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JACL Chicago Chapter

JACL *en*

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2013 Scholarship Luncheon

RSVP today!

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Confronting Racial Slander

By Bill Yoshino, JACL Midwest Director

There are times when we are jolted with a reminder that racism is alive and well. That was the case last summer when a gunman with ties to a supremacist group burst into a Sikh temple in Wisconsin and killed six congregants. Many of us don't experience or notice racism in our daily lives, so the shock of Oak Creek makes us ponder the scope and frequency of racial incidents.

In recent months, the JACL has been called on to react to a series of incidents with racial overtones. A Google app called *Make Me Asian* purported to be a fun way to appear to be Asian. It used overlays such as a "coolie" hat and a "Fu Manchu" mustache that could be placed on photos. Needless to say, it was a convenient way to mock Asian Americans,



"MAKE ME ASIAN" APP TAKEN DOWN FROM GOOGLE PLAY

and Google removed it following reaction from the community. We also objected to an Apple app called *Transformat Celebrities*, similar to Google's, which no longer appears to be available.

Late last year on NBC's *Tonight Show*, Jay Leno raised the specter of Asians as dog-eaters with quips such as "my cat sold my dog to a Chinese Restaurant." He told these so-called jokes during three separate broadcasts in July, October, and December. JACL executive director, Priscilla Ouchida, reacted following the October broadcast, resulting

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Securing and maintaining the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others who are victimized by injustice and bigotry.

The JACLER is published by the JACL Chicago Chapter for its members, supporters and friends. We welcome your comments and suggestions.

For More Information

For information about the JACL Chicago Chapter, call 773.728.7171, or log on to www.chicagojacl.org

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in a telephone conversation with Leno where he said that he understood the fallout from his jokes. Undeterred, Leno struck again causing Priscilla to contact NBC executives, and the quips have since ceased.

A similar incident happened on an episode of the CBS program, Mike & Molly, where a character stated, "Oh, Lord, bless that nasty *Chinaman* (emphasis added) that lives across the street, even though I don't like him...and he probably eats his pets." Again, JACL brought this to the attention of network executives.

Early this month, in an American Voices article appearing online in Tribune Media Services, Joel Brinkley, a Stanford journalism professor, said that a favored dish in Vietnam is dog. Moreover, he asserted, "...Vietnamese have regularly eaten meat through the ages, adding significant protein to their diet that also helps explain the state's aggressive tendencies..." Fortunately, he was pilloried by virtually every respondent to his article.

This dog-eating image plays into attitudes that cast Asians as different, as oddities within a Western culture, and even as uncivilized. These portrayals started in the 1800s when the Chinese were seen as having strange customs, a strange language, and an appearance that made them targets for the harassment and discrimination that would follow. It is, of course, a way to perpetuate the myth of Asians as forever foreign.

There isn't an expiration date on prejudice and bigotry. The notion of a post-racial society with the election of an African American president belies institutional discrimination and the racial assaults, large and small, that continue to plague our society. For those reasons, there must be watchdogs, individuals and organizations, who will monitor and react to the insults and insinuations because it's imperative that we confront the slander that tars us as outsiders by some and as uncivilized by others. 🐕

My Summer at the White House

By Alexa Wong

This past summer, I had the great privilege of interning for the White House. I remember walking up the tall stone steps leading up to the Eisenhower Executive Building for my very first day of work. In the entrance hall, I saw the official photographs of President Obama and Vice President Biden smiling back at me—and I realized then that every day spent here was bound to hold for me countless once-in-a-lifetime experiences.

As an intern for the First Lady's Office, I contributed to a small team that assists Mrs. Obama in all areas of her public life. To accompany this honor, I was given daily access to the East Wing. I walked through the halls of the White House often, past the Rose Garden and past portraits and photographs of former presidents and first ladies. In the East Room, I sat near the press and watched President Obama give a speech and honor the Baylor Lady Bears basketball team for their accomplishments. Once, a group of tourists noticed me pass through a Secret Service checkpoint and exclaimed, "Look, she must work for the White House!"

I also had the chance to see the President board his Marine One helicopter and depart from the South Lawn. On that same lawn, I ushered in members of Congress and their families to the White House annual picnic. I later served them a variety of cookies and pies and dished out ice cream sundaes alongside Executive Pastry Chef William Yosses ("Chef Billy"). He even let us interns take the leftover desserts home, which tasted nothing less than fantastic.



ALEXA WONG IN THE JAMES S. BRADY PRESS BRIEFING ROOM DURING HER INTERNSHIP AT THE WHITE HOUSE.

Everyone at the White House whom I met as an intern was welcoming. The internship program provided opportunities for us to hear high-level officials talk about their background and ask them for their candid opinion on political issues, books and the meaning of life. From these settings I better grasped the extent of staffers' talent, intelligence, and passion for improving America. I also crossed paths with the Obamas' beloved dog Bo a few times. Needless to say, I was pretty star struck and couldn't resist petting him.

