



2003 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE: RACE PREJUDICE, WAR HYSTERIA, FAILURE OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP—THEN & NOW

By Kay Ochi

Congressman Mike Honda (D- CA) has been invited to be the keynote speaker of the 2003 Day of Remembrance (DOR) which will be held on Saturday, Feb. 15 at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) in Little Tokyo from 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM.

Sponsored by NCCR, the Pacific Southwest District Japanese American Citizens League and JANM, the Congressman will address the issues of the DOR's theme, "Race Prejudice, War Hysteria and Failure of Political Leadership—Then and Now."

The 1982 federal Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) determined that race prejudice, war hysteria, and failure of political leadership were the broad historical causes of the internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. The DOR committee is very aware that these factors are threatening the nation once again.

"As we commemorate Feb. 19, 1942 and its aftermath, American Arabs, Muslims and South Asians are being targeted based on the same factors. The detentions in Cuba and the treatment of Americans who protest the policies of the government are clear violations of the rights that are prescribed in the Constitution.

"Also, the DOR Committee recognizes and applauds the Asian Pacific Islander Congressional members for voting against granting President Bush the authority for a unilateral, first strike attack against Iraq," stated Kay Ochi, NCCR co-chair.

The DOR program also includes highlights of the film project, "Stand Up for Justice," the Ralph Lazo story. Visual Communications and NCCR have been collaborating on this 30-minute documentary about Lazo, the only non-Asian, non-spouse to live in Manzanar concentration camp during WWII. (See story, right.)

The program is free, but reservations are required. Call JANM at (213) 625-0414 for reservations. For more information, call NCCR at (213) 680-3484.

TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

As a community-based civil rights organization, NCCR relies on your membership dues to support events such as DOR, Summer Activist Training, educational forums and projects that we report about in the Banner. Please fill out and send in the membership form on the back cover of this newsletter.

Historic Lazo Docu-Drama Completes Filming

By Janice Harumi Yen, Associate Producer



Film shoot at Fillmore train station. Photo by Steve Nagano at the train museum in Fillmore, California and at the Manzanar National Historic site.

The 30-minute film explores the endearing values of friendship and loyalty between teenagers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and educates viewers about the hardships and deprivation of civil liberties that Japanese Americans (JAs) faced during World War II.

Ralph Lazo was a Mexican-Irish American who spent just over two years at Manzanar as a voluntary internee. His closest friends were fellow high school students of Japanese descent who were abruptly and involuntarily removed from their homes and communities by the US government in 1942. Ralph decided, much to the surprise of his Nisei friends, to join them on the train to Manzanar. He maintained lifelong friendships with his JA friends, and more than forty years later became active in the redress movement.

NCCR has long-wanted to capture Ralph Lazo's story on film. Honored posthumously by NCCR at the 1992 DOR in Los Angeles, Ralph never sought recognition for himself. During the years he lobbied for redress for JAs, Lazo insisted that the spotlight focus on his friends' unjust incarceration.

Lazo. Cont. on Page 2

JANICE HARUMI YEN TO BE HONORED WITH NCCR FIGHTING SPIRIT AWARD

Janice Harumi Yen, community activist and founding member of NCCR, has been selected as the recipient of NCCR's 2003 Fighting Spirit Award for her over 22-year commitment to redress and her many contributions to NCCR and the community. Yen will be honored at the Day of Remembrance program on Feb. 15.

As a member of the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization during the late 1970's, Yen worked on housing issues on behalf of the Little Tokyo hotel residents. Throughout the 1980's she worked concertedly on the campaign to win reparations for former internees and evacuees. Yen stated that the highlight of her NCCR activities was helping to get the government to pay reparations.

She is also proud of her work with the Japanese American Bar Association lawyers during the 1990's who fought for redress through lawsuits for those former internees and evacuees who had been denied reparations by the government.

Most recently, Yen participated on NCCR's delegation to Cuba for an educational and cultural exchange with Japanese Cubans, and she currently serves as the Associate Producer on "Stand Up for Justice," the Ralph Lazo story, a documentary film produced by Visual Communications and NCCR.

"Please join us at the 2003 Day of Remembrance to help thank Janice for her decades of commitment and service to our community and to civil liberties issues. She truly exemplifies the best qualities of a devoted community volunteer and activist," stated Kathy Masaoka, NCCR co-chair.



Janice Yen with husband John Yen.

