



Banner

a newsletter of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Winter
2006

2006 Day of Remembrance to Highlight "Justice Along Color Lines"

By Kay Ochi

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has been invited to present the keynote address at the Day of Remembrance program on Saturday, February 18, 2006 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the Japanese American National Museum, 369 East First Street, Los Angeles.

The Day of Remembrance commemorates the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, and the impact of the forced removal and incarceration of 110,000 Japanese Americans and 2,300 Japanese Latin Americans. Congressman Xavier Becerra (D-CA) will speak about the current legislation on behalf of Japanese Latin Americans and other former internees who are still seeking equal justice.

64 years after Executive Order 9066 and with the issuance of the U.S. government's apology and reparations to over 82,900 surviving former excludees and internees, the legacy of redress will be further explored. The achievements of the Japanese American redress movement are a powerful tool in organizing to refute revisionist interpretations of history.

The 2006 program's theme, "Claiming History: Justice Along Color Lines," reflects the concern for important issues in communities of color as part of the redress legacy. Little known stories of government sponsored abduction of Japanese Latin Americans, the hostage exchange program involving Japanese Americans, and many other events came to light during the redress campaign. The government sponsored forced deportation of over one million Mexican Americans from California during the 1930's is another little known travesty.

Professor Francisco Balderrama, the author of *Decade of Betrayal*, will speak about this grave injustice to the Mexican American community. In addition, Senator Joseph Dunn has been invited to share the victory of Senate Bill 37, which provides the community with a state sponsored plaque to acknowledge the forced deportations.

Poets Amy Uyematsu and Gloria Alvarez will present their original work relating to this year's theme. The DOR is sponsored by NCRR, the Japanese American Citizens League/Pacific Southwest District, and the Japanese American National Museum.

Admission is free. A reception follows the program. For more information, call NCRR at (213) 680-3484.



1932 Los Angeles train station - Mexican Americans being forcibly removed to Mexico. (Photo courtesy of Herald Examiner Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.)

Sox Kitashima

Long-time leader and spokesperson for the San Francisco NCRR Tsuyako "Sox" Kitashima passed away on Dec. 29, 2005. As the "heart and spirit" of the Bay Area NCRR, Sox worked tirelessly on the redress campaign and joined several lobbying trips to Wash., D.C. She assisted hundreds of former excludees and internees in applying for redress, and she worked closely with the Office of Redress Administration to convince them to grant redress to many unusual cases.

Sox stated, "In looking back at the years since my retirement, NCRR's the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I think, or hope, that we lobbied for redress in a respectable, straightforward manner. We didn't lose our belief in the absolute power of perseverance..."

"My fervent hope is that people- be they Japanese Americans or others- never forget what the redress movement was about and what an enormous battle it was for us to achieve vindication.

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NCRR Will Miss...



Tom Hayashi joined NCRR recently but with a great deal of energy. Tom had been speaking out for justice his whole life and it was no surprise that he brought up issues around Black reparations and pushed to include Mexican repatriation as the theme for the upcoming Day of Remembrance (DOR). He worked with Black and Latino youth and other minorities for much of his life.

Tom's first job was working with gang members as part of the staff of the Catholic Youth Organization and later with inmates at the California Youth Authority. He not only directed a community center in Watts, Tom also was a primary force in saving the Watts Towers. He also contributed to the East L.A. Community Service Organization and the Central City Action Committee. Tom did not talk about himself so many of us learned these things from people who spoke about him at his service in December. He had just attended the DOR meeting a few days before he suddenly passed away. NCRR will miss his smile, his energy and his support.



Tom Hayashi

Time to renew your 2006 membership - see page 4!
Check out the NCRR Website at www.ncrr-la.org!!

Campaign for Justice Fights On

By Richard Katsuda

Campaign for Justice (CFJ) continues to work with Congressman Xavier Becerra (D - Los Angeles) on the Wartime Parity and Justice Act, which would resolve the remaining redress issues for Japanese Latin Americans and Japanese Americans denied redress. The bill was initiated in 2001 but has not gained much momentum in Congress.

