

Leading the Way

JACL Hawai'i, Honolulu Chapter



July 2003

Preserving the Nisei Legacy

Shelley N. Nishimura

On June 14, 2003 the Honolulu Chapter of JACL Hawaii held its annual membership meeting and luncheon at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii. The event provided an opportunity for members to honor the lifelong work of Francis Sogi and to renew their commitment to JACL's fight against discrimination and injustice. The gathering was also a chance for members to reflect upon the events which the Honolulu Chapter has been involved with in the past year and to learn more about the current issues that they face.

The event, which was emceed by Mr. Donn Ariyoshi, began with a report by Honolulu Chapter president, Susan Kitsu. Following her report, Mr. Francis Sogi was presented with the JACL Hawaii, Honolulu Chapter Service Award for his dedicated work on behalf of the Nikkei community locally, on the continental United States and abroad. A native of Kona, Mr. Sogi served in Military Intelligence Service during World War II and later became an international lawyer in New York. Besides his military service, Mr. Sogi has also served as the Chairman of the Board of the Japanese American National Museum, secretary/treasurer of the Friendship Commission, and board member of the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii and the Japanese American Memorial Foundation. He is also a long standing member of JACL's Honolulu Chapter. Many guests attending the luncheon flew in from the Big Island just to pay tribute to Mr. Sogi.

Following a buffet luncheon, during which Hawaiian slack key guitarist Ozzie Kotani performed, Representative Barbara Marumoto gave the keynote address. A member of JACL since the 1980s Rep. Marumoto paid tribute to the nisei and praised their quiet heroism, especially those whose acts of bravery have never been officially recognized. These heroes included those who found the courage to start over and succeed after World War II and internment and who were undeterred by either discriminatory practices or economic hardships. She identified these nisei as being responsible for laying the groundwork for the social, political, and economic benefits that later generations would receive.

Guests were also shown Cynthia Grant Fujikawa's documentary of JACL's 2003 Day of Remembrance ceremonies nationwide. Many scenes from the Honolulu Chapter's event were included in the documentary. The featured DOR programs focused on President Bush's Patriot Act and brought up the parallels between the current racial profiling and detainment of men and women of Muslim descent and the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The events also spotlighted the violations of civil liberties done in the name of national security and encouraged citizens to reject passive acceptance of injustice.



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Sogi seen here with JACL President Susan Kitsu

After announcing winners of the silent auction and raffle, emcee Donn Ariyoshi returned to the theme of responsibility that Rep. Marumoto brought up in her address. He reminded the sansei and yonsei that they were the beneficiaries of the sacrifices made by the nisei and that they had the responsibility to continue to serve their community as their parents' and grandparents' generation had done. He cautioned the sansei and yonsei that by failing to serve as guardians of Japanese values they were ignoring the source of their strength. He also reminded his audience that they were setting the example for their own children and that by refusing to act to ensure the safeguarding of the civil liberties they were encouraging apathy in their own children.

In her closing remarks, President Susan Kitsu congratulated JACL on remaining vigilant and praised their persistence in seeking redress for all wrongs. She gave an example of the JACL's persistence noting that Representative Howard Coble, who had so far refused to retract his statements about internment, had finally agreed to meet with JACL members. She concluded by urging attendees to join in the fight against discrimination and to remain committed to JACL's cause.

President's Message

Susan H. Kitsu



Upcoming Events:

Celebration of Justice Dinner 2003

Sponsored by the Consumer Lawyers of Hawaii. Featuring Keynote Speakers **Fred Korematsu** and attorney **Dale Minami**.

July 11, 2003 at the Ilikai Hotel from 6 – 10 pm. Tickets are \$100 per person and you can send your response to 1088 Bishop Street, Suite 1111, Honolulu, HI 96813, or call 599-2769.

JACL members **Richard Turbin** and **Rai St. Chu** would like to invite all JACL Hawaii members to an informal reception at their home to “talk story” with attorney Dale Minami and Fred Korematsu. Date and Time to be Announced--check your mailboxes!

Organization of Chinese Americans National Convention and 30th Anniversary Celebration, August 7 – 10, 2003 at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel. Gala Reception and Banquet on August 9, 2003, please contact **Kalene Sakamoto** at 228-1199 for details. Tickets \$75 per person. Please make checks out to OCA and mail to JACL, PO Box 1291, Honolulu, HI 96807.

