

SEATTLE CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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Proactive role against discrimination stressed at conference

By Ryan A. Chin

A diverse group of speakers expressed similar messages throughout the 1999 JACL/Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) Leadership Conference held in Washington, D.C., March 27-30. Twenty-seven participants from around the U.S. represented their respective APA organizations. Mari Hirabayashi and I represented the Seattle Chapter.

Representatives from African American, Jewish American and other APA groups also attended the conference. All attendees seemed to share common goals. The top agenda items were support for Bill Lann Lee, coalition building, and control of the media.

President Clinton has renominated Bill Lann Lee as the United States Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights. If approved by the Senate, Lee will be the highest appointed Asian American ever. Last year the appointment was blocked as the Senate Judiciary Committee deadlocked 9-9 on whether to allow the Senate to vote on Lee. This will probably be Lee's last chance at the appointment.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orin Hatch (R-UT) has adamantly stated his disapproval for Lee's appointment. Hatch admits Lee has the necessary experience to take the position, but the Utah Senator disagrees with the Chinese American's stance on affirmative action. Lee has strong support from the APA, African American, Jewish American, and women's groups.

While it remains important for separate groups to make their opinions heard, an increasing importance has been placed on coalition building. Emphasis was placed on working closely with local chapters of groups like the NAACP, OCA, National Federation of Filipino American Associations, and American Jewish Committee. Collaboration facilitates unification of separate communities while empowering each group further.

Numerous speakers addressed the issue of coping with the national media which have promoted misconceptions about APAs. Poor media coverage of illegal campaign contributions has reinforced "sneaky Asian" stereotype which too many Americans have quickly accepted as accurate.

In order to combat such misperceptions, APAs must take a more



Ryan Chin

PNWD JACL joins groups supporting Makah Indians

by Akemi Matsumoto

Pacific NW District JACL and APACE joined the NW Coalition against Malicious Harassment, the Coalition for Human Dignity, the American Jewish Committee, and the Church Council of Greater Seattle in a press conference to support the Makah Indians in their



Akemi Matsumoto

struggle to maintain their sovereign rights on Friday, May 21, 1999. The recent threats and acts of violence against the Makah have outraged Washington's communities of color and is a reminder of the history of racial violence which is unfortunately still alive in US society today. The written statement of the District JACL issued May 21, 1999, follows:

It is with deep concern that I stand before you today as a representative of the Japanese American Citizens League. The JACL is a national, non-profit, educational organization dedicated to preserving civil rights for all people. In addition to our work on Japanese American issues, we have also been privileged to work with a number of other Asian Pacific American groups, as well as other civil and human rights organizations.

For several years now, the JACL has had a standing policy in support of the sovereignty of indigenous peoples, including the Makah Nation. In addition, the JACL has worked in coalition to address hate crimes and acts of violence motivated by prejudice, including the threat of violence. The recent much-publicized Makah whale hunt, which is a legitimate exercise of the tribe's sovereign rights, has unleashed a wave of racism toward Indian peoples which we are saddened to see in our community.

The JACL therefore joins with the other groups present today to denounce the threats of violence which have been directed at both Indian people and the press which has tried to cover this issue fairly. Such threats are cowardly acts that do nothing to improve what is already a complex and heated situation. While we support everyone's First Amendment right to freedom of speech, threats or acts of violence perpetrated against an individual or group based upon race or ethnicity are against the law of Washington State, and we would strongly support the enforcement of Washington's hate crimes statute.

Scholarship Winners!



JACL chapter scholarship winners (from left): Stacy St. John, Mariko Sata, Erin Kimura, Junko Nishimura, Michael Walsh and Christine Beppu

JAs making a difference

by David Yamaguchi

Picture a scared, high school kid squaring off with a black-belted bear of an opponent in a regional judo tournament in a scene right out of David and Goliath. The confident bear advances on his quarry in large, confident steps. As the two competitors come together, each grapples for a firm grip on the other's jacket, and for the advantage that such a hold imparts.



And then time stops as the kid throws the bear like a fishmonger tosses a salmon.

All who were there in the Asa Mercer gym that day will recognize the kid in this true story as *David Fukuhara*. While it occurred some 25 years ago, I remember it clearly because I learned more about judo that afternoon than I ever managed to learn since (in spite of the diligent efforts of our national-champion Seattle Dojo teachers). For unlike our *sensei*, David was one of us, just another JA kid from the Rainier valley and Beacon Hill. I was proud to know him that day.

But I was even prouder to watch him emcee the community memorial service at Lakeview Cemetery this past Memorial Day in his current capacity as the president of Seattle Sansei, the volunteer group now helping run the Nisei Vets Hall. In introducing guest speaker Melvin Chigioji, a retired navy admiral and a Hawaii-born sansei, David succinctly asked the crowd, "What will be the legacy of the sansei?" His question was appropriate against the backdrop of the JA vets monolith there, because unlike our Nisei fathers, most of us are not vets. In these and other ways, David is continuing to set an example for those of us around him.