FIRST STREET NORTH STILL ONLY VIABLE SITE FOR LITTLE TOKYO REC CENTER

By Christina Shigemura

Despite the assurances of renowned architect Hayahiko Takase that the Little Tokyo Recreation Center could be built underground in such a way that it will not disrupt the planned Central Avenue Art Park or create additional noise for East West Players, elitist forces are conspiring to keep the Rec Center off the city-owned block north of First Street. Although Takase's plan for an underground Rec Center effectively addresses the concerns that the Japanese American National Museum, the Geffen Contemporary Museum, East-West Players and the Go For Broke Monument had raised previously about the proposed presence of the Rec Center on First Street North, the City of Los Angeles still has not granted the Rec Center a lease because JANM and the Geffen have expressed their disapproval of the project to LA City District Nine Councilwoman Jan Perry.

At the heart of the Rec Center controversy is a conflict between two very different visions for Little Tokyo. One vision expresses a goal of status—Little Tokyo as a tourist destination with elite museums as the centerpiece. In this vision, the presence of actual Japanese Americans is largely unnecessary except to donate money and volunteer hours at JANM. In the vision supported by NCRP and many others, however, Little Tokyo is seen as a living community rather than as a commodity. As the cultural, historical and geographical home for Japanese Americans in the greater Los Angeles area as well as for many people of other ethnicities, Little Tokyo needs affordable housing, a recreation center and many other amenities to address the needs of the people who live, work and gather in Little Tokyo.

Councilwoman Perry has encouraged the Little Tokyo Service Center to consider the former location of St. Vibiana's Cathedral on the block bordered by Second, Los Angeles and Main Streets. However, neither the city nor developer Tom Gilmore has been able to secure the land. Only one of the three parcels of land at the St. Vibiana's location has been purchased, and this single parcel is not big enough by itself to accommodate the Rec Center. Unless the other two parcels at the St. Vibiana's site can be secured, First Street North is the only viable location for the Rec Center. For updates on the Rec Center, visit <http://reccenter.itsc.org> or call 213/473-1690.

See more photos and stories at
www.ncrr-la.org

Lazo, Cont. from Page 1
during WWII. *Stand Up for Justice* is Ralph's story recreated through interviews with his Nisei friends. It is NCRP's and Visual Communications' tribute to Lazo, a true friend of the JA community.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Ralph Lazo's life has generated much interest among members of the JA community and others interested in history, civil rights and community relations. Over 100 persons volunteered to be "extras" in the film; friends and businesses generously donated meals for the cast and crew; and the production members worked at reduced rates or volunteered their services in order to assure that the filming phase of the story was completed. Individuals belonging to groups such as the Manzanar Reunion Committee, the Manzanar Pilgrimage, East West Players and Cedar Grove Productions served as consultants to the project.

The morning film "shoot" at the Fillmore train museum was a true display of community involvement. With only five hours available for filming, the *Stand Up for Justice* project initiated the day at 4:00 AM at Visual Communications for the costuming, hair styling and make-up of the more than 80 extras and actors. At the same time, the crew and supporting services assembled at the train station to prepare the site for filming. By 5:45 AM the first busload of extras had left for Fillmore.

PRODUCTION TEAM

NCRP Education members Patty Nagano and Kathy Masaoka spent hours recruiting "extras," assisted the costume designers in fitting the volunteers in period clothing, and worked with Director Esaki to choose background for the daily film shoot. Suzy Katsuda and Kay Ochi were in charge of craft services, which meant providing the cast and crew with three meals-a-day on a limited food budget. Suzy and Kay coordinated the many donations of meals and won the acclaim of the production team for the quality and variety of meals they provided.

Esaki and Kato assembled a professional cast and crew that worked tirelessly during production. Because there was a time gap between the filming of the train scene at Fillmore and the remainder of the scenes, Esaki and Kato had to assemble two separate production units. Among the crew, Janice Tanaka and Moises Valez, the Production Managers, admirably brought together the daily logistical elements. Michael Chin served as Director of Photography (DP) for the train scene and Dean Hayasaka was the DP for the other scenes including the Manzanar outdoor scenes. Naomi Yoshida Rodriguez was the Costume Designer for the train scene and Steven Lee headed the Costume Design department for the second production unit. Kumiko Sato was chief of the Hair/Makeup department for the train scene while Cindy Nakadaira was the Head Hairstylist and Heema Arie the Head Make Up Artist for the rest of the film. Sound Mixer for the train scene was Jon Oh and Curtis Choy mixed the sound for the second production unit. Art Director for both units was Akeime Mitterlehner. The First Assistant Director, Ken Wada, who helped to produce a DOR during the 1990's, kept both crews on schedule.

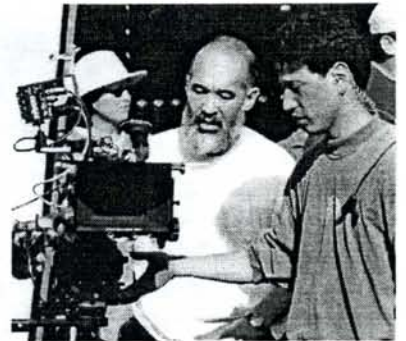
POST-PRODUCTION

With the filming completed, post-production begins soon. Members of the post-production team will weave the raw footage into the 30-minute *Stand Up for Justice* docu-drama. Music, historic film footage from World War II and titles will be added to maximize the artistic impact of the film. Plans for distribution and marketing of the videotape to schools and libraries will be finalized.