District News:

The **Pacific Southwest District and National JACL** is co-sponsoring a Gala dinner event, honoring Senator Daniel K. Inouye, Norman Mineta, Robert Matsui, and Michael Honda. To encourage early reservations, a special early bird rate for chapter members is being offered at \$1,250 per table of 10. Deadline for this special rate is August 1. Non-member price, which will be the regular member price after August 1 is \$150 per person. Non-members wishing to receive the special price can become a member of JACL, depending on chapter/location, for as little as \$55 annually.

Aloha! Thank you JACL Honolulu Chapter members and NEW members for supporting the Annual General Membership Meeting, Luncheon, and Silent Auction on Saturday, June 14th at the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii. It was a great day to celebrate our members. We were so pleased that we could acknowledge and honor long time JACL member, Francis Sogi, for his outstanding service to the Japanese American community. We were also very fortunate to have another long time member, Representative Barbara Marumoto, deliver the keynote speech about membership and her tribute to the nisei. The day was complete with entertainment from local slack key guitarist and newest JACL member, Ozzie Kotani. On behalf of JACL, I thank all of you for your continued support.

On a national level, JACL's membership has been declining and immediate efforts are being taken to increase our membership and educate the public on who we are and what we do. Our work is not over, and we must continue to be diligent in our efforts to ensure equal opportunity and civil rights for those who continue to seek justice.

I call on you, as members, to tell your friends and family about JACL. If they are interested in joining, please encourage them to do so. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me directly at 737.8073. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Leading the Way*, and I look forward to your comments.

Mahalo nui loa,
Susan H. Kitsu

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JACL Supports Federal Recognition for Native Hawaiians

David M. Forman

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Author: David Forman is the 2nd Vice President of the JACL Honolulu Chapter. He is an attorney with the law firm of Alston, Hunt, Floyd and Ing.

Unlike other Native Americans (and Native Alaskans), Native Hawaiians do not have the right to petition the United States for formal recognition. Legislation now pending in Congress, however, seeks to correct this discriminatory state of affairs. Senate Bill 344, also known as the Akaka-Stevens Bill (U.S. Senators Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI) and Ted Stevens (R-AK) are two of the bill's co-sponsors), would provide a process for recognition of a Native Hawaiian governing entity.

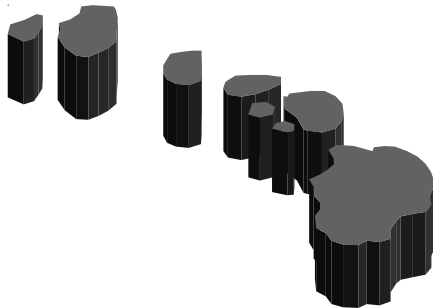
Earlier this year, the Japanese American Citizens League ("JACL") and its Honolulu Chapter submitted testimony to the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs in support of the Akaka-Stevens Bill. The JACL has been a staunch supporter of the human and civil rights of Native Hawaiians, including their right to self-determination, for nearly twenty years. As early as 1984, delegates to the JACL National Convention adopted a resolution urging Congress to acknowledge the illegal and immoral actions of the United States in the 1893 overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and calling for restitution of the resulting losses and damages suffered by Native Hawaiians. Similar resolutions were again adopted in 1986 and 1992, and reaffirmed as recently as 2000.

While Japanese Americans have received redress and reparations for the injustices of evacuation and internment, Native Hawaiians have received only an apology for the loss of their nation. In 1993, the Apology Law acknowledged the illegal overthrow and that the United States obtained 1.8 million acres of land without the consent of, or compensation to, the Native Hawaiian people or their sovereign government.

One hundred years earlier, President Grover Cleveland denounced the overthrow and the role of U.S. Minister Stevens and American armed forces as "an act of war." Native Hawaiians sent representatives to our nation's capital and succeeded in defeating a proposed treaty of annexation. However, in 1898, during an era dominated by belief in American expansionism and Manifest Destiny, United States President William McKinley signed a Joint Resolution to "annex" the Hawaiian Islands as a territory of the United States. (The legality of annexation by joint resolution – versus by treaty, as is expressly provided for in the Constitution – continues to be debated.)

As part of the process of admitting Hawai'i to the Union, the federal government conveyed 1.4 million acres of the ceded lands to the State of Hawai'i to be held in trust for the betterment of the Hawaiian people, among other express purposes. The federal government retained the remainder of the lands ceded to it for military and other federal use, approximately 400,000 acres in all. Neither government paid any compensation for the "conveyance" of these lands.

