



New England Chapter News *Japanese American Citizens League*

February-March 2010 P.O. Box 592 • Lincoln, MA 01773

Day of Remembrance on Saturday, Feb 20. *Remembering Internment: the Images and Words of Miné Okubo & Michi Nishiura Weglyn.* Featured guest speaker will be **Elena Tajima Creef**, author of *Miné Okubo: Following Her Own Road* and associate professor at Wellesley College. The program will include a short documentary on Michi Weglyn. Light refreshments will be served. Co-sponsored by New England JACL, the Asian American Resource Workshop, and several MIT departments. This event will be held from 3 to 5 pm in MIT Building E25, room 117 (for driving/parking details, see flyer included with this mailing or go to interactive map at <http://whereis.mit.edu/>.) This program is free and open to the public.

A Report from the 1945 Topaz High School Reunion

Editor's Note: *With the 2010 Day of Remembrance just around the corner, we thought it would be appropriate to print the following report we received from **Glenn Kumekawa** of Rhode Island about the **1945 Topaz High School Class Reunion** and their experience on September 10, 2009.*

It was the second day of our 1945 Topaz High School Class Reunion meeting in Washington, DC, some 64 years after our graduation in the Internment camp of Topaz Utah.

Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island had arranged for a White House Tour for our 25 members who had gathered. But unlike other White House Tour groups, we were informed that a special White House staff member, Mr. Kalpen Modi would meet us at the gate. We were then escorted to a reception room within the White House, when we were then informed that a special guest would personally greet us. Mr. Modi, recognizable as KalPenn from several television series, then informed us that Valerie Jarrett, President Obama's most senior policy aide and Assistant to the President, would then arrive. Some of us, knowing of her role in the White House were stunned to hear that she would greet us.

Ms. Jarrett arrived with her Chief of Staff, Michael Strautmanis and spoke to us, expressing her apology and that of the Administration, for the incarceration of our class member that endured the three years of our high school at the Topaz Internment camp. She spoke of the admiration of the role model we offered overcoming adversity and to endure those years. She greeted each one of us individually as did her Chief of Staff and telling us that she and the White House staff were honored by our presence.

It was both stunning and extraordinarily moving for all of us, for such a senior member of the White House to acknowledge that experience of all of us. Each of us had received a letter of apology from President George H. W. Bush with our reparation some years ago. Nevertheless,

listening to the words of Ms. Jarrett, face to face and with the immediacy of the moment and place, evoked emotions such that not one of us was dry eyed.

It was a moment none of us would ever forget, an experience melding the events of long ago during perhaps our most impressionable years of our lives, to the reality of the moment, in the White House where Executive Order 9066 incarcerating all of us was signed, and to hear expressions of regret spoken by such a high ranking member of the Executive to each one of us, who felt no sense of being special, except as we were bonded by that internment experience but then to be deemed to be honored guests in that same White House.

Glenn Kumekawa
September 13, 2009

Asian Americans featured on *Faces of America* on WGBH/Ch.2. Harvard scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr., uses the latest tools of genealogy to trace the family histories of 12 famous Americans, including two Asian Americans: Kristi Yamaguchi and Yo-Yo Ma. Wednesdays, Feb 10-24, at 8 pm on WGBH/2. For more information go to www.wgbh.org.

AARW Seeks Bakers! The AARW is looking for the region's best bakers to volunteer to create scrumptious tidbits – sweet and savory – for its 4th annual dessert tasting fundraiser on April 24 at the Vietnamese American Community Center in Dorchester. Interested bakers will receive a complimentary ticket to the event. Bakers must register in advance. If you are interested in helping to plan the event, planning sessions will be held at 6 pm on Feb. 8 & 22, Mar 6 & 22, Apr 5, 12 & 20 at the AARW office, 33 Harrison Ave., 5th floor, Boston Chinatown. For more information call 617-426-5313 or email dessert@aarw.org.

Ricesticks and Tea, Boston's Asian Community Food Pantry. Ricesticks and Tea (RST) is a volunteer-run community program that serves low-income, limited or non-English speaking immigrants by providing culturally appropriate food staples and language assistance. Food items distributed include jasmine rice, cooking oil, dried red beans, tofu, and Asian noodles. RST benefits as many as 120 families monthly – this includes more than 300 kids, adults and seniors. Contributions at any level to this year-round program are greatly appreciated. Volunteers are always welcome. For more information contact: ricesticksandtea@gmail.com.

Asian American Resource Workshop Writers' Group. All writers are invited to join this group to share your writing, give and get feedback, and participate in group writing exercises. For info email Pong Louie at p.louie6@rcn.com or call the AARW office at (617) 426-5313 and leave a message with your name, phone number and email address.

