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a newsletter of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Winter 2009

2009 Day of Remembrance to Highlight Common Roots Between

Japanese American Immigration History and Today's Immigrant Experience

By Kay Ochi

"Forging Alliances: Connecting Nikkei to Current Immigration" is the theme of the 2009 Los Angeles Day of Remembrance. The annual DOR program is slated for Saturday, February 21 from 2 to 4 pm at the Japanese American National Museum.



Lillian Nakano, center, speaks at the 2001 candlelight vigil in Little Tokyo held to honor victims of 9-11 terrorist attacks and remember the JA internment experience.

In addition to commemorating the unconstitutional incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, the program's theme reflects the organizing committee's desire to make connections between the JA immigration experience and that of today's immigrants. As the Nikkei community grows into its fourth and fifth generations in this country, it's remembrances of the difficulties of immigrants' lives become more distant.

Well-known scholar Professor Roger Daniels, the author of "Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II" and numerous works on the topic of immigration, will present the keynote address. Dr. Daniels will speak about the early JA immigrant experience and the factors that affected their lives.

The program will also feature the personal stories of several Issei that reflect the hardships and discrimination they faced. Students from

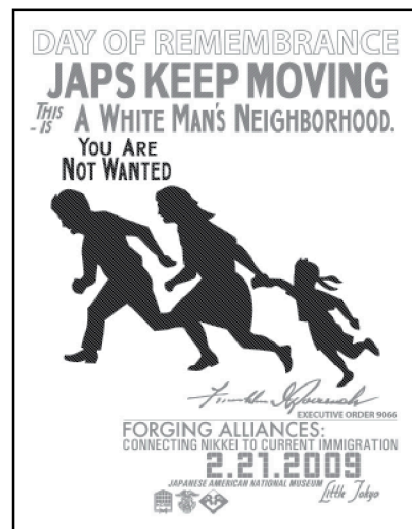
UCLA will share their personal experiences as recent immigrants and the obstacles they face in seeking higher education.

The 2009 DOR will mark the return to an NCRR tradition and present the Fighting Spirit Award to Lillian Nakano, a founding member of NCRR. This award is given to community members whose contributions to the redress campaign and their fighting spirit in the pursuit of justice make them exemplary. Nakano's dedication to the community, the redress movement and social justice spans many decades. An early leader in redress, she was a role model to the many women who participated in the campaign. Nakano's strength, conviction and willingness to speak out have been a source of inspiration to all who work with her.

The DOR will also feature local hip-hop artist Prophet who will perform pieces that he has created for this community program.

In addition to NCRR, the program is presented by JACL/PSW and the National Museum. The organizers gratefully acknowledge the important support of Dr. Lane Hirabayashi and the UCLA Asian Studies Center.

For more information, call NCRR at (213) 680-3484.



NCRR PRESERVES HISTORY WITH DIGITAL ARCHIVES

By Suzy Katsuda

In an effort to preserve over three decades of the history of NCRR and its involvement with the commemoration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's February 19, 1942 signing of Executive Order 9066, we established the Day of Remembrance Archives to remember the DORs of the past. Partly funded by the CCLPEP (California Civil Liberties Public Education Program), the DOR website includes more than 25 Days of Remembrance. The DOR Archives home page features all of the Los Angeles DOR posters, postcards and flyers. The DOR archives documents each of the programs with historical significance of DOR, scanned documents, original artwork, speakers, photos, presses coverage, and "Fighting Spirit" awardees given to deserving grass roots activists. Each year's DOR from 1981 through 2008 reflects NCRR efforts in the campaign to educate the public as to the unprecedented and unjust incarceration of over 110,000 Japanese Americans in United States concentration camps during WWII.

In addition to the DOR Archives, we recently included a Historic Redress Archives which takes NCRR's history from its Founding Conference in 1980 to its current work in support of other communities who have suffered from the violations of civil and constitutional rights in the name of national security, the excesses of presidential authority, and targeting of ethnic and religious minorities after the attacks of September 11, 2001. The Historic Redress Archives includes photos, press releases, articles, personal testimonials, etc., relating to all things Redress including the historic Commission Hearings in 1981, the 1987 Lobbying trip to Washington DC to lobby the House and the Senate for their support of the passage of the Civil Liberties Act on August 10th, 1988. Many groups were not included in the original Civil Liberties Act so the struggle for the various denied groups is also documented. The current struggle for justice for Japanese Latin Americans (Campaign for Justice) is also on the Redress Archives.

The archive committee consisted of Miles Hamada (webmaster), Janice Yen & Kay Ochi, co-coordinators, Edna Horiuchi and Suzy Katsuda. Please sign onto www.NCRR-LA.org for the DOR archives and the Historic Redress Archives stories.