(At the end of World War II, the United Nations listed Hawai'i as one of the Non-Self Governing Territories Designated for Decolonization. In



“Words can Kill the Spirit — ‘Jap’ is a Derogatory Term!

Yoshie Ishiguro Tanabe

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A recent Anti-Hate Program brochure distributed by the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) contained the above title.

For a ten year old girl—last of ten children—December 7, 1941, a wet Sunday morning on a pineapple farm in Kalaheo, Kauai, suddenly nothing was normal. My father and older ones were on their way to Kapaa to our leased field to harvest the fruit to be taken to the cannery on Monday.

Mid-morning, the truck returns with no pineapples but the family jumps out and excitedly tells us about being stopped by the police and sent home. That’s how it all started for me.

Before December 7, 1941, Japanese American students were told we were the brightest, the cleanest, the most honest, the most industrious and trustworthy. Overnight we became sly, inscrutable, sneaky, insidious, untrustworthy, back-stabbers—and it was puzzling as well as hurtful to a ten year old.

Next came “Japs!” According to Webster’s Third New International Dictionary, 1971, “Japs: Japanese; often used disparagingly.” Some dictionaries will add that it can be used as an abbreviation.

As a child, being called a “Jap” was like a Black American being called “nigger.” No wonder before the days of “Black is Beautiful,” many Black Americans spent millions of dollars on hair straighteners and skin bleachers. How I wanted to have round blue eyes, fair skin, blonde hair, a tall nose. I asked my parents why I had to be born a Japanese and listen to the ditty “We’re Gonna Have to Slap The Dirty Little Jap.” At least I wanted to be Chinese. Can you imagine the frustration on the parents and the child?

Why did it hurt so badly? Because my brother, a student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, after Pearl Harbor was not allowed to return to his rooming house so he volunteered for the U.S. Army. Another brother, a welder in Honolulu, was drafted. My issei parents who by law were not allowed to be naturalized had their homes ransacked to be cleared of anything that smacked of collaboration with Japan—Japanese school books, short wave radio (one brother was a ham radio operator). All the while, my parents had taught us we were Americans and were to be loyal citizens. My father did not care whether or not we ever went to Japanese Language School (but we did) but he checked our report cards for our English grade!

When the War was over, we all breathed a sigh of relief. We thought we were now cleared because our brothers had fought and died in Europe, as road and bridge builders in Hawaii, as translators/interpreters in the Pacific. We naively believed that people would no longer call us “Japs,” since we had proven our loyalty and made our share of sacrifices and contributions to America. Unfortunately, our battle against the “Jap” word with all the anger and hurt the word caused us had not ended.

In 1965, my husband and I took our family to Chicago. We lived in the vicinity of the University of Chicago and our two boys attended grade school there. On December 7, 1966, our boys came home from school to tell us that something puzzling happened in Band Class. The two instructors had ordered them to stand up in class and be recognized as those whose “Jap” grandparents had executed the sneak attack on Pearl

Harbor 25 years ago! We were dumbfounded—words cannot describe the hurt, the disappointment my husband and I felt. We reported the incident to the Board of Education and an apology was made.

The children in our sons’ band class were told about the attack on Pearl Harbor. However, they were not told about the 100th and the 442nd and the 1399 and the MIS units’ heroic contributions during World War II. They were not told about Executive Order 9066 which sent over 120,000 Japanese, Japanese Americans and Japanese Latin Americans to concentration camps. They were not told about the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 when our government finally admitted her grave injustice and officially apologized. When will our school curriculae include the WHOLE truth about the Japanese American experience so that this type of racist stereotyping is eradicated.

According to Noaki Schwartz of the Florida Sun-Sentinel (1/18/03) as recently as in the 1990’s, Florida used the word “Jap” in voter registration cards of Japanese residents. After many challenges, it was finally changed to “Jpn.” An auto repair shop owner, Jeff Waltz, named his business: The JAP Shop. His reply when questioned by the local Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) was, “I’m not trying to be derogatory. I think it is humorous. If it were not for Japanese cars we’d be out of business!”

There is an area on the coast of Florida where early Japanese settlers used to fish. It is called Jap Rock. When asked about that by the JACL, Mayor Tom Reid said he thinks the appellation is innocuous and “therefore is not up for discussion!”