I wouldn't meet the President and First Lady until my internship was drawing to a close. Mrs. Obama not only shook my hand and thanked me for my contribution, but she also gave me a big hug! I feel truly lucky to have met such a charismatic, friendly, and funny person. In our group picture, I am standing right next to her.

The President also took some time to speak to us interns altogether and pose for a picture. President Obama's smile is truly contagious; I found myself smiling the whole time and hanging on to his every word. He was inspiring and honest when answering our questions, and even caused the whole room to erupt in laughter with his sense of humor. More importantly, I will never forget how he made me all the more proud to be a White House intern and honored to serve my country in such a capacity. I encourage any young person—who believes in making a difference and yearns for priceless experiences—to apply. 🇺🇸

Alexa Wong is a senior at Northwestern University. Alexa has participated in internship projects with the JACL Midwest Office and she has been awarded scholarships from the Chicago JACL and the National JACL.

Asian American Coalition of Chicago 30th Annual Lunar New Year Celebration

2013 Exemplary Community Service Award for the Japanese American Community

Introduction By Megan Nakano, JACL Chicago Chapter President

This year, Stanley Fukai was awarded the Japanese American Community Service Award at the Asian American Coalition of Chicago's 30th Anniversary Lunar New Year Celebration at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare. The AACC, founded in 1983, is represented by over 16 cultures including the Bangladeshi, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Thai, and Vietnamese American communities.

The Asian Lunar New Year Celebration helps celebrate these rich heritages and diverse histories. The AACC's mission is to organize and promote equal opportunities in government, education, economic development, and international affairs in order to empower all Asian Americans.

Nine of the communities (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Pakistani, Thai and Vietnamese American) take turns hosting the Asian Lunar New Year Celebration on a rotating basis. This year's event was hosted by the Vietnamese American community.



Stanley Yoshiro Fukai

Since 1996, some 5,000 Chicago-area drivers—many of them senior citizens—have relied on Stanley Fukai to help them stay safe on the roads. For the past 16 years, Mr. Fukai has been a volunteer instructor in the adult driver education programs of the AARP and the Office of the Secretary of State of Illinois, and has taught a total of more than 300 classes. Moreover,

he is the only instructor in the State who can conduct his classes in both English and Japanese.

Driving represents independence to many people, but it may not occur to them that refreshing or updating their driving knowledge can prolong their years behind the wheel. Mr. Fukai's students revisit the basics and get current information on changing traffic rules and automotive technology as well. They also learn how age and medications can affect response time on the road. In addition, many of those who complete the eight-hour AARP classes are eligible for discounted rates from their insurance companies.

During his working life, Mr. Fukai's career interests were also in transportation, but the vehicles he focused on were airplanes, rather than cars. He worked for Northwest Airlines in Tokyo for 12 years, and then moved his family to Chicago, where he spent 29 years as a radio mechanic, an airframe and powerplant mechanic, and crew chief for Northwest at Midway and O'Hare

Continued on page 4

Airports. After his retirement, he held a part-time position at an aviation parts company, where, among other things, he taught employees how to disassemble 747 and other engines. Fortunately for those of us who spend more time on the ground than in the sky, he soon found his post-retirement niche as a bilingual instructor in the AARP and Illinois Secretary of State driver education programs.

Stanley Fukai maintains a busy teaching schedule at various venues in the city and suburbs and will continue to do so for the

foreseeable future. His wife, Yaeko, and daughter, Eiko, join him as the Asian American Coalition of Chicago honors him with an Exemplary Community Service Award tonight. 🍵

The 2014 AACC Asian Lunar New Year Celebration will be hosted by the Japanese American community. For more information on how to get involved, contact 773-728-7171 or aacchicago2014@gmail.com.

2013 Day of Remembrance

By Christine Munteanu

The 2013 Day of Remembrance was held at the Chicago History Museum at noon on Sunday, February 17th, to commemorate the signing of Executive Order 9066. Signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, Executive Order 9066 gave the U.S. Army the authority to remove civilians from the military zones established in Washington, Oregon, and California during WWII. This led to the forced removal and incarceration of some 120,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry living on the West Coast, who had to abandon their jobs, their homes, and their lives to be sent to one of ten concentration camps scattered in desolate, remote regions of the country.

The Chicago Japanese American community established the annual Day of Remembrance over 20 years ago as a reminder of the impact the incarceration experience has had on our families, our community, and our country. It is an opportunity to educate others on the fragility of civil liberties in times of crisis, and the importance of remaining vigilant in protecting the rights and freedoms of all.

