

KOKORO

the heart and soul of our community
san mateo chapter Japanese American citizens league may 2009
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 first Friday (one month prior to publication) and in electronic format [Microsoft WORD, Calibri font] to katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com

ICE: 'CONCERN' OVER IMMIGRATION REPORT

Amnesty International released a 51-page report critical of the treatment of immigration detainees held in detention centers and other facilities such as the Santa Clara County Jail and charging the federal government with allowing tens of thousands to be held in custody without hearings. The human rights group also discussed how the vast majority of detainees have a hard time receiving legal counsel.

Even the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) admits there may be cause for the criticism published in "Jailed Without Justice: Immigration Detention in the USA." According to an article written by Ken McLaughlin by the same title, above [*San Jose Mercury News*, March 25, 2009], the most serious complaint is that the jail "commingles criminal inmates with immigration detainees." ICE describes the immigration detainees as such:

40 percent of the people it incarcerates are 'criminal aliens'—a sweeping term that includes everyone from illegal immigrants awaiting deportation after finishing state prison sentences to legal permanent residents targeted for deportation because they've been convicted of serious traffic offenses. The remainder are undocumented immigrants, often picked up in immigration raids in workplaces and homes where immigration fugitives are suspected to be hiding.

ANTI-GAY HATE CRIMES INCREASE

An article by this name, authored by Tracey Kaplan, appeared in the *San Jose Mercury News* [March 16, 2009]. While in 2007, of 20 hate crime incidents reported, 3 or 15% were anti-gay, in 2008, of 25 incidents reported, 14 or 56% were anti-gay. A hate crime is defined as a criminal act committed in whole or in part because one or more of the following actual or perceived characteristics of the victim: race/ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability or association with a person or group with one or more of these characteristics.

The article reports that the striking increase in anti-gay hate crimes is tied to the controversy over Proposition 8. Deputy District Attorney Jay Boyarskey, who is assigned to monitor hate crimes, states: "My belief from having done this work for many years is that surges in types of hate crimes are linked to the headlines and controversies of the day. Marriage equality and Proposition 8 have been in the news, and we have seen an increase in gay bashing."

GARY LOCKE CONFIRMED TO COMMERCE POST

Gary Locke, the nation's first Chinese-American Governor, who went on to serve two terms [1997 to 2005] in Washington State, was confirmed by the U.S. Senate as commerce secretary. The appointment was an easy victory for President Obama after the first two nominees for the post withdrew.

The Commerce Department's responsibilities include the census—the largest peace-time operation in the nation—many aspects of international trade, ocean policy, and weather forecasts, as well as the nation's transition to digital TV. Locke is yet another example of Asian Americans presence in, and contribution to, American politics.

INTERMENT CAMP DETAINEES RISKED ALL TO FISH

The following is an excerpt from an interesting article by Ed Zieralski, published March 21, 2009, forwarded by Patty Wada at the NCWNP District Office, brought to mind an enthusiastic fisherman, Ted Yamagishi, who once served on our board and remains a loyal supporter, and the Fishing Club at the San Mateo Japanese American Community Center:

He was known as "Ishikawa Fisherman," a seemingly mythical person who disappeared for weeks at a time and returned with a stringer of trout. But Heihachi Ishikawa actually was a legendary and brave Japanese-American who would risk his life and sneak out of the well-guarded Manzanar World War II internment camp north of Lone Pine to go fishing. Ishikawa's mini-journeys from the mundane life in the relocation camp took him high into the Sierra where he created his own adventures with handmade fishing gear and caught California's golden trout.

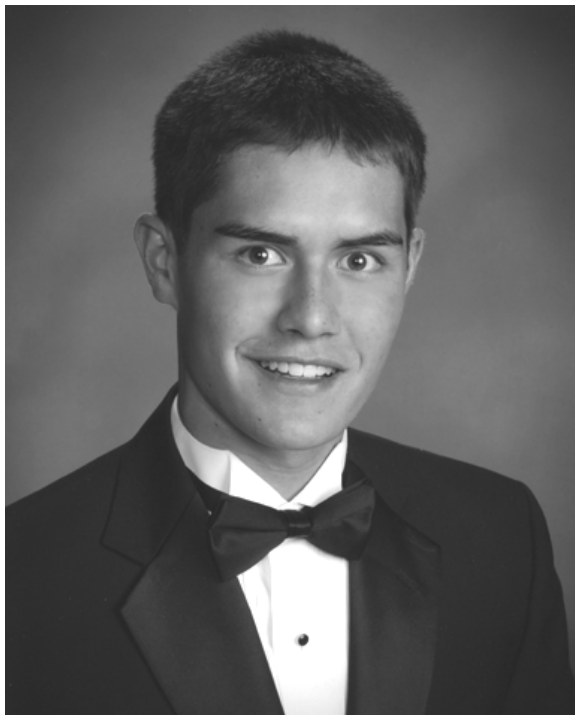
For 65 years, a photo taken of Ishikawa by fellow Manzanar internee Toyo Miyatake was the only photographic evidence that more than 150 of the Manzanar internees "escaped" camp to go fishing. Manzanar was the first of 10 internment camps that housed an estimated 120,000 Japanese-Americans who were forcibly removed from their homes on the West Coast at the start of World War II. From March 31, 1942 to Nov. 21, 1945, Manzanar would hold more than 11,000 internees.