Humorous? Innocuous? To whom? Maybe some day, in an America where the “four little children” of Dr. Martin Luther King can “live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character,” (“I Have a Dream” speech in Washington, D.C. by MLK on 8/23/1963) then and only then, maybe I will accept “Jap” as an abbreviation. Humorous? Innocuous? Never!

Author: Yoshie Ishiguro Tanabe is a member of the Education Committee of JACL Honolulu Chapter.

The JACL’s ongoing mission is to secure and maintain the civil rights of Japanese Americans and all others who are victimized by injustice and prejudice. For more information about JACL of Hawai‘i, contact them at P.O. Box 1291, Honolulu, HI, 96807.

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1959, Hawai'i became a State, pursuant to a vote that provided no option for a return to independent nation status—as is required by the U.N. The JACL does not believe that the Akaka-Stevens Bill, as domestic legislation, jeopardizes Native Hawaiian claims under international law.)

Since 1920, the U.S. Congress has enacted over 150 pieces of legislation providing Hawaiians with special benefits to address their disproportionate educational, labor, housing, homesteading, health and other social problems. However, these programs have come under attack in recent years. Some believe that these are race-based programs that violate the constitutional guarantee of equal protection. A United States Supreme Court decision in 2000, *Rice v. Cayetano*, lent some (misguided) support to that position.

The *Rice* Court cited the infamous *Hirabayashi* case for the principle that “[d]istinctions between citizens solely because of their ancestry are by their very nature odious to a free people whose institutions are founded upon the doctrine of equality.” The JACL firmly believes that the Supreme Court’s analysis was in error, just as it was when the Court overwhelmingly upheld the race-based curfew, exclusion, evacuation and internment of Japanese during World War II, in the *Yasui*, *Hirabayashi*, and *Korematsu* cases. Contrary to the historical record, the *Rice* Court refused to recognize the special political relationship that Native Hawaiians have with the United States government, and ignored Congress’ implicit recognition of Native Hawaiians as a native people with whom the United States has a trust relationship.

Should Congress fail to clarify the political status of Native Hawaiians, the economic impact on our State could be devastating. The potential loss of these federal and state programs, which benefit diverse communities including Native Hawaiians, would cripple families as well as agencies structured to address some of the most profound problems in these islands.

The Honolulu chapter of the JACL recognizes Native Hawaiians as an aboriginal, indigenous and native people (kanaka maoli). They are not simply an ethnic minority. Rather, they occupy a unique position in the society that now calls Hawai'i home. The JACL is also aware of the hard work that many Native Hawaiian organizations have engaged in to promote the concept of self-determination. This movement has grown in both size and sophistication over the past 25 years. Accordingly, the JACL’s support for the Akaka-Stevens Bill is not an endorsement of any particular form of self-governance. The Native Hawaiian people should make that decision pursuant to a democratic process that reflects the true exercise of self-determination.

The Akaka-Stevens Bill has been voted out of committee. It now awaits a full vote by the Senate, but the necessary floor time

for debate is difficult to calendar because other issues are being given priority. As a result, Native Hawaiians are continuing to wait for justice to be done. They deserve our support.

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If you have not already done so, please seriously consider becoming a member of the JACL Credit Union. This a great program and a very easy way to raise some funds for the chapter and National. find out more at: <http://www.jaclcu.com/>

Upcoming Events: *continued from page 2*

Proceeds from the dinner this year will go to support the JACL’s operations and programs. Corporations and businesses seeking sponsorship opportunities should contact national JACL at 415-921-5225.

The Wilshire Grand Hotel, in downtown Los Angeles, is offering rooms at \$85 per night. The Miyako Hotel in Little Tokyo is offering a rate of \$79 per night single and \$89 per night double. Please contact the Pacific Southwest district office at 213-626-4471 or at psw@jacl.org for more information on the dinner or hotel/trip suggestions.

Board Members:

I’d like to welcome Marcia Sakamoto Wong to the Board of Directors for JACL Hawaii, Honolulu Chapter. Marcia will be chairing the Education Committee.

Photos from JACL's Annual Membership Meeting
Pictured to the far right: Silent Auction items up for bid and the winners of the HCRC Civil Rights Poster Contest, co-sponsored by JACL; to the left, JACL members helping to check-in; below: informational displays regarding JACL activities and



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