



The JACLer

Chicago Chapter Newsletter

January/February 2009

Meet Truc Nguyen



Truc Nguyen is currently serving a one-month (January) internship in the JACL Midwest Office in Chicago. Truc's internship with the JACL is part of a Winter Term Project at Oberlin College, where she is in her freshman year. A resident of Chicago, Truc said she selected her internship with the JACL because, "I seek hands on experience directly related to Asian American and civil rights issues. I am particularly interested in women's rights, education, environmental justice, and social economics..." Truc went on to state "I feel that the JACL is on the forefront of representing the Asian voice."

"We're pleased to have Truc serve an internship with the JACL," said Bill Yoshino, JACL Midwest Director. "Truc will be assigned an education project and deal with some day-to-day issues during the time she is with us."

SPECIAL FEATURE

Championing Values of Non-Discrimination

**By: Katherine Bundra
Guest Columnist**

This past year, we have been through a wave of excitement with the 2008 presidential campaign. For the first time in our nation's history, we have witnessed a black man, two women, and a 70 year-old man all compete to be elected to the White House. Our nation is breaking down barriers of race, gender and age at an alarming rate.

Yet while the United States seemingly makes progress, we should not ignore the underlying racial tension which exists towards Arabs and Muslim communities. A study released by Columbia University cited that soon after the events of 9/11, Muslims faced a range of problems such as job losses and violent hate crimes. Women reported having their head scarves torn from their heads, and children endured verbal and physical assaults by their non-Muslim peers¹. Most recently, the racial tension was reflected loudly and clearly by a McCain supporter during a rally in Minnesota who cried, "I don't trust Obama. I have read about him

and he is an Arab."

Within the conflict of our progression, there exists one common theme, which is "discrimination." It is also one of the main reasons I am proud to be a part of the JACL community - an organization which was founded upon the values of non-discrimination, tolerance, and respect for diversity. As the JACL Vision states, "...[JACL] strives to promote a world that honours diversity by respecting values of fairness, equality and social justice."

It is important to take a moment to again reaffirm these simple values of respect and non-discrimination; particularly at a time when we are being divided in a heavily charged political climate, or during time of war, as the Japanese American community knows all too well. The values we hold personally, as well as our actions, have reverberations upon those around us and our communities.

As it states in the United Nations "The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination," adopted in 1965²:

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A Letter to the President¹:

Dear Ms. Nakano:

The copy of the CHICAGO HEARINGS was very much appreciated. The people who testified at that time (many now deceased) were admirable in that they wanted the truth to be told, whereas many of us just held back our opinions because of shyness, embarrassment and most of all, not wanting to admit the shame that had befallen us during those crucial days. Thanks to the brave ones, and also to the hard-working young sansei lawyers, we were able to receive the fruits of their labor.

Enclosed is a small donation – I wish I could give more.

Gratefully,

Ruby Izui

¹ Reprinted with permission

Many Thanks to our Generous Donors!

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Bill and Carol Yoshino
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In Memory of Mitzi Schectman
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Scholarships
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...Ithaca

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to have come from such a diverse city and a childhood during which I had close friends of every ethnicity. Old habits die hard, and the self-segregation present at Cornell – particularly among Asian Americans, by far the largest represented minority group on campus – certainly reinforces this adage. Race remains an unspoken issue on campus, tacitly affecting interactions and relationships, and I doubt that Cornell University is unique in this. My first trip back to Chicago wasn't until the end of December. While it was refreshing to return to the city, I also returned with a deeper appreciation for the lessons that it had taught me – about others as well as myself.

SAVE THE DATE: Day of Remembrance

on Sunday, February 15, 2009 at 2pm
 at **Chicago History Museum**, 1601 North Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois

The annual 2009 Day of Remembrance will commemorate the 67th anniversary of President Franklin Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066, which allowed for approximately 120,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans to be forcibly interned in concentration camps during World War II. The program will recognize those who testified before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians in Chicago in 1981. It will feature a video on the hearings and a panel that includes individuals who presented testimony at those hearings. The event is sponsored by the Japanese American Citizens League, the Japanese American Service Committee and the Chicago Japanese American Historical Society. Free Admission.

