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a newsletter of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Winter
2013

2013 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT

By Kay Ochi

The 2013 Day of Remembrance (DOR) will take place on Saturday, February 16 from 2 to 4PM at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Little Tokyo. The theme of this year's commemoration is "25th Anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988: Our Struggle, Our Perseverance, Our Commitment."

The program is a collaborative effort of NCR, the Japanese American Citizens League/PSWD, the Manzanar Committee and JANM, and continues over 30-year tradition in Los Angeles and across the nation of commemorating President Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066 and the impact on the Japanese American community of World War II and subsequent generations.

During the commemorative portion of the DOR, a memorial tribute will be made to the late Senator Daniel Inouye and other community members and friends who have passed away during the past year, including Tokihiro Shiroishi, former Congressman Mervyn Dymally, James Hirabayashi, John Saito, Jimmy Mirikitani and others.

A panel of community activists will address key issues related to the Civil Liberties Act—what the Act accomplished, what it failed to address, the lessons learned and the legacy for the community. NCR Co-Chair and long-time grassroots activist Richard Katsuda, Manzanar Committee founding member and Executive Director of the California Forensic Science Institute at Cal State LA Rose Ochi and JACL representative Dr. Mitch Maki will address the issues. Bruce Embrey, Manzanar Committee Co-Chair, will moderate.

Also invited to speak is Anan Ameri, the Executive



NCR's historic 1987 lobbying delegation to Washington, DC.

Director of the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. Ms. Ameri will be in Los Angeles to help open JANM's newest exhibit, "Patriots & Peacemakers: Arab Americans in Service to Our Country" that opens on Feb. 16. This exhibit was created to honor Arab Americans who have served this country in the US Armed Forces, the Peace Corps and the diplomatic corps, and reflects their contributions and perspectives.

Students from the University of Southern California's Nikkei Association, Brandon Uchimura and April Nishinaka, will present a "pechakucha" style slide show to recall the major events of the redress movement that led to the signing of the CLA. The pechakucha format includes approximately 20 slides with a maximum of 20 seconds of narration for each slide.

Serving as emcees for the DOR are the newly appointed Regional Director of the JACL/PSWD Stephanie Nitahara, and Soji Kashiwagi, Executive Producer of the Grateful Crane Ensemble.

The event will conclude with a reception catered by Carrie's Community Caterers. For further information, contact NCR at (213) 284-0336.

Book Project: The NCR Story

By Richard Katsuda

For many years, we in NCR have been talking about publishing a book about our grassroots work in the redress movement and other campaigns against injustice. NCR has always kept itself grounded by activating members of the community to speak out for redress/reparations and against injustices that have arisen over the years. We have done this without fanfare but with great resolve that the grassroots community must ultimately exercise its voice and power.

However, we have come to realize that NCR's experiences and lessons learned must be shared with

a larger audience: those in our community who were not aware of our role but might be interested and even inspired to work with the community, and young people of all communities looking for examples of groups who have successfully worked with the grass roots.

Over this last period, we've talked about how to seek a book publisher and what kind of format we would use in our book. In this process, we were very fortunate to obtain the support of Dr. Art Hansen, professor emeritus at Cal State Fullerton and pioneering historian on the Japanese American incarceration, who generously took

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Bridging Communities 2013 – Participants

By Kathy Masaoka

Welcome for Program's Fifth Year

NCRRR has continued to sponsor the Bridging Communities (BC) program since its inception. In 2009 we partnered with JACL's then-Regional Director to write a CCLPEP grant for a program that would bring Japanese American and American Muslim high school youth together to learn about each other's history, culture, beliefs and communities.

NCRRR had a history of work with the American Muslim community since 2001 and the idea for this program grew out of that work along with the participation of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) in the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage. Shakeel Syed of the Shura Council expressed the hope that the young people could continue to build connections throughout the year and not just at Manzanar. CAIR, JACL and



Keisho Maehara, son of Meg Imamoto and Aki Maehara as well as Alina Nakano, daughter of Erich and Sandra Nakano and granddaughter of Bert and Lillian Nakano, participated in both BC 1 and BC 2. Alina shared some of her thoughts about Bridging Communities: "My years in BC taught me a lot about both my culture as well as American Muslim culture. I also learned a lot about the daily struggles of American Muslims after 9/11. BC is special because I learned about these struggles and American Muslim culture from my American Muslim peers, so it was more real to me than it would have been otherwise. BC also taught me that we shouldn't try to ignore or differences, but appreciate them."

