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a newsletter of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Winter 2008

2008 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE TO COMMEMORATE CIVIL LIBERTIES ACT AND GRASSROOTS STRUGGLE FOR REDRESS

By Kay Ochi

“Unleashing Community Voices: The Power of Grassroots Activism” is the theme of the 2008 Day of Remembrance. This year’s program will highlight NCCR’s contributions to the historic redress campaign and will take place on Saturday, February 16 at 2:00 PM at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

The annual program commemorates the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. The Order led to the forced exclusion and incarceration of over 110,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. In NCCR’s tradition, the DOR program will pay tribute to the Issei and Nisei generations in gratitude for their courage in enduring the harsh effects of the wartime exclusion, incarceration, and difficult resettlement.

In addition, 2008 marks the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the legislation that provided a governmental apology and reparations to the over 82,000 Japanese American concentration camp survivors and others impacted by EO 9066. The passage of this historic legislation was the culmination of concerted effort by Japanese American community organizations with the support of other ethnic and religious communities. This anniversary will be marked with a series of events sponsored by NCCR, the Pacific Southwest District/JACL, and the Museum during this year. The DOR is the first of several commemorative programs.

The theme of the DOR program reflects NCCR’s strong commitment to grassroots participation in the redress campaign and the impact on the community. Since its founding conference in 1980, NCCR has maintained its Principles of Unity — (1) a strong demand for monetary compensation to each former internee, (2) an education fund to support academic and artistic projects to educate the broader community about the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans, and (3) giving support to other communities who face similar injustices.

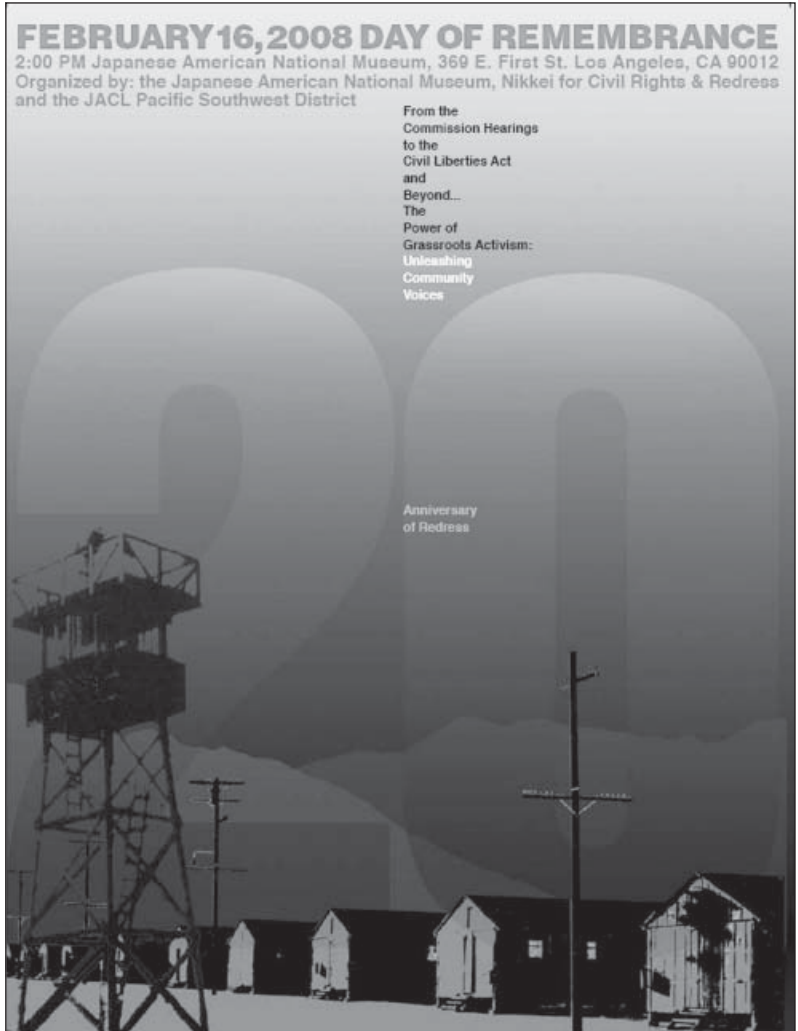
Traci Kato-Kiriyama, poet and performance artist, has created a multi-media performance piece for the DOR program that will showcase several Nisei in this community who share their thoughts on their participation in seeking redress. Voices from several generations will demonstrate the empowering effects of being involved in pursuing justice. Excerpts from important redress-themed films and projects will be woven into the performance.