Ishikawa's incredible story of living off the land in the hard Sierra mountain range for a couple of weeks at a time is one of many incredible stories of survival that make up Cory Shiozaki's work in progress. Shiozaki's partially completed documentary, "From Barbed Wire to Barbed Hooks," will preserve the stories of how Japanese-Americans used their ingenuity and called on their bravery to fish Sierra streams and lakes.

ANNOUNCING SAN MATEO JACL SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS: TREVOR SMITH AND KIMBERLY YAMADA

The scholarship committee interviewed two candidates, Trevor Smith and Kimberly Yamada. They were to write a personal statement: "What would you do to make the JACL more relevant to the younger generation of Asian Americans?"

Essay from Trevor Smith as a candidate for a Freshman Scholarship:



To make the JACL more relevant to the younger generations of Asian Americans I would start a club at school to raise awareness of the JACL. I feel that the JACL is not very visible in the lives of people my age. If my mom was not a member of the JACL, I would not know that it even existed. There aren't many programs that engage the youth and I have never heard of any organized events such as clubs and other programs offered by JACL. At my current school, there is an Asian students club that participates in a dragon boat race at Treasure Island. They train together to build skills and have some social events to build friendships prior to the actual race competition. They also participate in the Chinese New Year's Parade by building their own float. These seem like excellent ways to engage teenagers. Another club my school has is the Anime club where they focus on a popular art form that comes from Japan. They study animation films and discuss their sociological and psychological relevance. I think if the JACL could put together events like this or maybe start a sports or art program for the youth; it could have a big impact on their relevance to the younger generation..

The club idea I have in mind would be a club that includes everyone but focuses on Asian culture. I would try to have activities and speakers that teach us about art, history, music, dance, and anything else people are interested in. By keeping the topics broad, hopefully we could learn a lot and cover several different interests. The club would also emphasize injustices against Asian Americans at which point I could include

the JACL and how they fight for equal treatment and human rights. I have had a few conversations with teachers about the incarceration of Japanese Americans in 1942 during World War II. Our textbooks set aside about a paragraph to give a brief overview of the situation. This event in history should be emphasized more and I would encourage the faculty to teach a more thorough unit on it to raise awareness.

The main goal of the club would be education that would create awareness and hopefully lead to education that does justice. Whenever there is a case of injustice, the club will investigate the situation and help out in any way possible. Many clubs at school

use donations and volunteer workers to combat genocide all over the world and I hope we could follow their lead. Without first creating awareness and then education people, they will never know about certain situations. I hope I can help the JACL become more visible to teenagers and the entire population as a whole. I know they put on events for the Day of Remembrance, but I still feel the organization is not as well known as it could be.

Essay from Kimberly Yamada for a Freshman scholarship:



JACL is an amazing organization that brings together the Asian Americans in our community and our country, honoring and supporting the people and group as a whole. They offer countless activities and programs, also providing a monthly newsletter that keeps everyone involved and aware of the current events that are taking place in the Asian community.. However, for this wonderful institution to continue and thrive, the youth need to play a key role in the development and direction of JACL. There are many different aspects of the organization that could be changed in order to make the youth's participation and involvement more active.