Because the program runs on a shoestring with one part-time coordinator and representatives from each of the groups who help develop the curriculum and run the workshop, each organization is responsible to raise \$1000. This year we hope to raise the funds with a new Bridging Communities T-shirt, designed by David Monkawa. We plan to have order forms available at the Day of Remembrance program on February 16. If you would like to support the Bridging Communities program now, please send your donation to NCRRR. We still have the DVD, "Passing Down the Legacy" made by Marissa Kitazawa and Alexandra Margolin. You can request a copy of the DVD for a donation of \$20.



NCRRR were the early sponsors of the program which now also includes Kizuna, a new organization that has taken a lead in organizing programs for youth.

Last year we decided to work with youth who had either participated in BC before or one of Kizuna's or CAIR's youth programs to try to include an action-oriented part to the program where the youth could deepen their understanding of each other's communities by working together. They created a video on stereotypes, planned a basketball clinic for younger children, participated in distributing food and health products to homeless in Orange County and shared what they learned by leading the parents and guests in some of the workshops.

This year we are going back to the original curriculum and invite high school aged youth to apply for the program. The program consists of seven very interactive sessions beginning on February 9 at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center and culminates on June 8 at the Islamic Center of Orange County. All the sessions begin at 9AM and end at 1PM except for the trip to Manzanar in April. For more information and to apply, please visit: <http://www.kizuna-la.org/programs/bridging-communities/>

Bridging Communities is not a program that most Japanese American youth would normally be exposed to but all have learned a lot by participating in it and have moved on to other programs offered by Kizuna and others groups in the community. Some of the participants were children of NCRRR members. Both

NCRRR Book Project, continued from page 1

the time to meet with our book committee and gave us insightful recommendations.

We are also pleased to announce that Dr. Lane Hirabayashi, UCLA's Aratani Professor of the Japanese American Internment, Redress, and Community, has agreed to be the editor for our book. Dr. Hirabayashi fondly recalls his experiences with NCRRR when he lived in Gardena in the early 1980s and has maintained a strong bond with us.

Over the last couple of months, the book committee has been collecting articles from people who have worked with NCRRR over the years, and there has been a lot of excitement generated from the writings. Contributors have expressed the life-transforming power of their experiences working with NCRRR. The book project is finally on its way, and we hope to have it completed this year.

NCCR Education Committee Stays Busy in 2012

By Janice Yen

2012 Education Committee activities began on a high note on January 20 with a Phoenix, Arizona screening of Stand Up for Justice, the Ralph Lazo Story. At the invitation of Ted Namba and the Phoenix JACL, NCCR presented the Lazo film to an appreciative multicultural, multi-generational audience at Phoenix College.

The program included a taiko performance by Ken Koshio, the screening of the film, and a panel discussion with NCCR's Kathy Masaoka, two interneers, Marian Tadano and Mas Inoshita, and Peter Garcia, president of the Victoria Foundation. Five NCCR members (Patty and Steve Nagano, Carrie Morita, Suzy Katsuda, and Kathy Masaoka) flew to Phoenix for the presentation and stayed an extra day or two to learn more about nearby Arizona incarceration sites.



Patty, Steve, Carrie, Mas, and Kathy in Phoenix. (Photo by Suzy Katsuda)

During the year committee members promoted Stand Up for Justice at more



Panelists Kathy Masaoka and Mas Inoshita address Phoenix College audience. (Photo by Steve Nagano)

than 15 presentations, including teacher-training workshops and community screenings (see the complete list on NCCR's website: www.ncrr-la.org). The Pasadena Unified School District passed a resolution in which Stand Up for Justice was recommended as a resource for Pasadena schools.

We were thrilled when we found out that Satomi Honjiyo earned a trip to Washington DC based partially on her Girls Scout project on Stand Up for Justice. She and seven fellow award-winning Girl Scouts met with President Barack Obama in the Oval Office. Then in

November Patty and Steve Nagano ended the year by screening Stand Up for Justice at the National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME) conference in Philadelphia, PA.