JOIN or DONATE TO THE JAACL TODAY!

By joining Chicago JAACL:

- ◆ You will be part of a national network of Asian Americans that addresses policies and issues that affect you.
- ◆ You will receive the Pacific Citizen, JAACL's national newspaper with in-depth coverage about Asian American communities.
- ◆ You will receive the JAACler, Chicago JAACL's newsletter reporting on the local news and activities.
- ◆ You will be eligible to receive JAACL national and local student scholarships; this year Chicago JAACL awarded \$20,000 in funds.
- ◆ You will be eligible to join the JAACL Credit Union for savings plans and competitive interest rate loans. For more information, visit online at www.jaclcu.com.
- ◆ You will be eligible for discounts on auto, health (where applicable), and property insurance.

See Reverse Side for Membership Application

Already a JAACL Member?

To renew your membership or give a donation, please complete the reverse side. For information regarding your membership status, please contact Kelli Rucker, Membership Chair at (jacl.mbr@gmail.com) or Jacqueline Mac, JAACL Ford Fellow at 773-728-7171 (Chicago@jacl.org).

...Values

(Continued from page 1)

...discrimination between human beings on the grounds of race, colour or ethnic origin is an obstacle to friendly and peaceful relations among nations and is capable of disturbing peace and security among peoples and the harmony of persons living side by side even within one and the same State.

We cannot live in peace without respecting one another, regardless of their gender, age, religion, ethnic origin or skin colour. While the United States makes significant progress on one hand, we must not move two steps back on the other.

Restating the obvious by discussing

values of non-discrimination, respect for diversity and human dignity, may seem all too simplistic. But these values are indeed the basis of our humanity, and the reason why we have united among the Japanese American citizens in our country to be a part of JACL. We must continue to live and champion these values in our everyday lives, and strongly persist in the face of dangerous and divisive ideologies which feed the roots racial discrimination.

¹The full article is available at: www.nytimes.com/2004/10/05/nyregion/05muslim.html?_r=1&scp=7&sq=discrimination%20muslium&st=cse&oref=slogin

²The United States signed the Convention on the 28th of September, 1966 and ratified it on the 21st October 1994. The Convention can be found at www.ohchr.org



Katherine is a native of the Chicago area and the granddaughter of Roy Iwata, a long-time JACL member. She earned her first degree at Boston College, later teaching English in Namibia and completing a Masters in Human Rights at the University of London in 2006. She has worked for a number of human rights non-governmental organizations in Chicago, London and Geneva, and now works on communications at a humanitarian organization.

JOIN or DONATE TO THE JACL TODAY!

The JACL is a community organization that ensures the protection of your rights. Help us continue to be a strong voice for you and your family by supporting us with your membership or a donation.

Name _____
 Address _____
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PRICE

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PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: **JACL**

Mail this form and check to:

JACL Chicago
 Attn: Membership
 5415 N. Clark Street,
 Chicago, IL 60640

PLEASE SUPPORT THE JACL WITH A DONATION!

IN MY NAME AMOUNT: \$ _____
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 IN MEMORY OF: _____

Chicago Chapter Japanese American Citizens League 2009 Scholarship Program Guidelines Application Deadline: **March 2, 2009**

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is a national civil rights and education organization founded in 1929 and with chapters across the country. Since its beginning, the JACL has taken an active role in dismantling discriminatory barriers for all Asian Pacific Americans.

The Chicago Chapter of JACL administers a scholarship program to help qualified students pursue their educational goals. The program awards several scholarships each year which are funded by generous donations from community sponsors. The scholarships provide financial assistance to promising students who have demonstrated academic excellence and school/community service with a special emphasis on JACL involvement and service within the Japanese American community. Applications are available online at www.jaclchicago.org.