This year's program featured a talk from Priscilla Wegars, author of *Imprisoned in Paradise*, focusing on the story of the Japanese prison inmates who worked at the Kooskia internment camp in rural Idaho. The inmates were Japanese Issei resident aliens who were arrested by the FBI after the Pearl Harbor attack. The men were suspected as potential saboteurs due to the fact that they remained Japanese citizens; however, the reason they remained Japanese citizens was because they were barred from naturalizing as American citizens due to the U.S.'s racist immigration policies. At Kooskia, most of the men worked on the construction of the Lewis-Clark highway.

Ms. Wegars' talk shed light on some of the intimate details of life at Kooskia, through personal documents and letters of the inmates, government documents, and other artifacts found through the 2010 archeological excavation of the camp site. Ms. Wegar stated her goal of her research and her book was to help



Photo: Robert Brown

THE 2013 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE COMMITTEE AND VOLUNTEERS WITH AUTHOR PRISCILLA WEGARS.

the families of the men interned at Kooskia understand what daily life was like for their relatives.

Ms. Wegars drew a strong distinction between her use of the term "internment camps," which she used to identify the camps run by the Department of Justice and held Japanese resident aliens who were classified as "enemy aliens" during WWII. This is in contrast to the incarceration camps run by the War Relocation Authority in which Japanese American U.S. citizens were forcibly and unjustly imprisoned.

The program was emceed by JASC board president Michael Tanimura. The Chicago Nisei Post no. 1183 Color Guard posted the colors, and Megan Trick read excerpts from the removal poster.

The Chicago DOR event continues to grow and educate the public. The 2013 program enjoyed a diverse crowd with over 300 in attendance. The Day of Remembrance is sponsored by the Chicago Japanese American Council, the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society, the Japanese American Citizens League – Chicago Chapter, and the Japanese American Service Committee. 🍵

One Nation, One Health Care

By the JACL Chicago Civil Rights and Education Committee

When we think of what constitutes civil and human rights, we typically think of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. marching along the mall in Washington, DC—thousands of men, women and children walking hand-in-hand and asking those in positions of power for change. Since then, civil and human rights have taken many different shapes and forms. On Saturday, January 26, 2013, Dr. Anne Scheetz and Steve Serikaku, members of the Illinois Single Payer Coalition, presented the Chicago Chapter of the JACL with what can only be seen as an emerging human right—access to health care for all.

As Japanese Americans—one of the most affluent of the Asian American

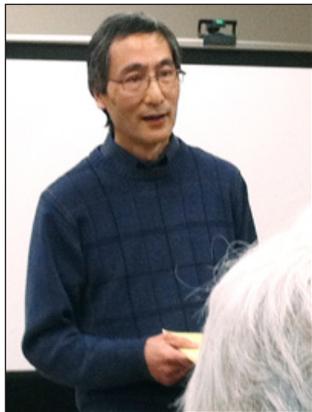
illustration that Dr. Scheetz and Mr. Serikaku presented to the attendees.

Under the single payer system, the single payer refers specifically to the government. All of the money that currently goes towards various health care plans would be funneled into one pot, which would pay for everyone's health care costs. Other countries, such as Canada, have embraced this system—and thus, each individual citizen is provided with the same health care coverage. The Coalition argues that billions of dollars are spent on overhead and administrative costs. If we were to do away with these costs, more dollars could be directed to where the money is needed most—towards actually providing care to those that need it. There are downsides, of course, which includes that fact that the health care industry and insurance makes

up a significant number of jobs in the United States. Despite arguments to the contrary, it would be an imposing, and difficult, task to realign these workers into other fields. Similarly, with all of the pork that gets thrown around the appropriations roundtable in Washington, whose to say that the funding will actually end up where it's supposed to?

Regardless of where one stands on this issue, the simple truth is that our current

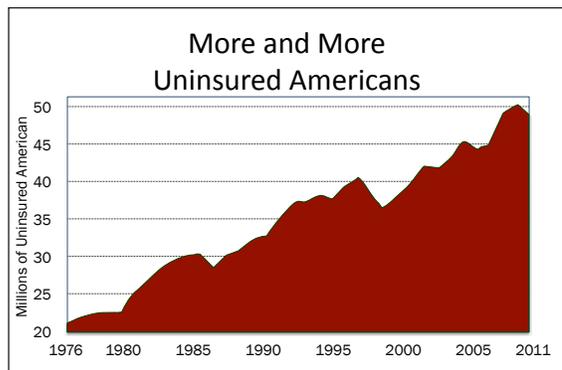
system is broken. The Illinois Single Payer Coalition is just one solution to this overarching problem. To find out more about the Coalition, visit their website at <http://www.ilsinglepayer.org/>.



DR. ANNE SCHEETZ AND STEVE SERIKAKU EXPLAIN HOW A SINGLE PAYER SYSTEM WOULD WORK.