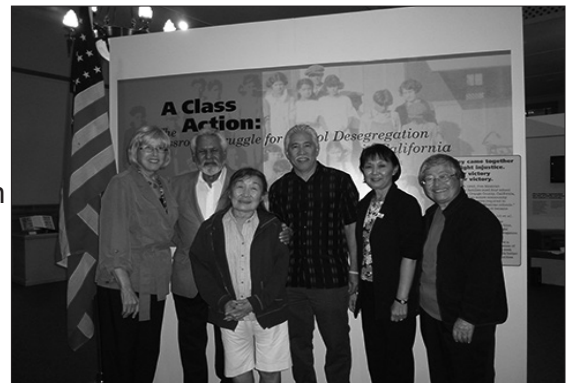
The committee spent a significant amount of time in 2012 selecting 20 testimonies from the 1981 Los Angeles Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) hearings for inclusion on the Densho website. The committee reviewed



Screening for 100 employees at the downtown L.A. Southern Cal Gas Company. (Photo by Janice Yen)

all 157 testimonies recorded by Visual Communications and NCCR in 1981 (compiled in a 13-DVD set called Speak Out for Justice)

before selecting the final 20. The 20 chosen reflect a variety of impacts (among them economic, psychological, mental and physical health, family separation, legal, resettlement) on Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II Densho, Visual Communications, and NCCR signed a restricted use agreement to make the 20 testimonies available on the Densho website. Look for the Speak Out testimonies on Densho some time in 2013.



Greta Nagel and Gonzalo Mendez with Suzy, Steve, Patty, and Janice at the Santa Ana Old Courthouse screening of SUFJ.

NCCR and Visual Communications have continued to meet and inform each other on Stand Up for Justice screenings, revenue from sales of the DVD, and activities using excerpts from Speak Out for Justice. Approximately 1800 Stand Up for Justice curriculum guides have been distributed to California teachers. Workshops and screenings will continue in 2013, and we hope to make progress on making Speak Out for Justice menu driven and available for sale.

SATOMI GOES TO WASHINGTON

By Amy Honjiyo

As part of the 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouts United States of America (GSUSA), Satomi Honjiyo and seven other Girl Scouts from across the nation were invited to meet President Obama in the Oval Office on June 8, 2012. All eight scouts were Gold Award recipients, the highest achievement and awarded to only 5% of all eligible scouts. Satomi is the daughter of Amy Utsunomiya Honjiyo and Reid Honjiyo of Monterey Park, California.

Satomi earned her Gold Award project using the docudrama about Ralph Lazo, "Stand Up for Justice", which was produced by Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress (NCRR) and Visual Communications. When asked how she chose her project, Satomi explained, "First, I was advised that



Girl Scout Satomi Honjiyo (second from right) with President Obama.
(Photo by Amy Honjiyo)

the Gold Award should be a project that the Scout truly believes is personally important, something that you could work on with conviction. I remembered seeing a documentary about a teenager who stood up for what he believed in. The movie impressed me; it was a true story about a young person."

"When I started to brainstorm about a Gold Award project, I realized that I wanted to share this teenager's story and lead discussions about young people's values and their experiences about standing up for their beliefs. I believe that young people may know when something is not right, but are too afraid to stand up and do anything about it. I think it is important to start with the idea that people should not be afraid to share their feelings and at the same time, learn to respect and appreciate our differences."

Before meeting the President, the White House arranged for individual meetings for the Scouts with White House staff that were interested in the Scout's Gold Award project. Satomi met with two representatives; Gautam Raghavan, Associate Director Office of Public Engagement and Shin Inouye, Director of Specialty Media, Office of Communications who knew about the camps but did not know of Ralph Lazo.

As they completed their meetings and walked toward the Oval Office, President Obama opened the door and welcomed them into his office. "All the Scouts gasped and were speechless," said Satomi. "Before our visit, I studied photos of the Oval Office but while I was in the Oval Office I only saw President Obama. He was inspiring and a very good listener. I'll always remember my visit with the President." Obama congratulated them on achieving the Gold Award and told them that he looks forward to seeing what good things they will do in the future. President Obama recognized Girl Scouts founder, Juliette Gordon Low with the highest civilian award, the Medal of Freedom during this 100th anniversary of Girl Scouts in America.