Archives Committee Members (L-R): Suzy Katsuda, Edna Horiuchi, Janice Yen, Miles Hamada, Kay Ochi

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And More!



JAPANESE LATIN AMERICANS RAISE HOPES FOR JUSTICE IN 2009

By Richard Katsuda

The new year brings renewed energy and hope that Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs) will finally win the dignity and redemption that are so long overdue. Campaign for Justice: Justice Now for Japanese Latin Americans! (CFJ) is optimistic that newly-elected President Obama and the 111th Congress will create a political climate in which legislation providing justice for JLAs will gain passage.

CFJ has been working with Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-LA) since he first introduced redress legislation for JLAs in 2000. CFJ has also worked with Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), who introduced the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act in the Senate during the last session of Congress. Rep. Becerra and Rep. Mike Honda (D-San Jose) introduced the commission bill in the House of Representatives.

This bill is patterned after the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which held hearings on the Japanese American incarceration and made recommendations that were instrumental toward passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The bill would convene a commission to study the events surrounding the deportation and incarceration of Japanese



(L-R) Grace Shimizu, Craig Ishii, Richard Katsuda and Karen Parker explain the Japanese Latin American quest for justice.

Latin Americans during WWII and to recommend appropriate remedies to Congress.

It has been over twenty years since the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, yet JLAs are still waiting for their just redress. Time is of the essence, and so the commission would be charged with holding hearings and submitting its findings

and recommendations within twelve months of the bill's enactment.

Sen. Inouye and Rep. Becerra reintroduced the bill in the 111th Congress. In the coming year, CFJ will be providing outreach on college campuses and seeking allies among community organizations in order to build support for the bill. Recent events that CFJ has cosponsored include a community forum on October 25th at the National Center for the Preservation of Democracy in Little Tokyo and a campus event on November 13 at UCLA, in which "Hidden Internment: the Art Shibayama Story" was featured.

Watada Case Remains Open

By Kathy Masaoka

Lt. Ehren Watada, who was court-martialed for refusing to deploy to Iraq in 2006 and fight in a war that he believed was immoral and illegal, is still awaiting a decision by the military. In October 2008 U.S. District Judge Benjamin H. Settle of Tacoma said that, based on double jeopardy, the government could not retry 1st Lt. Ehren Watada on charges of missing his unit's deployment to Iraq in June 2006 and for denouncing President Bush and the war. The army had already tried him on these charges and had declared a mistrial. NCCR's delegation to that trial in February 2007 reported that, when it appeared that the trial was not going well, Judge Head strongly advised the army attorneys to find a reason to request a mistrial.

There are still two charges that remain which Judge Settle did not rule on since these charges, "conduct unbecoming an officer" for speaking to two reporters, were excluded from the court martial. Ehren had admitted speaking to the reporters so that they would not be required to appear and testify at the trial. Ehren remains on desk duty at Fort Lewis and awaits a response from the base's commanding general, Lt. General Charles H. Jacoby Jr. Until the military either decides to try Ehren on the remaining two charges, appeal the decision of Judge Settle's or dismiss the charges, he is in limbo and unable to leave the military. We hope that the military will drop the charges and allow Ehren to go on with his life. His father and stepmother, Bob Watada and Rosa Sakanishi, now living in Oregon and closer to him, are able to give Ehren greater support.

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NCRR CONTINUES COLLABORATION WITH MUSLIM COMMUNITY

By Kathy Masaoka

NCRR worked closely with the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) this past year. At the Manzanar Pilgrimage in 2007, the idea of bringing more Muslims from Southern California to the next pilgrimage was suggested. In March and April 2008, CAIR organized educationals and asked NCRR members to show the film "Pilgrimage" by Tad Nakamura and to give presentations on the incarceration of Japanese Americans to about mosques (Corona, Anaheim, Orange County, Hawthorne and San Diego). CAIR was able to bring almost 80 to 100 people to the pilgrimage and the experience was moving for both the Muslim and Japanese American communities. CAIR also created a film which was shown at their annual dinner attended by over 2000 people. The film included many of the NCRR members who spoke at the mosques.

Because we wanted to continue to work together with CAIR and with the JACL Pacific Southwest District, we decided to apply for a grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP). Through the hard work of Craig Ishii, JACL Regional Director, NCRR and JACL was awarded the grant to work on a project bringing about 15 JA and 15 Muslim high school youth together for four Saturday sessions to increase an understanding of each other's community as well as build relationships for the long term. It will start with the Day of Remembrance on Feb. 21 and will end with the Manzanar Pilgrimage in April and will include a session at a mosque led by CAIR as well as a creative workshop led by Nobuko Miyamoto of Great Leap. The session in Little Tokyo will include a tour of Little Tokyo and skits on the history of both Muslims and Japanese Americans in the United States. Mar Elepano, who teaches film and animation at USC, will help students create stories and a film. There will be lots of interactive activities as well as blogging in between the sessions so that they can get to know each other better. We hope they will learn about each other's culture, history and community and build a basis for mutual support in the future. Planning is under way with representatives of CAIR and the Shura Council and applications are being accepted until the slots are filled. (See right for more details.)