Last year Senator Daniel Inouye introduced the idea of a bill that would convene a commission that would investigate what happened to Japanese Latin Americans during World War II. The commission would be much like the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), which held hearings in 1981 and subsequently recommended redress and reparations for Japanese Americans. CWRIC's recommendations were pivotal in setting Congress on course to pass what ultimately became the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Senator Inouye's proposal would expedite the formation and hearings of the commission in order to complete the process in timely fashion and render recommendations on redress for Japanese Latin Americans.

CFJ has met with Congressman Becerra and Congressman Mike Honda (D - San Jose) to discuss Senator Inouye's proposal, and the congressmen have committed themselves to pursue the commission bill in the House of Representatives. CFJ hopes to be able to introduce discussion within the commission on Japanese Americans who were denied redress and public education about the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans.

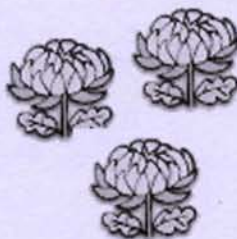
CFJ has also broadened its view of redress to include the experiences of German and Italian Americans who were treated unjustly during World War II as well as German and Italian Latin Americans who were kidnapped and incarcerated along with Japanese Latin Americans. Last April, CFJ sponsored the Assembly on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which highlighted testimonies about the World War II experiences of Japanese Latin Americans as well as German and Italian Americans whose families suffered greatly.

CFJ is trying to sort out the complexities of the current redress questions in order to attain the broadest measure of justice for all concerned.

NCCR 2005 in Pictures



Past Fighting Spirit Honorees at NCCR 25th Anniversary Luau
(Top L-R) Bruce Iwasaki, Yosh Kuromiya, Frank Emi, Carmen Mochizuki, Jim Matsuoka, David Monkawa; (Bottom L-R) Jim Saito, Jan Yen, Bernadette Nishimura, Lily Okamoto, Alan Nishio



NCCR sponsors Cuba Talkback by Tsukimikai of Northern California

NCCR 9/11 Committee Organizes Chaplain James Yee Book Tour

By Kathy Masaoka

At the end of Oct. 2005, the NCCR 9/11 Committee organized a week-long speaking tour for Chaplain James Yee, the Chinese American Muslim chaplain who wrote a book, "For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire." He was charged with spying and pornography after serving as the Muslim chaplain at the prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. His duties were not only to minister to the religious needs of the detainees but also to recommend changes that would help the prison run more smoothly. He worked with the high command, including Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller of Abu Ghraib fame, yet he was charged with espionage and thrown into solitary confinement for 76 days in the same prisons as Jose Padilla and Yasser Hamdi. All charges were eventually dropped but his military career was destroyed.

Chaplain Yee spoke to students at UCLA, the Cal State campuses of San Bernardino, Long Beach and Northridge, USC, UC Irvine and Occidental College. His presentation included a video made by the Australian Broadcasting Company with comments from his family who felt he was targeted not only because he is Muslim but also because he is Chinese American. He spoke clearly about his conversion to Islam and his desire to serve the military as a Muslim chaplain. Yee graduated from West Point in 1990 and served as an Army lieutenant in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War. It was then he became interested in learning about Islam. He also talked very openly about the abuses he saw and the anti-Muslim attitudes at Guantanamo and hoped that his book and his talks would help to prevent the inhumane treatment of prisoners. The tour was also cosponsored by the Muslim Public Affairs Council, the Council on American Islamic Relations, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, the Southern California Library and the Japanese American Citizens League PSWD.



Want more details?

More photos?

Check out NCCR online at

www.ncrr-la.org

Stand Up for Justice Video Available to Teachers Soon

By Janice Yen

2005 was another busy year for the NCRR Education Committee. Visual Communication and NCRR's co-produced "Stand Up For Justice", (the 30-minute docudrama about Ralph Lazo's friendship with his Japanese American friends during World War II), was accepted at several Asian American and Latino film festivals. The film was screened at over 10 Festivals including the Chicago, San Jose, and Washington DC Asian Film Festivals and the Los Angeles International Latino Film Festival. Please visit www.ncrr-la.org for a complete listing of film festivals.

