- Membership to Seattle Chapter JACL
- Seattle Chapter monthly newsletter

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## Calendar of Events

Compiled by Ed Suguro

### Meetings

**Seattle JACL Board Meeting**, everyone invited, March 16, 7 P.M., Japanese Language School, 1414 S. Weller St.

**Video Discussion Night: Japanese Pop Culture.** Through discussion and viewing clips from several Japanese pop concerts, learn about pop culture in Japan, March 23 and 25, 5:30 - 7 P.M., Hyogo Cultural Center, 2001-6th Ave., Suite 1101. Free. Registration deadline: March 19. For info, call 728-0610.

**Doshi Kai Meeting:** April 6, 7 P.M. Call Wayne Kimura for location, 827-0460 day, 869-5174 eve./wkend.

**Tomo no Kai Dine-out**, April 15, 5 P.M., Butcher Restaurant Mayflower Room, 5701-6th Ave. S. Info: 772-1160.

### Community and Social Events

**Nisei Vets Installation Dinner/Dance**, March 19, Rainier Golf and Country Club, 1856 S. 112th St.; 6 P.M. cocktails; 7 P.M. dinner and program; 9 P.M. dancing. Guest speaker: Russ Akiyama of Seattle Keiro Nursing Home.

Music by Dennis and Eddie. Cost: \$28/person. Info: George Yano, 723-6616.

**Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community Teriyaki Dinner**, March 20, Commodore Bainbridge Middle School cafeteria. Two seatings: 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. Entertainment by Seattle Kokon Taiko, slide show presentation, display of archival photos and the prize-winning *Kodomo no Tame ni* exhibit will be featured. Sushi bar and take-out available. Tickets: Adults, \$7.50; Seniors, students, children, \$5.50. Available at the door. Proceeds will benefit the Heritage Program. Directions: From the ferry terminal, drive straight to the second traffic light (High School Road), turn left and drive about a third of a mile and the school will be on your right. Info: Dr. Frank Kitamoto, 842-4772/4774, or Lucille Galbraith, 842-5914.

**Nikkei Community Dance**, April 9, 8 - 11:30 P.M., Nisei Vets Hall, 1212 S. King St., BYOB, live band, \$3 per person. Info: 772-1160.

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## Calendar, continued from page 6

**Weekly Ballroom Dance Class**, every Wed. from 1 - 3 P.M., Nisei Vets Hall, 1212 S. King St.

### Arts and Cultural Events



Jeni Fung is pictured at center with her family in 1930. Family photo is part of *The First 100 Years: Reflections of Seattle's Chinese Americans*, opening at WLAM March 17. Photo courtesy of Jeni Fung.

**The First 100 Years: Reflections of Seattle's Chinese Americans**, based on the Chinese oral history project opens March 17 at the Wing Luke Asian Museum, 407-7th Ave. S. Hours: 11 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Tues.-Fri; noon to 4 P.M., Sat.-Sun. Admission: \$2.50 adults, \$1.50 seniors/students, \$.75 children under 12. Info: 623-5124.

**Linoleum Block Prints by George Tsutakawa and Watercolors by Takiuchi Fujii**, through March 26, Carolyn Staley Fine Prints, 313-1st Ave. S., Tues.-Sat., 11 A.M.-5 P.M. Info: 621-1888.

**World premiere of Origami**, Northwest Asian American Theatre's presentation by D.A. Tsufura and directed by Tammis Doyle, March 16 - April 10, Theatre Off Jackson, 409-7th Ave. S., Thurs.-Sat. at 8 P.M., Sun. at 4 P.M. Tickets: \$6-\$12. For tickets and info: 340-1049.

**Reading by Japanese Canadian Writer Joy Kogawa** from her novel *Itsuka*, March 28, 7:30 P.M., Elliott Bay Books, 101 S. Main St. Info: 624-6600.

**Concert by Fujii Kunie**, Japan's leading performer of *jiuta* and *sokyoku*, 300-year-old traditions of Japanese singing accompanied by *sangen* (lute), *so* (zither) and *shakuhachi* (flute), March 29, 8 P.M., Meany Hall on the University of Washington campus. Tickets: \$10, \$5 seniors/students, available at Ticketmaster, UW HUB ticket office and Uwajimaya.

**Ikebana Classes**, April 5, 12, 19, 26, 5:30 - 7 P.M., Hyogo Cultural Center, 2001-6th Ave., Suite 1101. Ikenobo will teach the first two Tues., Sogetsu School will teach the last two. Fee: \$10. Registration deadline is one week prior to the beginning of each class. Info: 728-0610

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*The Seattle Chapter JACL newsletter is published the 2nd Wednesday of each month by the Seattle Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. Send items for inclusion by the 1st of the month to: JACL Newsletter, c/o Bob Shimabukuro, 6621 S. Bangor St., Seattle, WA 98178.*

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## NEWSLETTER ADDITIONS

Recently an invitation to a financial seminar, hosted by Edward D. Jones & Co. was mailed to many in the Nikkei community, using the community directory to obtain names and addresses. The invitation to the seminar included the heading, "A Special Invitation to Members of the JACL".

The Seattle Chapter JACL was not informed of this seminar, nor was the Chapter asked to sponsor or endorse this seminar. It is up to each individual to decide whether this seminar is appropriate for them. The JACL has not endorsed Edward D. Jones & Co., any of its representatives, or any of its products. **The JACL is not in any way connected with this seminar nor with Edward D. Jones & Co.** JACL did not provide the Edward D. Jones & Co. a list of our membership or any other type of mailing list.