(L-R) Panel members Wilbur Sato, Karen Ishizuka and Bob Nakamura listen to CAIR speaker.

Bridging Communities Program

The Japanese American Citizens League Pacific Southwest District (JACL PSW) and Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress (NCRR) in partnership with the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the Islamic Shura Council announce the launch of the Bridging Communities program to connect the youth of the Japanese American community to the Muslim American community by celebrating the strengths and differences that bind us as a community.

WHAT: Through a series of interactive sessions, 40 high school students will engage in workshops with discussions and group activities as well as visit sites that will allow the participants to fully engage and learn about the Muslim and Japanese cultures. These sessions will focus on topics ranging from ethnic identity, culture/religion, civil rights, and activism.

WHY: Since 9/11 and the start of the Iraq War, Muslim communities throughout the nation have experienced heightened hostility, discrimination, and policies that work against them simply because of their ethnic identity. JACL and NCRR recognize the hostilities and civil rights infringements on Muslim communities as those that were similarly forced upon Japanese Americans during WWII. The joint effort of both communities will heighten awareness through education to the youth.

WHERE: Tentative sites include the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, Little Tokyo, and Manzanar.

WHEN: Four Saturday Sessions in Spring 2009: 2/21/09, 3/14/09, 4/4/09, 4/25/09

Applications for the program will be available in December and will be accepted until the slots are filled. Applications and more information can be found at www.jaclpsw.org. For questions or further information, contact the JACL Pacific Southwest District office at (213) 626-4471 or email chrislay@ucla.edu.



NCRR's Year in Pictures

2008 was another busy year for NCRR. In addition to the work described in this newsletter, NCRR marched in the Nisei Week parade (right), was honored by the Nisei Week Committee (left bottom), organized a panel and exhibit on Japanese in Cuba (left top and middle), and had a holiday party in the social room of the Teramachi housing complex (below). 2009 looks to be another full year!



NCRR EDUCATION COMMITTEE GOES ON THE ROAD WITH “STAND UP FOR JUSTICE” TEACHER WORKSHOPS

By Janice Yen

2008 was another very busy year for the Education Committee. The Ralph Lazo film “Stand Up for Justice” and curriculum materials were presented at several teacher conferences and at local school district workshops. The “commercial DVD” of “Stand Up for Justice” drew closer to becoming reality. NCRR members, including Education Committee members, spoke about the World War II experience of Japanese Americans at Muslim mosques and community centers throughout Southern California.

Teachers Richard Katsuda, Patty and Steve Nagano, Kathy Masaoka, and Kay Ochi conducted several “Stand Up for Justice” workshops in Northern and Southern California. The workshops were designed to give teachers training in the use of the Lazo DVD and curriculum materials.



Kay Ochi presents at the Los Angeles Unified School District Human Relations workshop at California State University at Los Angeles.

Workshops at the California Teachers Human Rights Conference, the California Council for Social Studies, and United Teachers of Los Angeles were made possible by grants from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, the Takahashi Charitable Foundation, and Japanese American Community Services. This year NCRR partnered with Japanese American Museum of San Jose’s Agnes Idemoto to train Santa Clara County teachers in the use of the film and teacher’s guide.

The Committee anticipates that “Stand Up for Justice” will be available to the community some time in 2009. Visual Communications has completed the Spanish and Japanese subtitles, and additional film footage and commentaries have been edited into a supplementary making-of “Stand Up for Justice” segment.

2008 saw the continued strengthening of ties between the Japanese American and Muslim communities. June Hibino, Kathy Masaoka, Patty and Steve Nagano and Kay Ochi joined other NCRR members to discuss the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans at NCRR/JACL/Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) sponsored programs in the Muslim community (see Bridging Communities article).

With the reality of severe 2009 budget cuts



Kathy Masaoka, Carrie Morita and Suzy Katsuda promote “Stand Up for Justice” at the July Japanese American National Museum conference in Denver, CO.



Kay Ochi discusses “Stand Up for Justice” teacher’s guide.

facing California schools, it is anticipated that fewer teachers will be able to attend statewide conferences. NCRR plans to outreach directly to high school teachers who have attended past workshops and encourage them to conduct workshops at their own schools. Since March 2007 over 1000 “Stand Up for Justice” curriculum packets have been distributed free to California educators.

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Details Inside!