Screenings of "Stand Up For Justice" were also held at selected schools and community centers. The film was shown at the University of California at Santa Cruz's Day of Remembrance program. A very successful fundraising event was also held at



Lazo's grandchildren at San Fernando Valley screening of "Stand Up for Justice."

the San Fernando Valley Community Center. Because Ralph lived and taught in the San Fernando Valley, several of his old friends attended the event. They spoke about Ralph's life-long friendship with the Japanese American community and about his commitment to educating the public about the Japanese American internment. Several Lazo family members were also present.

Another of last year's highlights was Patty and Steve Nagano's summer trip to Washington DC. Congressman Mike Honda introduced the Lazo film to the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, and the Naganos screened the film to members of the National Education Association. Educators gave the film and the curriculum guide an enthusiastic reception.

For 2006, community screenings are planned for Orange County and Torrance, CA. In addition the film has been requested for Day of Remembrance programs in San Jose, Merced, and Berkeley, CA.

With festival screenings nearing an end and the "Stand Up For Justice" Curriculum Guide finalized for publication, the Education Committee looks forward to conducting teacher-training workshops on the effective use of "Stand Up For Justice" in classrooms. The Lazo Project recently was awarded a Henri & Tomoye Takahashi grant to cover a portion of the printing and distribution costs of the Curriculum Guide and film.



Principal actor Marcus Toji with family at LA International Short Film Festival.

NCRR Honored by Los Angeles County Human Relations Commission

By Suzy Katsuda



Supervisor Gloria Molina presents award to Kay Ochi, with Miya Iwataki, Suzy Katsuda and Janice Yen, accompanied by LACHRC Board Member Kathy Feng.

Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress was honored on October 6th, 2005, by the Los Angeles Human Relations Commission and the County Board of Supervisor's First District at the Commission's annual John Anson Ford Human Relations Awards held at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles.

Robin Toma, Executive Director of the Human Relations Commission, nominated NCRR for the award from supervisor Gloria Molina's First District. NCRR was honored for its body of work as playing a leading role in organizing Japanese Americans and others to win redress for the WWII incarceration of 110,000 Japanese Americans and for reaching out to the Arab, Muslim Americans and South Asian communities targeted by the wave of hate violence and discrimination that occurred in the aftermath of 9/11. NCRR continues to work with the Mexican American community, working to produce a film "Stand Up for Justice," which tells the true story of a Mexican-Irish American student at

Belmont High during WWII who went to live with his Japanese American friends who were forced to go to Manzanar Relocation Camp. NCRR is working on this February's DOR whose theme "Claiming History: Justice Along Color Lines" which will feature the story of the deportation of over one million Mexican Americans, (half of whom were US citizens), who were forced out of the United States beginning in 1929.

Finally, NCRR continues to educate others about a federal bill that would grant equity in redress for the little known story of 2,300 Japanese Latin Americans forcibly deported from their home countries in Latin American, imprisoned in U.S. government camps during WWII and swapped for American prisoners of war.

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\$30 One-year
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mail, email or phone if you wish to continue
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electronically. Thank you!

Sox Kitashima, cont. from Page 1

The road to redress was unpaved and rocky, a ten-year quest full of
obstacles and disappointments. Yet, we hung on because we believed
in justice. And justice did finally prevail." (from Birth of an Activist:
The Sox Kitashima Story by Joy Morimoto)

Sox and her family were incarcerated at Topaz, UT during WWII.

Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

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DOR 2006: Feb. 18, 2006
Details inside!

Little Tokyo Community Update

As the Downtown revitalization boom grows, luxury housing, city facilities, and new residents are changing the face of Little Tokyo. Please support the issues and projects crucial for sustaining Little Tokyo's historic and cultural legacy for future generations. J Town Voice will continue to fight to ensure Little Tokyo as a safe haven for immigrants and a center for the Asian American community.

Home is Little Tokyo

After three years in the making, the Little Tokyo mural was officially unveiled on Saturday, October 29, 2005 at the corner of First Street and Central Avenue. At each step of the way, J-Town Voice and NCRR members helped make the mural come alive by brainstorming design ideas, providing feedback, painting, and organizing the hundreds of mural volunteers.