Of course, as the name of David's group implies, Seattle Sansei is not a solo effort. Others making a go of it include *Warren Higa*, who I first met when we were students at Cleveland High. By then, Warren had already saved a man's life. He had happened on a car accident on Beacon Hill. A former scout, Warren took off his belt, and used it as a tourniquet to retard the profuse bleeding of the man's leg until professional help arrived.

A third Seattle Sansei of note is *Dale Watanabe*. Dale recently put the PNW fund drive for the Washington DC JA monument doubly across its goal with a \$10,000 personal contribution. While I only recently met Dale, his heart certainly seems to be in the right place.

On the topic of the national monument, *Lori Matsukawa* charmed all in her audience at the May 30th regional fund-raising celebration at the Vets Hall. Lori held back tears as she relayed the poignant story of the Ninomiya brothers, reported in that morning's *Seattle Times*. One brother fell at Bruyeres, France; the other recently went on a pilgrimage to find his brother's legacy there. The article reminded Lori of her own family's trip to France.

On Saturday, May 29th, UW student *Leslie Inaba* spoke especially eloquently about her JA heritage at the Japanese community

queen contest. In recent years, people have tended to poke fun queen contests as being fluff from the past, as I did. But they did not hear Leslie speak that day. Nor did they see she and her fellow princesses make the effort to withstand the cold and rain of the memorial service while other "more substantial" JAs stayed home.

On Wednesday, May 26th, keynote speaker *Sharon Tomiko Santos* moved all in attendance at our smaller chapter scholarship reception by producing her own dusty but successful application for a Seattle JACL scholarship. She described how her dreams of that hopeful day have now largely come to pass.

Seattle JACL board member *Mike Latimer* was no slouch either as he emceed that gathering with a presence beyond his years. As I watched, I tried to figure out if it was his military training or his business-world experience that lend authority to his words.

David, Warren, Dale, Lori, Leslie, Sharon, and Mike. Through representing this chapter, I was privileged to cross paths with these seven remarkable JAs within the span of one unusual week. I believe it is people like these that are now laying the cornerstones of the legacy of which David spoke, and perhaps even the stones of the generation that will follow us.

Community calendar [contact person in brackets]

Wed, June 16, 6 p.m. Potluck preceding board meeting. Chapter office, all welcome. [Dave Yamaguchi]

Wed, June 16, 7 p.m. Board meeting, chapter office. all welcome. [Dave Y.]

Sat, June 26, 8 a.m., Walk for Rice, Alki Beach, Asian Counseling and Referral Service [ACRS, 206-695-7600].

Public Education Volunteers Needed

by Arlene Oki

The Seattle Chapter is interested in recruiting speakers who will volunteer to speak about the Nikkei community's WWII concentration camp experience and/or the redress campaign at public schools and other venues. Most of the requests that have been made so far have been from K-12 schools.

We also need someone to serve as a volunteer "Speakers Bureau" coordinator to link volunteer speakers with requesting parties. This year, there have not been many requests, so this leads to another need: more speaking engagements to educate others about the Nikkei experience. Please call the Seattle office at (206) 622-4098 if you would like to volunteer to be a speaker or coordinator or if you know of organizations that might be interested in hearing speakers who are knowledgeable about the camp or redress experience. Thank you.

Ryan Chin, continued from front page

active role by voicing their opinions about media perspectives and also reporting their own news. By contacting journalists, relationships can be created allowing the truth to be told.

The conference stressed the point that JACLers must remain active in the community, whether that means writing letters to elected offi-



Scholarship Committee member Michael Latimer (left) presents Bryan Ohno, of Bryan Ohno Gallery, with a plaque of appreciation for donating his space for JACL scholarship presentations last month. The gallery is located at 155 S. Main. Its monthly exhibits tend to emphasize Japanese and U.S./Japan-related themes.

cial, forming coalitions, talking to the media, running for office, or supporting people who represent JACL. The more JACL's voice is heard, the less discrimination will occur. However, a lack of activity sends a message that Japanese Americans do not mind if they are picked on and used as scapegoats. The struggle for equality remains for all Americans present and future, but by taking a proactive role progress has been made.