FUNDRAISING

Stand Up for Justice has received grants from the federal Civil Liberties Public Education Fund and the California State Civil Liberties Public Education Program. In addition, Eastman Kodak donated the super-16 mm film stock used in filming the docu-drama. Donations have also been received from numerous individuals and organizations.

Because the grants and donations thus far received do not cover the total projected cost of *Stand Up for Justice*, more funds are needed. Your help is needed to complete this important film. For more information, e-mail NCRP at ncrrla@yahoo.com. Send tax-deductible donations to NCRP at 231 E. Third Street, Suite G-104, LA, CA 90013 or to Visual Communications at 120 Judge John Aiso St., LA, CA 90012 and indicate that the donation is for *Stand Up for Justice*.



Cinematographers Micheal Chin and Dean Hayasaka. Photo by Janice Yen.



NCRP members Steve Nagano and Suzy Katsuda prepare the food table. Photo by Janice Yen.



Prop Master Janet De Paiva prepares East LA house for filming. Photo by Janice Yen.

NCCR 9/11 Committee Continues to Build Links *By Kathy Masaoka*

Over the past year the NCCR 9/11 Committee has continued to build links with the Arab American, American Muslim and South Asian communities. On Sept. 9, the committee was recognized "for exemplary contribution towards promoting peace, justice and harmony in the community after the attack on American on September 11, 2001" by the Islamic Center of Southern California, who presented the Muslim Appreciation Award to several individuals including Mayor Hahn and Robin Toma of the Human Relations Commission and to one organization, NCCR. To remember the victims of Sept. 11 and to express our support to the Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities here, the committee initiated a candlelight vigil held in Little Tokyo on Sept. 10.

Second Break the Fast Program Held at Senshin

On Nov. 16, NCCR and members of the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) organized a Break the Fast program at Senshin Buddhist Temple. Over 200 people from Senshin, MPAC and the broader Japanese American community attended the event. During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims take no food or water during the daylight hours and break their fast only when the sun goes down. This is also a time for thinking good thoughts and performing charitable acts. Rev. Mas Kodani of Senshin shared the Buddhist perspectives and explained the rituals of chanting and incense offering while Hedab El Tarifi of MPAC conducted a question and answer session on Islam.

The program included Muslim prayers and a potluck dinner with plenty of time for people to get to know each other. During the cultural exchange, children from the New Horizon school sang, Dr. Saleh Kholaki read some verses of the Koran and Johnny Mori and George Abe played the taiko drums. The signing of a joint resolution by members of MPAC, NCCR and all attendees culminated the evening.

Part of the resolution read: "We American Muslims and Japanese Americans share many values and have common commitments, among them reverence for the dignity and honor of every human being. Our communities, represented by MPAC and NCCR Sept. 11 Committee, pledge to further strengthen our dialogue to promote peace and justice in the community and safeguard our civil liberties. In the spirit of celebrating our diversity, we gather to share a Ramadan iftar at the Senshin Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles, on Saturday, November 16, 2002."

In this spirit, the NCCR 9/11 Committee encourages the community to express its concern and opposition to any racial profiling and violations of the constitutional rights of people in the Arab American, American Muslim and South Asian communities.

INS Registration Targets Arab Americans, American Muslims and South Asians

In early December, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) announced plans to register and interview nonimmigrant males, 16 years and older from certain countries, mainly Middle Eastern. Wanting to cooperate with the government, organizations in these communities encouraged people to comply with the special registration plan, called the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). Due to a backlog in the INS, many people have been waiting for their applications for permanent residency as much as five years. Others are waiting for their applications for status-adjustments to be approved and in the meantime their visas have become invalid. Despite their fears, thousands of people did register and several hundred were then detained and jailed for visa violations.

Many organizations in the Arab American, American Muslim and South Asian communities are protesting these mass arrests and constitutional rights violations, calling for a suspension and review of this registration program. They are calling on supporters to be monitors to observe the registration at the INS offices. MPAC called for an end of the registration program at their annual convention and have asked people to support the letter written to Attorney General John Ashcroft by Senator Edward Kennedy, Senator Russel Feingold and Congressman John Conyers. They are asking for people to call or write Attorney General John Ashcroft at US Department of Justice, 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001; Phone: (202) 353-1555; Email: askDOJ@usdoj.gov

For more information, please visit MPAC's website: broadcast@mpacnews.org



Dr. Saleh Kholaki reads the Koran at the Break the Fast.

