

# KOKORO

the heart and soul of our community  
san mateo chapter Japanese American citizens league oct 2008  
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**San Mateo JACL is dedicated to promoting the historical and cultural understanding of the Japanese American experience and to protecting and advancing the human and civil rights of our multi-ethnic society through educational and community programs.**

Articles must be submitted before the first Friday (one month prior to publication) and in electronic format [Microsoft WORD, Calibri font] to [katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com](mailto:katemotoyama@sanbrunocable.com)

## CAMPAIGN FOR JUSTICE UPDATE

The Campaign for Justice, which seeks to secure redress for Japanese Latin Americans who our government kidnapped and imprisoned during World War II, sent out the following letter to the Asian Pacific American legal community. Its appeal to resolve some unfinished business—equity of treatment where redress is concerned—should be read by everyone. Authors of the appeal are members of the coram nobis legal team that represented Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi, and Minoru Yasui. □

Twenty years ago, through the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, this legal community was part of a broad coalition that helped secure redress from Congress for Japanese Americans forcibly taken from their homes and communities during WWII, and imprisoned in desolate "internment" camps scattered throughout the Western U.S. and Arkansas. This victory was exhilarating, but it wasn't enough. The same legislation that had found the Internment the product of race hatred, wartime hysteria and a failure of political leadership, nonetheless did not offer redress to other victims of U.S. wartime policies, the thousands of Japanese Latin Americans our nation had kidnapped from countries throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America and interned in U.S. prison camps to be used as barter for American prisoner exchanges. Our government held these innocent people indefinitely without charge, seized their property and identity, forced them into hard labor, and cruelly deported many of them as "enemy aliens" after the war. Redress and justice to the surviving JLAs for this flagrant violation of civil and human rights is long overdue.

Today, the Japanese Latin American redress effort, spearheaded by the Campaign for Justice coalition, is at a critical juncture. Companion bills to initiate this redress effort by establishing a Congressional study commission have been re-introduced in the House and Senate: H.R. 662 (Becerra, D-CA) and S. 381 (Inouye, D-HI). The Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee passed the bill last year. The House Judiciary Subcommittee on Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties has set hearings on the bill this coming July. To prepare for these hearings, the Campaign for Justice needs your financial support. The Campaign for Justice needs to raise at least \$20,000 for grassroots organizing and important legislative and educational outreach, as well as to assist former JLA internees to travel to Washington D.C. to testify at the subcommittee hearings to make the public historical record necessary to support the redress legislation. In the 1980s, Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi and Min Yasui were able to vacate their wartime convictions and expose the truth about the entrenched official racism and gross abuse of power that led to the Internment only with the moral support and determination of our communities. Although we donated our legal services pro bono, we were able to pursue the coram nobis cases only because our communities made generous financial donations to pay for the costs of litigation and public education. We achieved this victory together, and not only for Japanese Americans, but for all who care about securing justice and holding the government accountable for its wrongs. Today, this fight for justice continues for the over 2,200 people of Japanese ancestry our government had kidnapped from their homes in Latin America.

## THE 100/44 IS ALIVE AND WELL, contd.

The first AJA unit, the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion, was formed in Hawaii in May of 1942 and went into combat in Italy in September of 1943. The 442<sup>nd</sup> wasn't born until March 1943 and didn't get to Italy until June of 1944. By that time, the 100<sup>th</sup> troops already had fought at Salerno, Monte Cassino, Anzio Beach and through Rome. So when the 442<sup>nd</sup> settled in north of Rome, at Civitavecchia, and the 100<sup>th</sup> was made one of its three infantry battalions (plus the 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery, the 232<sup>nd</sup> Engineering Company, the 206<sup>th</sup> Army Band, the Anti-Tank Company, the Cannon Company, and Service Company), there was considerable friction. The 100<sup>th</sup> guys felt the 442<sup>nd</sup> was Johnny-come-lately-to battle, and the 442<sup>nd</sup> soldiers felt "who are these cocky guys who think they know everything about combat?" Truth be told, there's still separatism. Two clubhouses. Failure of every proposal to join the few survivors into one club. They do not have a joint annual memorial service at Punchbowl. The main story is how so many AJAs rose in the 1940s to the defense of an America that had stripped them of their homes, their businesses and their dignity. Only 25 percent of those of military age in the internment refused to sign American loyalty oaths. Seventy-five percent did sign and join the 442<sup>nd</sup>.

The above article, authored by Bob Jones, is excerpted from *MidWeek*, March 28, 2008.

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**POSITION OF JAACL ON LGPA'S "ENGLISH ONLY" REQUIREMENT**

The Japanese American Citizens League (JAACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization, is astonished by the action of the LGPA in requiring its players to speak English or risk suspension. The JAACL does not accept the LGPA rationale that this rule is needed to increase its marketability and ensure public interest at pro-am events. Rather than invoke this rule, which would require players who have been on the LGPA Tour for two years to pass an English evaluation by the end of 2009, the LGPA should reconsider and retract this action.

The hallmark of athletic performance is rooted in the skill and tenacity of those who play the game, and not in a criterion that tests English proficiency. Moreover, a lesson from the recent Olympic Games is that athletic excellence is not determined by national boundaries or by a proficiency in a certain language. The JAACL is greatly disturbed because this rule would selectively affect a large number of foreign-born players, including a sizable delegation from South Korea. These players honor the game of golf with their skill and sportsmanship, and they should not risk suspension because they fail an English proficiency test or because they may choose not to learn the English language. The disturbing feature of this policy is that it runs counter to American ideals that encourage and value diversity. Moreover it ignores a recognition that globalization extends beyond the import and export of consumer goods to internationalizing sporting events to ensure the best in competition. This is exemplified in sports such as Major League Baseball where foreign participation is actively sought, without imposing restrictive language barriers. The JAACL believes that if the LGPA is interested in increasing its marketability, it should reject an insular mentality and focus on attracting, rather than excluding, skilled players.



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