Feb 6 to Jun 6. Asian Journeys: Collecting Art in Post-War America. This exhibit explores the sociopolitical context for American collecting of Asian art in the post-World War II period. Works exhibited will be from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection from

the Asian Society, New York. At the McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College. Opening reception on Monday, Feb 8 from 7 to 9 pm. For information and directions, visit www.bc.edu/artmuseum.

Beginning Feb 15. Japanese Language Classes. The next 17-week semester of Showa/Japan Society of Boston language programs begin the week of Feb 15. Courses are offered on all levels, from beginner to advanced. Classes are small and taught by experienced native Japanese instructors. Tuition is \$290. Classes are held on the Showa Boston campus, 420 Pond St., Boston. Parking is free. For details and to register, go to: www.showaboston.org/jlc/.

Beginning Mar 2. Japanese Cooking Class in Boston. The Japan Society of Boston is offering an 8-week course on “The Japanese Kitchen: Home Cooking Japanese Style” on Tuesdays from 1 to 3:30 pm, Mar 2 through Apr 20. Classes will be held at the modern kitchen facilities of the Boston Center for Adult Education, located at 122 Arlington St., Boston. Instructor is Rie Akazawa, a licensed chef and caterer, born and raised in Japan and now living in Cambridge. Tuition for the series of classes is approximately \$500 with a discount for Japan Society members. For details and to register, go to: www.us-japan.org/boston/Cooking_Class.

OF STUDENT INTEREST

Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund seeks applicants. The NSRCF will award up to 30 scholarships to students of Southeast Asian heritage and living in the Washington, DC, area (including Virginia and Maryland). Applicants should be graduating from high school in 2010 and planning to continue their education and should be of Lao, Vietnamese or Cambodian heritage. Deadline is March 5, 2010. For more information go to: www.nsrcfund.org/scholarships/.

Asian American Legal Defense & Education Fund Summer Internships.

Internships available at the AALDEF based in New York from **June 7 to Aug 13**: the **Summer Legal Internship Program** offers law students internships in anti trafficking, community health care, economic justice for workers, educational equity & youth rights, housing justice, immigrant access to justice, voting rights, and Census 1020. **Application deadline is Feb 8. Unpaid Summer Undergraduate Internships** are available in voting rights, New Jersey Asian American Legal Project, Census 2010, youth rights & educational equity, and office assistant. **Application deadline Feb 13.** For more information, email: infor@aaldef.org or visit: www.aaldef.org/.

Scholarship Directory for Asian American and Pacific Islander Students. State Farm, the JAACL, Organization for Chinese Americans, and the Asian American Studies Program at the University of Maryland have collaborated on the 2009-2011 National Directory of Scholarships, Internships, and Fellowships for Asian American and Pacific Islander Students. It's available online at: <http://www.aast.umd.edu/scholarshipdirectory.html>.

Applicants Sought for the 62nd Japan-America Student Conference. Applications are being accepted until February 22 for this summer's Japan-America Student Conference. The goal of the program is to bring together students from the two countries, foster understanding, and make an impact on global issues. Each year, the month-long program alternates host countries. This year participants will travel between four cities, spending one week in each: Richmond, Indiana; Washington, DC; New Orleans, Louisiana; and San Francisco, California. The delegates will meet leaders in business, academia and government to discuss contemporary social, economic and political issues that face both countries and the world. For more information and application forms, visit:
http://iscdc.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=44&Itemid=69

ELSEWHERE

Feb 27 to May 30 in CA. *Textured Lives: Japanese Immigrant Clothing from the Plantations of Hawaii.* A colorful display of more than 200 intricately woven and hand painted kimono, pre-war plantation clothing, rare oral histories, photographs and moving images. Japanese American National Museum, 369 East First St., Los Angeles, CA. Museum hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday thru Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, Thursdays from noon to 8 pm. Closed Mondays. For details visit their web site: www.janm.org/

Mar 20 to Sep 5 in CA. *MIXED: Portraits of Multiracial Kids* by Kip Fulbeck. In a follow-up to his 2006 exhibition *kip fulbeck: part asian, 100% hapa*, the artist returns with images from his newest book, *MIXED: Portraits of Multiracial Kids*. A family-friendly exhibit that offers a powerful perspective on the complex nature of contemporary American identity. Japanese American National Museum, 369 East First St., Los Angeles, CA. Museum hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday thru Sunday 11 am to 5 pm, Thursdays from noon to 8 pm. Closed Mondays. For details visit their web site: www.janm.org/.