The unfinished business of redress and reparations will also be highlighted. Congressman Xavier Becerra will update the community of the current legislative attempts to secure commission hearings on the issue of the 2,300 Japanese Latin Americans’ abduction from Latin American countries and their incarceration in America’s concentration camps during World War II. Like the 1981 federal Commission Hearings held in major cities across the US, the hearings would provide JLAs the opportunity to provide testimony about their wartime ordeal and the long-term effects of the government-sponsored kidnapping.

Only 152 Japanese Latin Americans received the \$20,000 reparations. The remaining applicants were denied reparations provided by the CLA because they were not US citizens at the time of their incarceration. Although a settlement was offered to JLAs, the amount was only \$5,000 per former internee, only one-quarter of the amount given to Japanese American former internees. The Campaign for Justice, on behalf of the JLAs, continues to seek equitable redress and education about the JLA experience.

The third important component of the DOR program will involve college students from the University of California at Riverside and San Diego, and the University of Southern California. The student leaders will present their perspective on the Day of Remembrance and address other issues of importance to them.

A reception will follow the program, and admission is free. For further information, call NCCR at (213) 680-3484.



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NCCR 9/11 Committee Continues Support of Watada & Aguayo

By Kathy Masaoka

During 2007, the NCCR 9/11 Committee tirelessly continued its grassroots effort to speak out against injustices in the aftermaths of the terrorist attacks in 2001 to prevent the racism and failure of political leadership that led to the forceful incarceration of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II.

Vigils in Support of Lt. Ehren Watada and Against the War in Iraq

In October, the NCCR 9/11 Committee and Watada supporters held vigils on the corner of Alameda and First to express opposition to a second court martial of Lt. Ehren Watada for his refusal to deploy to Iraq in June 2006. For five consecutive Mondays, supporters from Global Women's Strike, Payday, Neighbors for Peace and Justice, the Whittier Peace Coalition, the Mark Twain Club, the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, the American Friends Service Committee and JACL joined the 9/11 Committee and the Asian American Vietnam Veterans Organization holding their own signs and banners calling for an end to the war in Iraq.

The NCCR 9/11 Committee circulated a petition calling for the US District Court to uphold Watada's 5th amendment protections against "double jeopardy" and opposing any retrial of Watada and any persecution



David Monkawa and Kathy Masaoka speak at the vigil in support of Watada and Aguayo.



Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War speak out in support of Agustin Aguayo at Studio Avenue 50 where a large crowd of friends and family welcomed Aguayo and his family.

of military war resisters. The petition was sent to Judge Benjamin Settle of the US District Court for the Western District in Tacoma, Washington. On November 8 Judge Settle issued a Preliminary injunction barring any court martial until further orders from him or until the injunction is lifted or modified. He chastised the judge who presided at the February court martial and reaffirmed that another court martial would do great damage to Watada and that the public interest was against it. The military court has yet to respond.

Highlights of 2007

March in Little Tokyo for Watada and Aguayo

In early February, Helga Aguayo, wife of conscientious objector Agustín Aguayo and Carolyn Ho, mother of Lt. Ehren Watada, led four hundred people through the streets of Little Tokyo who chanted, "Drop the Charges Now" and "Free Aguayo" all the way

to Higashi Hongwanji temple. The standing-room only crowd gathered to give more encouragement to Carolyn and Helga and to send off the four NCCR representatives attending the court martial in Ft. Lewis. Ehren faced up to eight years in prison and a dishonorable discharge if found guilty of the charges of missing a movement and behavior unbecoming an officer.

February 5 Court Martial in Fort Lewis

Four women, June Hibino, Kimi Maru, Kathy Masaoka and Robin McClaren of the Whittier Peace Coalition, represented NCCR at the three-day court martial and connected with people who had come to support Ehren from across the country. Thousands demonstrated above the freeway overpass near Ft. Lewis during the trial. The NCCR representatives were able to be in the public courtroom for all three days by arriving before sunrise to sign up and being first in line. They heard how Ehren was an exemplary soldier and that he had followed all the procedures given to him by his commanding officers. Military law experts, testifying for the military or the prosecution, agreed that if a soldier believes that an order is illegal or immoral, it is his duty to disobey that order. On the last day of the trial when Ehren was scheduled to testify, Judge John Head unexpectedly declared a mistrial over the objections of Ehren's attorney, Eric Seitz. Ehren was prepared to explain why



NCCR 9/11 Committee members march with Asian Pacific Islander contingent at October 27 anti-war march in Downtown LA.

his actions were not only justified but followed military law. Judge Head mistakenly presumed that Ehren would not be speaking about his reasons since he had signed a stipulation admitting that he had missed the movement and that he had spoken publicly against the war. For Ehren, acknowledging that he committed these actions did not mean that he was admitting guilt of any crime since they were based on his belief that the war is immoral and illegal.