New Members & Renewals

Randy Aoyama	Kazuo Kobayashi	Tak Tsuchida
Lorraine Bannai	Dean Koga	Dr. Ben Uyeno
Ann Fujii Lindwall	Yuriko Kojima	Clyde & Kathryn Yamamoto
Kiyoshi Fukano	Al Sugiyama	Joe & Lillian Yamamoto
Mary Gruenewald	Victor Takemoto	Lois & Tosh Taniguchi
Douglas Kanai	Lois & Tosh Taniguchi	Ben Tsuboi
Frank Kikuchi	Ben Tsuboi	Kurt S. Yanagimachi

Through directory forms (Regular)

Shelly Bloom	Sumiye Shimooka	Dr. George Yorita
Akira Honda	Curtis & Wendy Ono	Dr. Nancy Yamaguchi

Through directory forms (Booster)

Roy & Sei Fujiwara	Tushi Kurosaki	Gus Nikaitani
Jun & Alice Hayakawa	Marian Kurosu	Kiyoko Takayoshi
Jean Hirano	Mary Maniwa	Jack Tanaka
Shunji Ito	Kenny Nakatani	Lily Shitama
Fumi Kaseguma		

Paid membership (as of December 1998): 623

Membership Categories

Individual	\$50
Couple	\$85
1000 Club/Century	\$70-\$140
Spouse	\$40
Lifetime	\$1,000-\$2,000
Student/Youth (up to 25 years of age)	\$20
Boosters (Seattle JACL only)	
Regular	\$20
Seniors	\$15

Membership payments and questions should be directed to May Namba, 2324 NW 94th St., Seattle, WA 98117 (206-784-3824).

Donations for directory

James Akiyama	Kenji Masumoto	George & Nobuko Ohgi	Kenso & Margaret Teramoto
Henry & Lillian Aoyama	John & Lillian Matsudaira	Marlene Okada	Yoshio & Florence Teshima
Mark Fugami	Frances Matsumoto	Helen Okamoto	Tama Tokuda
Suyeko Fujikado	Max & Hisako Minegishi	Toyoko Okiyama	Mituso Tokunaga
Toshio & May Harada	Mutsumi Miyazaki	Tatemasa & Ruth Oki	Min Tsubota
Sharon Harada	Shig & June Momoda	Teimei & Yoshie Okimura	Osao Tsuchikawa
Hajime & Michiko Hirata	Tamio Miyata	Tak & Nobie Omoto	Tsue, Ted & Frances Yoshimi Yamamoto
Dr. Frank Hori	Aiko Mizuki	Hifumi Saimo	Masaye Yamane
Chieko Iguchi	Yoshie Mori	Warren Sakai	Sadie Yamasaki
Kachi Ikeda	Hiroe & May Nagasawa	Ray Sakamoto	Chizuo Yasui
Edith Imanishi	George & Kaoru Murakami	Aya Sakoda	Ted & Margaret Yasuda
Martha Imabori	Robert & Patti Nakao	Bob & Amy Seko	
Fumi Inouye	Eddie & Jean Nagai	Ken & Susanna Seno	
Roy Ishino	Barbara Nagaoka	Tokuo Shimbo	
Kimi Iwamoto	Richard & Mary Naito	Cho Shimizu	
Shigeo Kano	Jenifer Nakamura	K. Shintaku	
Charles & Lillian Kato	Kenjiro Nakamura	Donald & Yaeko Suyetani	
Betty Komura	Fumi Kasegumi	Hiroshi Suyetani	
Tom & Hana Konishi	Mitsuo Nakanishi	Hiroshi Suzuki	
Ted & Carolyn Kunihiro	Florence Nakano	Cal & Naoko Takagi	
Wayne & Daisy Kuramoto	Osami Namba	Bob Takatsuka	
Terry & Marie Kurimura	Osami's Barber Shop	Mary Takeuchi	
Akira Kuramoto	Akiko Narusawa	Noboru & Takako Taki	
Bhogo & Fusako Kusumi	Hisashi Nishimura	Tosh & Lois Taniguchi	
George & Hidy Matsui	Linda Nishimura	Katsumi & Terrie Tanino	
	Frank & Betty Nomiya	Allan Terada	

Thank You!!!

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Seattle Chapter JACL is a non-profit, grassroots civil rights organization dedicated to empowering our local community through high-quality programs and strategic partnerships focusing on activism, education, and youth leadership development. As a chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League, we strive to be a leading Asian American advocacy group for civil and human rights while promoting and preserving the values and cultural heritage of Japanese Americans.

Our primary means of carrying out our mission is a monthly meeting, held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month at the chapter office (316 Maynard Ave. S., Seattle) except August. All are welcome. (Those wishing to make presentations or be added to the meeting agenda should contact David Yamaguchi.)

Seattle Chapter JACL Newsletter

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Board members should submit materials to the editor (shimaito@foxinternet.net, fax 206-722-2044, 6621 S. Bangor St., Seattle, WA 98178) by the first Thursday of the month.

Non-board members and readers should send items for inclusion to David Yamaguchi, preferably in electronic format, by the last Thursday of the preceding month.

Calendar items emphasize chapter or community events not likely to be covered by community newspapers or by other newsletters. Business-card advertising space is available at a rate of \$10/issue or \$120/yr (circulation is about 1000).

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