There are many different events that JACL could plan in order to appeal and relate to the youth that are in the program. On a local level, there should be classes that are offered that are just for youth that either middle schoolers or high schoolers could attend. Fun, entertaining and hands-on classes such as a cooking class that would teach students how to prepare certain kinds of Japanese food, whether that be sushi, soups, meat, or special foods that are made for holidays. A drawing and art class would teach younger people how to draw mangas and the unique techniques that Japanese animators use in their artwork, so at the very end of the class they could display their art projects to their family and friends. There could even be classes that are simply just for education purposes, such as learning the Japanese language or Japanese history and culture. Demands on a student's time have increased in the past decades to include studies, sports, music, and community service. Youth are wary of long-term classes and commitments for this reason, so if month long classes aren't appealing, simply hosting one-day seminars and classes could be more beneficial. Community service projects with a youth

group coordinator would be very helpful to high schoolers especially because of the mandatory service hours that need to be completed in order to graduate. On top of everything else, JACL could even plan some events for the youth just for social purposes. The activity's only purpose would be to give Asian American youth the chance to meet and make friendships with other Asian Americans, giving them another reason to stay connected with JACL. Planning events like social dances, or education fieldtrips to museums, festivals, concerts, or even trips to Japan sound like opportunities that many youth would take advantage of. There are countless ways this program can get students involved and excited about Japanese culture and history, it simply has to open its doors a little wider so people have the chance to know what JACL is really about.

Unfortunately, I don't believe that many youth know about JACL and the opportunities they are missing out on, so in order to increase participation in the League, more people need to know about it. If the youth know about the organization and all of the important contributions it makes to society, people will want to sign up and join. They will want to participate and attend events the JACL is planning. JACL should publicize their programs in places where younger people get their information, like schools and libraries, high school newspapers, or online website like MySpace and Facebook. It's important to appeal to youth differently than you would adults, make the organization sound fun, exciting, and worthwhile. Youth who didn't have the chance to explore their culture in their home will have their eyes opened to who they are and where they come from, gaining more knowledge and respect for their heritage. Having projects for youth to participate in will not only serve the Japanese American community, but teach young people their proud heritage and to work against discrimination.

NOTE ON OUR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

We are very proud of our two San Mateo JACL Scholarship recipients, Trevor Smith and Kimberly Yamada. Both students have long and deep ties with San Mateo's Japanese American Community. As you can read from their essays, they have good ideas to bring to the table for the continued vitality of JACL as a civil rights and cultural organization.

Both recipients went through a screening process that included written information, an original essay, and an interview with screening committee members. We are planning to celebrate the accomplishments of Trevor, Kimberly, their family, and friends

with a reception and lunch on May 3rd. You can look forward to seeing some pictures from that event in the June issue of *Kokoro*. Until then, our sincerest congratulations to you both!

NEW UC ADMISSIONS POLICY

A new University of California policy adopted to increase campus diversity could increase the number of white students on campuses while reducing the number of Asian students. Asian activists add that the policy results in negligible increases in African American students and only a moderate climb in the number of Latinos; the chart below compares changes in the UC system based on current versus new admissions criteria:

	Current	New
Black:	4%	4-5%
Latino:	19%	19-22%
Asian:	36%	29-32%
White:	34%	41-44%

An article by Lisa M. Krieger published in the *San Jose Mercury News* [March 28, 2009] stated that Asians account for only 12 percent of the state's population; however, they now represent 37% of UC admissions—the single largest ethnic group. At UC Berkeley, 46% of the freshman class is Asian.

The new admissions policy would drop SAT subject tests from eligibility requirements, and Asians have traditionally done well on these tests. Nina Robinson, UC's director of policy and external affairs for student affairs, stated that many students, especially low-income and/or minority students, become ineligible to apply because they do not take subject matter tests.

The case is interesting from several standpoints. Asian students excel in SAT subject tests, a multiple choice exam. Students who can afford it pay for expensive classes, tutoring, and practice tests through Barron's and Kaplan's, so SATs become problematic from the standpoint of privilege. Standardized tests are a measure of achievement in discrete subject areas as opposed to holistic, critical thinking that befits collegiate work. Also, Asian students are, on the whole, overrepresented at the UC's in general and UC Berkeley in particular when compared with the surrounding population it serves as a state university. It would be interesting to disaggregate and see what are the different Asian ethnic groups represented among the incoming freshman class, as well as the generations represented. All the UC's are supposed to be equal in reputation; however, many Asian students and their parents are pressured to view admission to UC Berkeley as most prestigious. Perhaps many of these concerns apply to White students, as well.

ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION RENOVATIONS NOW COMPLETE

Angel Island is forever tied to the lives of Asians and Asian Americans who have settled in the Bay Area. Tens of thousands of Asian immigrants were detained and processed from 1910 through the early 1940s. These groups were Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and other groups from Asia.