Titled *Home is Little Tokyo*, the 16 x 40 foot mural combines images from Little Tokyo's 100-year



history into a festive scene complete with hanging lanterns and odori dancing. You'll see images from Nisei Week, 1970's redevelopment struggles, Redress Movement, the Recreation Center campaign, and more. Along with welcoming visitors and beautifying the area, the mural captures and passes on J-Town's rich history.

Both J-Town Voice and NCRR supported the mural from the very beginning. In 2003, NCRR held a mural planning meeting where members shared ideas, history and their earliest memories of Little Tokyo. In September 2004, J-Town Voice helped prime the 20 4' x 8' mural boards and trace the mural design with an overhead projector in Casa Heiwa's stuffy underground parking lot during the hottest week of summer! Throughout October 2004, J-Town Voice helped organize several public painting weekends and along with NCRR shared the mural's Little Tokyo history with volunteers. One weekend over 200 people came out to paint—including basketball teams, families, college students, seniors, shop owners, residents, and tourists.

Like NCRR and J-Town Voice, the mural making process was based around ideas of community organizing and democratic participation. We started the project by holding public meetings and getting mural ideas before any designs were drawn. Instead of using only experienced painters, we chose to be inclusive and encourage people of all ages to paint. In total, almost 500 individuals, groups and organizations took part in planning, painting and behind-the-scenes work.

The project's goal wasn't just to paint a mural, but build a sense of community. The mural making process should be contrasted to the authoritarian approach the L.A. City and private developers have taken with Little Tokyo. We demand better. It's only right that projects in Little Tokyo begin and end with the wants and needs of our community.

Thank you to all that helped make the mural possible. Let's keep working on new ways of getting people together in Little Tokyo and Los Angeles.



NCRR members relax after a long day of painting

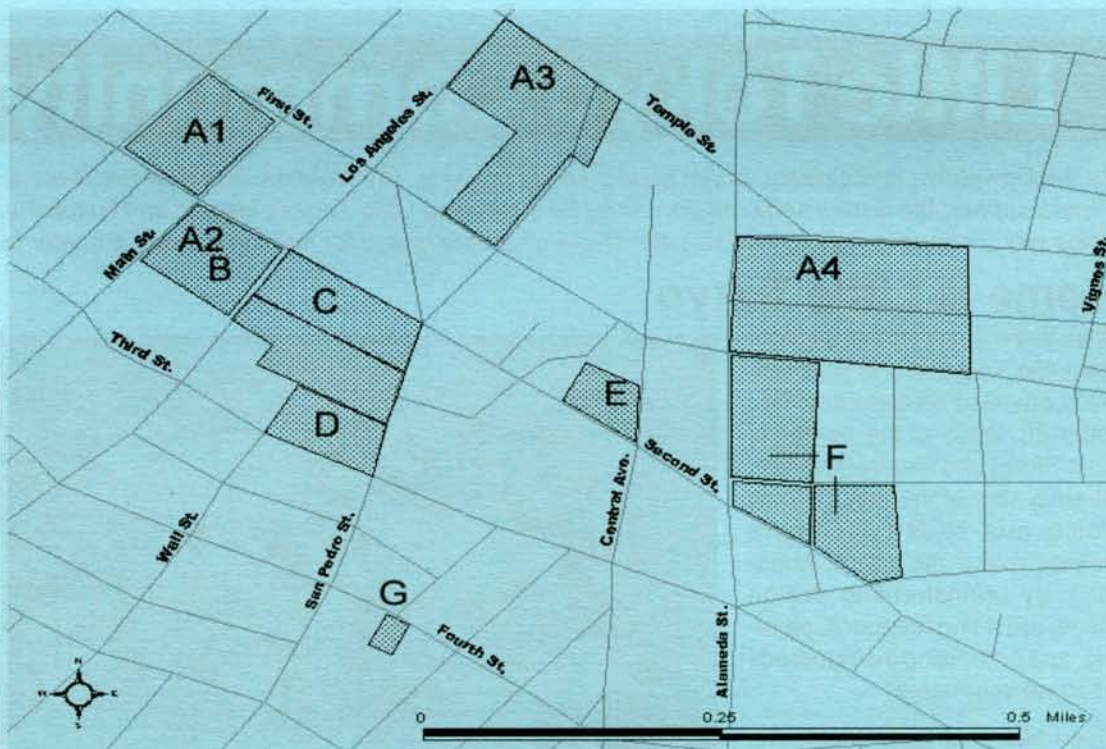
J-Town Voice helped create the four English sentences on the top and bottom of the mural, which were created at community-wide planning meetings on the future of Little Tokyo during the campaign to stop the City's proposed 500 bed jail near Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in 2003.