In March 2012, Satomi was selected to be a Girl Scout Great, someone who inspires others. She has been a scout for 13 years and is currently a Girl Scout Lifetime member. She will be heading off to Japan to study at Temple University, Tokyo campus to improve her Japanese speaking skills and plans to pursue a career in fashion design.

Satomi said, "With the support of my advisor Patty Nagano, I was able to share the documentary, Stand Up for Justice: The Ralph Lazo Story which gave me an opportunity to share how a Mexican American teenager made the decision to accompany his Japanese American friends to the Manzanar concentration camp because he did not think it was right for the Japanese to be sent away." Satomi made seven presentations and held discussions at the Monterey Park Library Teen Club, East Los Angeles Community College, Monterey Park Language School, Brightwood School Girl Scouts Troop, San Gregonio Council Girl Scouts Troop and 2 neighborhood presentations. The neighborhood presentations included many neighbors who were interned during WWII.

Nagano, a member of the Education Committee of NCRR commented, "We are very proud of Satomi and her accomplishments. Satomi is a perfect example of why the film was made - to inspire youth to stand up for justice."

Remembering Two NCRR Heroes

By Suzy Katsuda

NCRR mourns the loss of two heroes for our organization: Congressman Mervyn Dymally and Toki Shiroishi.

Mervyn Dymally was born in Trinidad and arrived in the US at the age of 19. He was elected the first foreign-born black California Assemblyman in 1962, first black California state senator in 1966 and first black lieutenant governor in 1974 under Gov. Jerry Brown. Dymally introduced redress legislation in 1982 that sought individual monetary reparations of \$25,000 before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) issued its findings. The bill did not pass, but it provided impetus for this issue among members of Congress.

The CWRIC released its report, "Personal Justice Denied: in 1983. Its recommendations included individual monetary reparations of \$20,000. House Majority Leader Jim Wright introduced a bill incorporating the commission's recommendations. The bill was reintroduced in 1985, passed by the House in 1987 and signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1988. Mervyn Dymally was instrumental in our organizing during our historic 1987 lobbying trip to Washington DC by 141 NCRR and supporters.



Toki Shiroishi passed away on October 29th after suffering a second and major stroke. She was born in Tokyo where she was brought up by her brother since her birth parents passed away when she was very young. She married Tom Shiroishi (a long haul truck driver and fervent NCRR supporter) whom she met while working as a waitress in Little Tokyo. She had a son from a former marriage and had a son and daughter with Tom.



Toki and Tom went on our historical NCRR 1987 lobbying trip to Washington DC where we lobbied members of Congress for the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Toki loved traveling and went solo to Egypt, Vietnam, China, Europe and Peru after Tom's passing in 1990.

She single-handedly arranged funding for a couple of lunches for NCRR members to congratulate us for our work on redress. She loved nature and traveled with Tom and their children to visit the National Parks.

Toki was fiercely independent, strong-willed and self sufficient. She did things her way and made no apologies about it. She was very unique and will be missed by her children and grandchildren and all of us in NCRR.



Are You a Member? NCRR Needs You to Renew! Not a Member? Join Now!

NCRR is a not-for-profit organization that operates solely on grants and contributions from individuals like you. In order to keep up the fight for civil rights and justice, we need you to join or renew your membership today.

NCRR Membership Levels (tax deductible)

- \$30 One year
- \$15 Students, seniors and low-income one year
- \$500 Lifetime membership

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NCRR OUT AND ABOUT IN 2012



NCRR continued to support the struggle of Korean “comfort women” to obtain reparations from the Japanese government. At left, David Monkawa spoke on behalf of NCRR in support of the “comfort women” at a rally at the Japanese Consulate (below). (Photos by Janice Yen)



Mr. Okamoto and Mr. Yamada, two skilled Fukushima veterans, spoke about the tsunami-damaged nuclear reactor in Fukushima, Japan. (Photo by Janice Yen)

Lucia Lin, Kathy Masaoka, Janice Yen and John Yen at a downtown May Day anti-Walmart rally (Photo courtesy of CCED)



The Islamic Center and Muslim Public Affairs Council honored Kathy Masaoka and NCRR for their ongoing support of the Muslim community (Photo by Janice Yen)



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DOR 2013: February 16, 2013

“25th Anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act: Our Struggle, Our Perseverance, Our Commitment”

Details Inside!