Angel Island's immigration history dates to California's Gold Rush, which spurred the demand for railroad labor and created a wave of mid-19th century Chinese immigration. Much like the racism and economic protectionism that led to the internment of Nikkei during World War II, the fears about job competition and assimilation fueled an anti-Chinese movement at state and national levels. Congress passed a law in 1822 to prohibit immigration by more Chinese laborers. That same year, a record 40,000 Chinese immigrants came to the United States to beat that deadline.

Ellis Island, which processed hundreds upon thousands of immigrants from Europe, was known as the *gateway* to America. Angel Island, on the other hand, was the *gatekeeper* for Asian immigrants. While immigrants from Europe came through Angel Island, but in fewer numbers, and their stays in the cramped facilities were "typically much shorter," according to an article, "Angel Island's New Chapter," written by Matt O'Brien [*San Jose Mercury News*, March 15, 2008]. Many Chinese immigrants tried to get around strict immigration restrictions by claiming kinship to those already residing in the United States:

Berkeley resident Buck Gee, a retired engineer, said that after his father's death his family discovered a "cheat sheet" the immigrant had brought with him on the voyage to San Francisco. It was a sign that the father was most likely a 'paper son,' one who memorized invented details about his heritage so he could circumvent exclusionary laws. Like the Quan family [also interviewed for O'Brien's article], the Gees never discussed the island.

The cheat sheets were needed because the questions asked, such as "Show us your bedroom in this diagram of your house," or "How many stairs did you have on the back steps," or "Who is your closest neighbor," were designed to trip up newly arrived immigrants. The premise behind the interrogation was to ferret out who was, for example, an actual son versus a "paper son." A mistake could lead to deportation after many days at Angel Island; one woman, who claimed to be married to a legal immigrant, was held for 600 days before she was released.

The Angel Island renovations include reconstruction of a stairway leading to the detention quarters, repair of the detention barracks, landscaping, and new study and interpretive guides.

SAN MATEO JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS
LEAGUE'S

Annual Burger Booth Fundraiser

Burlingame Art in the Park

Saturday, June 13 & Sunday, June 14,
2009

Lunchtime through Early Dinner time



Please support our fundraising for student scholarships.

For information or volunteering opportunities, please contact Kevin
Wong, ktw777@yahoo.com

KOKOMO JOE:

The Story of the First Japanese American Jockey in the U.S.

meet the author John Christgau

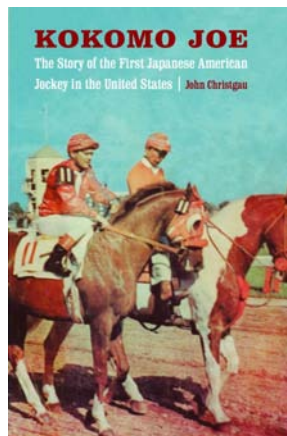
Learn the amazing story of Yoshio “Kokomo Joe” Kobuki

The Taube Room
The Belmont Library
1110 Alameda de las Pulgas, Belmont
Thursday, May 14, 2009, 7:00 p.m.
(For more information: 650-591-8286)

Sponsored by: the Friends of the Belmont Library
Belmont Library

The Oak Room
San Mateo Main Library
55 W. 3rd Ave., San Mateo
Sat., May 23, 2009, 2:00 p.m.
(For more information: 650-522-7802)

sponsored by: Asian American Advisory
Asian American Curriculum Project
San Mateo Library



BOOK SIGNING

“Kokomo Joe” was the first Japanese American jockey in the country. He was as promising a young jockey as turf writers could remember--winning race after race during the summer of 1941, despite conspiracies against him by antagonistic jockeys. As the war with Japan loomed, his continued victories and amazing records aggravated fans who hated and feared anything Japanese. When the war began, America's concerns over invasion grew, and not even Kokomo Joe could escape the country's espionage and sabotage dragnet.

“Christgau masterfully unearths a story about a small town man with a giant spirit struggling to realize a dream in the midst of racial hatred and war.” Satsuki Ina, producer of *From A Silk Cocoon*

“Christgau has given us the bittersweet story of Kokomo Joe, who carried the American dream on his tiny shoulders.” Stephen Fox, author of *Fear Itself*

10am-5pm • May 9, 2009
San Mateo Central Park Recreation Center
50 East 5th Ave.

Great Entertainment

Urisawe Korean Drum Group •
California Youth Chinese Symphony •
Charlie Chin doing a one man performance of *Uncle Toisan* •
Thia Konda Okasan and Me - Shamisen Jazz and Pop •
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San Mateo's 9th Annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Celebration



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