Photos: Phyllis Tamada-Brown

ethnicities—we rarely fathom what it means to not have such access. For most of us, it's easy because we have stable full-time jobs that provide sufficient coverage. However, there are millions of Americans of all backgrounds and walks of life who do not have adequate protection to safeguard against the catastrophic occurrences that could affect us and the ones we hold dearest. The irony here is, even under the current Affordable Care Act, millions of people in the United States still cannot afford sufficient health care. That is the simple



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2013 Annual Chicago JACL Scholarship Luncheon

Please join us on Sunday, May 5 at the Annual Chicago JACL Scholarship Luncheon at Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant located in Skokie at the Westfield/Old Orchard Shopping Center. The luncheon begins at noon and tickets are \$45.00, payable to Chicago JACL. This event celebrates the accomplishments of Chicago JACL Scholarship Program award recipients. It is also an opportunity to recognize and honor those whom on behalf many of the scholarships are given by generous individuals and organizations within the Japanese American community. Please RSVP by April 23, 2013 using the form below.



2013 Chicago JACL Scholarship Luncheon
Maggiano's Little Italy Restaurant
 (Westfield/Old Orchard Shopping Center, Skokie Blvd & Old Orchard Road)
Sunday May 5th, 12:00 pm
Please RSVP by April 23, 2013

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** Please take this opportunity to support our sponsor-a-grad program. Please donate even if you are unable to attend the luncheon. Any funds remaining after the luncheon expenses will be deposited in the Chicago Chapter JACL Scholarship Fund to be used for future scholarship & youth programs.*

Midwest District Council (MDC) Spring Meeting

The MDC Spring meeting will be held at the JACL office April 13-14.

Come and welcome the District delegates from the Wisconsin, Hoosier, St. Louis, Dayton, Cincinnati, Detroit, Houston, Twin Cities, and Omaha Chapters. All JACL members are welcome.

Sign Up Today!

Project Community Dates
April 20, April 27, May 4, May 11, May 18, May 25

Sessions include topics such as personal identity; Japanese American community history; and Asian American issues such as immigration reform and stereotypes and discrimination.

Contact Christine Munteanu at jacl.fellow@gmail.com for more information.

Welcome the New Program Coordinator

The JACL has hired Marisa Fujinaka as the 2013-2014 Program Coordinator for the Bridging Communities: Preserving the Legacy Program. The program is funded through the Japanese American Confinement Site (JACS) grant program, *Passing the Legacy Down: Youth Interpretations of Confinement Site in the Western United States*, and will be implemented through the JACL regional offices in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle and include on-site service learning projects at Manzanar National Historic Site, Minidoka Internment National Monument and Tule Lake National Monument. Marisa will be working closely with the regions and their interns, as well as NPS staff and local organizations. She currently working from the Chicago JACL office and is excited to be a part of the organization and program. She says, "I look forward to collaborating and engaging with such a motivated population on preserving the history of the Japanese American incarceration experience and the opportunity to visit these confinement sites." 🐾



Marisa graduated in 2008 from the University California Santa Cruz with a bachelor's degree in Psychology. Since graduation, she has received her California Multiple Subject Teacher Credential from San Francisco State University and was teaching in independent schools in Oakland. She moved to Chicago last September and is currently working towards her 200 hour Yoga Teacher Training Certification.

Thank You to Our Donors!

In Memory of Chiye Tomihiro

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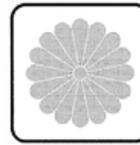
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2013 JAACL Chicago Inaugural

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Marigold Restaurant
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Building Leadership Across Communities

DATE & TIME

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Japanese American Citizens League

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The Japanese American Citizens League is a non-profit human and civil rights organization dedicated to preserving the civil liberties of Japanese Americans and of all Americans.

We welcome your participation.

Introducing “*The Way I See It . . .*” A new column to voice your opinion.

Have something you’d like to say? Submit your comments via email to chicago@jacl.org, or by mail to JACL Chicago Chapter, 5415 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60640-1294

The deadline for the May/June issue is Monday, April 15th.

Calendar of Events

Wednesday, March 13	Chicago JACL Board Meeting 7 PM, Chicago JACL Office
Wednesday, April 10	Chicago JACL Board Meeting 7 PM, Chicago JACL Office
Thursday, April 11	2013 JACL Inaugural Marigold Restaurant, 5413 North Clark St.
Friday, April 12 – Sunday, April 14	Spring Midwest District Meeting Chicago JACL Office
Sunday, May 5	Scholarship Luncheon 12 PM, Maggiano’s Little Italy Restaurant, Old Orchard Shopping Center
Wednesday, May 8	Chicago JACL Board Meeting 7 PM, Chicago JACL Office