- ◆ ***Little Tokyo is a complete Living & Thriving 100 year old community***
- ◆ ***Little Tokyo is a Gathering Place and Destination for Japanese American community and culture***
- ◆ ***Little Tokyo is a Spiritual Place***
- ◆ ***Little Tokyo is a Bridge to downtown communities.***

Adopted and passed by the Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC), the guiding principles were developed as a starting point for all new development in the area, making sure projects "measure up" and are beneficial to Little Tokyo and its people.

Current Developments in Little Tokyo (Jan 2006)

- A-Public Safety Facilities
 - A1- Parker Center HQ
 - A2-LAPD Parking
 - A3-Detention Center Jail
 - A4-Emergency Ops/Fire Station, and future development
- B-Rec Center
- C-Block 8
- D-Teramachi Condos
- E-2nd & Central Apts
- F-Savoy Apts/Condos
- G-Former Site of Carver Hotel



Little Tokyo Recreation Center

On December 1, the City of Los Angeles held a public hearing for the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for City facilities being planned in and around Little Tokyo. At the hearing, City staff described the environmental impacts of the proposed facilities, to be constructed in multiple sites around City Hall, which include a new LAPD headquarters, parking lot, and motor pool station, as well as space for the Recreation Center and public parking.

Speakers from Little Tokyo, representing the Little Tokyo Community Council, Little Tokyo Service Center, Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple, and the Recreation Center spoke in support of the EIR findings, and highlighted the Recreation Center and public parking in the plan. Downtown residents and artists, who live and work near the sites, opposed the LAPD facilities, instead calling for more park space, and complained about the noise and disruption that will arise from construction.

The proposed site for the Recreation Center is large enough for all of our proposed programs, including basketball, volleyball, martial arts, as well as community kitchen, computer lab, and performing arts center.

Upcoming hearings include approval of the EIR as well as approval of a Memorandum of Understanding for construction of the Recreation Center at the St. Vibiana site.

Block 8

"Block 8", south of the New Otani Hotel, is currently public parking lots. The Related Companies are planning 750 units of market rate condos and apartments with a 22-story tower, as well as retail space. The Little Tokyo Community Council's push for community benefits resulted in 600 public parking spaces, community review throughout the project development, and an afford-

able homebuyer program. Details of the homebuyer program, which could help certain qualified potential buyers, have not yet been announced. The community is working with the CRA to ensure an effective program.

1st/Alameda Site

Councilwoman Jan Perry and other city officials are working with a community task force to develop the 1st and Alameda site. The city first proposed that the LAPD headquarters and jail be built at the site, however, the Little Tokyo community advocated for more community use of the site. LTCC is working to ensure community benefits at the site, and promoting Little Tokyo's historic and cultural legacy in guiding any decision for the site. LTCC recently completed Planning and Design guidelines for Little Tokyo based on statewide historic cultural preservation efforts for Japantowns, and these guidelines should be approved in 2006 by the City of Los Angeles.

Residential Hotels

In early 2005, residents of the Carver Hotel on 4th St. were illegally evicted from their rooms, and the hotel was torn down later that year. The Little Tokyo Service Center, with help from Los Angeles Community Action Network and the Legal Aid Foundation of LA, helped the tenants win relocation benefits from the hotel's owners.

Throughout 2005, a movement to preserve residential hotels citywide picked up steam. A City Ordinance is planned to preserve these hotels, which often are the housing of last resort for many low-income people. With an ordinance in place to preserve the existing hotel stock, hotels along the 1st St. Historic District as well as 4th St. will remain open for immigrant tenants long into the future. The Ordinance will go before City Council sometime in 2006.

Political/Historical Tours of Little Tokyo

Are you interested in learning more about what's happening in J Town? Want to learn more about the area's history? J-Town Voice hosts tours of Little Tokyo by appointment. Email us at jtownvoice@yahoo.com.