NCCR SUPPORTS SUSPENDED ASSI SUPERMARKET WORKERS

By Richard Katsuda

NCCR sponsored a car wash on January 4 to support 56 workers who were suspended on August 1, 2002, from their jobs at Koreatown's Assi Supermarket. Assi Market owner Daniel Rhee claimed their "indefinite non-disciplinary suspension" was a result of a "no-match" letter from the Social Security Administration (SSA) that indicated that certain workers' names and social security numbers did not match. However, the SSA stated that their letter was merely a courtesy notice and not intended to be used in any adverse action against the workers.

Of the 56 placed on suspension, 50 are Latino and 6 are Korean. The suspensions are viewed by the employees as retaliation for efforts to organize the Assi Market workers. In January 2002, Latino worker representatives had filed employment discrimination charges with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), stating that Latino workers were subjected to poorer working conditions than Koreans, faced retaliation and harassment, and received different terms and conditions of employment. They also charged that Latino workers were denied employment due to national origin.

In September 2002, after the suspensions had been implemented, the EEOC ruled that Assi Market had committed massive violations under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The EEOC determined that Latino workers as a class (meaning as a group of approximately 75 Latinos) had been subjected to harassment, different terms and conditions of employment, and retaliation. The ruling also stated that Latino workers, as a class, had been subjected to a hostile work environment and had been denied employment due to their national origin.

According to EEOC procedures, conciliation meetings were to be held to resolve the violations. Each employee of the class (of approximately 75 Latino workers) is entitled to an award of up to \$100,000, which could total approximately \$7.5 million. However, because Assi Market has failed to participate in the reconciliation meetings, the Immigrant Workers Union is preparing to file a civil lawsuit against the market.

In response to the suspensions, a campaign to boycott Assi Market has been in full force, with daily picket lines in front of the market. NCCR members have participated in the picket lines and have seen the spirit and solidarity of the suspended workers and all their supporters. The boycott and pickets have been successful in educating the public about Assi Market's labor practices and in impacting sales at the market.

However, many of the suspended workers have not been able to secure other employment and are therefore in great financial need. A car wash cooperative has been part of a fundraising campaign to raise \$20,000 per month to support workers in rent, food, and emergency medical expenses. A donor pledge program has also been initiated. If you would like to contribute to this campaign, please make checks payable to KIWA Workers Justice Fund, 3465 W. 8th St., LA, CA 90005. Community members are also encouraged to join the Friday boycott picket line from 6 to 8 PM in front of Assi Market at 3525 W. 8th St., LA. For more information, please call NCCR at (213) 680-3484.



Photo by Janice Yen.

Are you an NCRR member? Have you renewed recently? Join or renew now and support continuing efforts for redress, civil rights and social justice!

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KEEPING REDRESS ALIVE! By Richard Katsuda

NCRR continues to work with Campaign for Justice (CFJ)—Redress Now for Japanese Latin Americans! Efforts to push the Wartime Parity and Justice Act of 2001 have slowed, and CFJ is looking into how to reenergize our supporters in Congress. This legislation would resolve the remaining redress issues for Japanese Americans (JAs) as well as Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs). CFJ members met with one of Dianne Feinstein's top aides in order to encourage Senator Feinstein to take a leading role in the Senate. In addition, CFJ plans to meet with Representative Xavier Becerra (D-CA), who initiated the bill in the House of Representatives, and with Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI), who introduced the bill in the Senate.

In the courts, Isamu "Art" Shibayama and his two brothers, represented by Karen Parker, still await a ruling in their case, in which they sued for full redress and other demands regarding mistreatment and suffering of JLAs.

Robert Murakami, represented by John Ota, is a member of the category of JA children born after their parents had left camp. Murakami asserts that his parents were not realistically free and able to return to their West Coast home. His mother was eight-months pregnant at the time his father received a rescission order on his individual exclusion.

The judge had sent the case back to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for reconsideration. But DOJ again denied eligibility to Murakami, saying that the fact that the Murakamis did not return to California for several years afterward is evidence that it was a "personal decision" not to return earlier and not a result of government action. Attorney Ota believes DOJ has disregarded the judge's order and plans to ask the court to overturn the decision and order DOJ to declare Murakami eligible.

Attention Readers: If you do not wish to receive NCRR's Banner in the future, cut out the mailing label with your name and address and send it to NCRR at "NCRR, 231 E. Third St. G104, Los Angeles, CA 90013".



Stand Up for Justice! cast members Brittany Ishibashi, Marcus Toji, Chad Sakamoto, Director John Esaki, cast member Alexis Cruz and Producer Amy Kato. Photo by Steve Nagano.

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