Continuing to Build Ties with the Muslim Community

Nobuko Miyamoto of Great Leap and Ruben Guevara of the 9/11 Committee participated in the Council on Arab Islamic Relations' dinner program attended by over 2000 people. Nobuko shared the testimony of Yuri Kochiyama and Ruben read from Cesar Chavez speeches. In December, the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC) recognized the support of NCCR during their annual dinner. Both the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) and MPAC joined with other Muslim organizations including the Shura Council to protest the "Muslim mapping plan" created by the Los Angeles Police Department. NCCR signed onto a letter of protest and joined others at a press conference where the LAPD retracted the plan and apologized.



NCCR representative and other Watada supporters at Fort Lewis. (Photo by Jeff Paterson/Courage to Resist)

CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE MAKES BIG PUSH

By Richard Katsuda

Campaign for Justice (CFJ) has been fighting for redress for Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs) since 1996 when NCRR, JACL, Japanese Peruvian Oral History Project, and the Southern California chapter of ACLU came together to support JLAs who were excluded from redress provided by the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. CFJ worked with JLA former internees to file the *Mochizuki v. U.S.* class-action lawsuit, which culminated in negotiations with the Department of Justice and a compromise, in which JLAs were afforded only \$5,000 reparations for each former internee.

Since that time, CFJ has dedicated itself to securing equity in redress for JLAs. CFJ also pushed for redress for Japanese Americans who had been denied redress and to restore \$50 million that Congress had intended to use for public education about the World War II incarceration and internment.

Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-CA) has championed the JLA issue in Congress since introducing the Wartime Parity and Justice Act in 2000, which sought to remedy the unfinished business. In 2001, Senator Daniel Inouye (D-HI) joined Rep. Becerra in reintroducing bill, which was also reintroduced in 2003 and 2005, but never gained enough momentum for passage.

In 2006, upon Sen. Inouye's recommendation, he and Rep. Becerra introduced the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act (JLA bill). This bill was patterned after the original Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which recommended redress and was pivotal as the basis for

provisions of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The JLA bill would convene a commission that would investigate the causes and effects of the JLA internment and make appropriate recommendations.

Sen. Inouye and Rep. Becerra reintroduced the JLA bill in 2007. CFJ worked closely with Christine Oh, who was a legislative aide for Rep. Becerra, and with Van Luong, who is a legislative aide for Sen. Inouye.

This year, CFJ is making a big push for passage of the JLA bill. CFJ has been fortunate to secure the services of Christine Oh to work on this campaign full-time. CFJ has also begun to meet jointly with JACL and will be working with Craig Ishii, the Pacific Southwest District (PSWD) Director; Brian Moriguchi, Chair of the PSWD Civil Rights Caucus; and Debee Yamamoto, Public Policy Director in DC.

One of the key goals of the campaign is to garner support from Republicans in Congress. Gary Hayakawa, one of the pioneers of Japanese American Republicans, has begun to work with JACL and CFJ in this effort. We are also seeking support from national organizations as well as local groups in this cause. The immediate task is to secure a hearing on the JLA bill by the Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties of the House Judiciary Committee, chaired by Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY).

As CFJ gears up for the 2008 push, we encourage community members to help us in any way that you can. We need volunteers as well as monetary donations. If you can help us, please contact us at Campaign for Justice, P.O. Box 1384, El Cerrito CA 94530, or at www.campaignforjusticejla.org.

NCRR Digitizes Archives with CCLPEP Grant

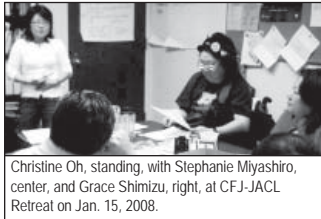
By Suzy Katsuda

In 2007, NCRR received a grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP) to archive NCRR's historical Days of Remembrances. The grant will allow the events to be preserved via our website, NCRR-LA.org.

The committee consists of Janice Yen, co-grant writer and "mad scanner," Kay Ochi, co-grant writer and unofficial "keeper of boxes of historical documents," Miles Hamada, webmaster and previous DOR poster creator, Edna Horiuchi, assimilator of historical interviews, and Suzy Katsuda, a sometimes DOR photographer. We have been furiously scanning articles, printed DOR programs, NCRR statements, biographies of speakers and performers, and photographs of the DOR events.

The grant allowed us to purchase a heavy-duty Epson scanner and three external hard drives to back-up and store the electronic data. Several of our NCRR members have assiduously collected boxes of *Rafu Shimpo* articles, photos, and *Banners* (our newsletters) relating to DORs and other historical events. It has been a huge challenge to undertake scanning NCRR's 27-year history.

We hope to go "live" before the next DOR to be held at the Japanese American National Museum on Saturday, February the 16th. Please look for our Days of Remembrances on our website soon.



Christine Oh, standing, with Stephanie Miyashiro, center, and Grace Shimizu, right, at CFJ-JACL Retreat on Jan. 15, 2008.



(L-R) Hector Watanabe, Dana Nakano, Christine, Stephanie, and Grace at CFJ-JACL Retreat.



(L-R) Kay Ochi, Suzy Katsuda, Edna Horiuchi, Janice Yen and Miles Hamada at committee meeting.

**It's Time to Renew Your NCRR Membership!
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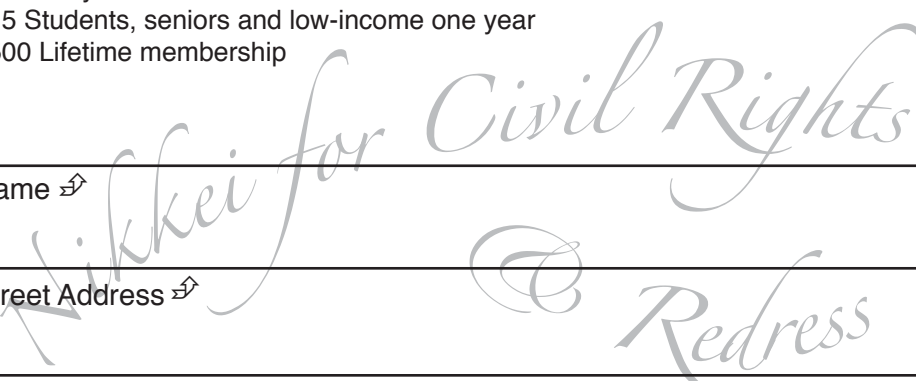
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"Stand Up for Justice!" DVD/Curriculum Guide Available to CA High School Teachers

By Janice Yen

The NCRR Education Committee is pleased to announce that a ten-year collaboration with Visual Communications (VC) has culminated in the production of a 33-minute film about Ralph Lazo and the "Stand Up for Justice Curriculum Guide" for secondary school social sciences teachers.

The "Stand Up for Justice" film is about 17-year-old Lazo's World War II friendship with his Nisei high school classmates from Belmont High School. Lazo, a Latino of Mexican and Irish descent, decided to go with them to the Manzanar concentration camp and remained at Manzanar for more than two years. He graduated from Manzanar High School in 1944, was drafted into the armed forces, and later became active in the movement to win reparations for Japanese Americans. He remained life-long friends with his fellow Manzanar classmates and the Japanese American community.

After production of the film, NCRR's Education Committee developed curriculum lessons and resource materials to accompany the Lazo docu-drama. The lessons are especially geared for 11th grade U.S. History and 12th grade Government classes. Teachers at other grade levels have used the film to promote interethnic understanding, and, at the college

level, instructors have screened the educational video in their Asian American history classes.

Due to generous grants from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, the Japanese American Community Services, the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the Aratani Foundation, and hundreds of individual donations, 2,000 copies of the guide/DVD were produced and are available free to secondary school Social Studies teachers.

During the last nine months over 400 copies were distributed to teachers who attended workshops in Southern California and in the San Francisco Bay area. NCRR teachers conducted workshops at conferences of the California Teachers Association, California Association for Bilingual Education, California Council for the Social Studies, as well as at United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA)-sponsored workshops, and workshops in the Glendale, Long Beach, Torrance, and LA County school districts. NCRR partnered with UCLA's Center X, and a workshop was held for San Francisco high school teachers with the help of Greg Marutani of the SF JACL.



Education Committee members Patty Nagano (standing) and Steve Nagano conduct a workshop for teachers.



NCRR and VC along with the Lazo family are honored by the Board of the LA Unified School District. (Photo by Mario Reyes)

The NCRR Education Committee is exploring ways to reach teachers in Northern California, the San Joaquin Valley, and other districts that are out of the immediate Los Angeles area. Educators who are willing to organize a workshop for ten or more people should contact the Education Committee at ncrrla@yahoo.com. NCRR will send a teacher to conduct the workshop or arrange for the training of persons willing to do the workshops.

Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

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20th Anniversary of Redress Bill to be celebrated at

DOR 2008: February 16, 2008

Details Inside!