SCHOLARSHIP CATEGORIES

Scholarships are available to graduating high school seniors entering as freshman to a school of higher learning; continuing undergraduate students and graduate students.

Entering freshman should complete the FRESHMAN application. All other applicants should complete the GENERAL application form.

The Chicago JACL reserves the right not to make awards in every category depending upon the type and qualifications of the applicant pool.

ELIGIBILITY

Scholarship applicants must meet all of the following eligibility requirements.

1. Applicant must be a JACL member at either an Individual or Student/Youth Level. (Parent membership will not meet this requirement.) If the applicant is not a member, he/she must

join JACL at the time of application – for information, call the JACL office at (773) 728-7171.

2. Applicant must be a full-time student at a college, university, trade school, business school, or other institution of higher learning within the United States in the fall of 2009. Students deferring enrollment will not qualify for the 2009 scholarship program.
3. Applicant must be a resident of the State of Illinois for at least one year prior to graduation or graduate from an accredited Illinois high school.
4. Applicant may apply under only one scholarship category (Freshman or General) during the same year.
5. Past recipients of Chicago JACL scholarship awards are limited to a total of **two** awards.
6. **Scholarship recipients must attend the annual scholarship luncheon to receive their awards** – requests for exceptions to attendance must be submitted in writing in advance and approved by the Scholarship Committee.

APPLICATION MATERIALS

Only one application (Freshman or General) need be submitted to qualify for all awards listed in that same category.

The following is a condensed list of supporting documents required to complete a Chicago JACL Scholarship Application: JACL Application, JACL involvement, Personal Statement, Letters of recommendation, Official transcripts including SAT and/or ACT test score verification, Extracurricular activities, Work experience and Community involvement.

CRITERIA

Demonstration of academic excellence, as a measure of commitment to education, is an important but by no means the sole determinant for the scholarship awards.

All application components listed above will factor into the scholarship committee's evaluation. Extracurricular activities indicate a well-rounded individual but recognition will also be given to students whose part-time jobs may limit their ability to participate in activities. Criteria may be weighed differently depending upon the nature of the scholarship. *Special attention and weight will be given to an applicant's involvement with JACL and the JA community and in the type of activities (i.e., ensuring the civil rights of Asian Americans and others through education) that concern JACL.*

Decision of the Scholarship Committee is final.

KEY DATES

December 2008 or earlier – applications will be available for download from the Chicago JACL web site at <http://www.jaclchicago.org>, or by calling the Chicago JACL office at 773/728-7170.

March 2, 2009 – applications must be received or postmarked by this date for scholarship consideration.

April 2009 – scholarship award recipients will be notified

May 2009 – Annual scholarship luncheon – the exact date will be available by or before March 2 from the Chicago JACL office at 773/728-7171 or on the web site at: <http://www.jaclchicago.org>

Applications and supporting materials should be submitted to:

**Chicago Chapter JACL
Attention: Scholarship Program
5415 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60640-1294**

Note: The JACL also has a National Scholarship and Awards Program in addition to the Chicago scholarship program. The national program requires a separate application available at www.jacl.org. Students may apply for both local and national scholarships in the same year.

Remembering Smoky

The following is adapted from a eulogy given by Ron Yoshino at Smoky's memorial service on January 3, 2009

I first met Smoky Sakurada about 30 years ago. We were both on the Board of Directors of the Chicago Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League. And, during those 30 years – I would see Smoky at the monthly Board Meetings and at the various events sponsored by the Chicago JACL.

Smoky didn't drive – so I would drive him home after Board Meetings. During that time I got a chance to talk to Smoky and know him. During the years I knew Smoky – he was retired. Smoky spent a lot of his time doing volunteer work for the Chicago JACL and for Friends of the Park. Smoky was involved with JACL long before I knew him. During his early involvement with the Chicago JACL and the Chicago JACL Credit Union, Smoky worked with Shig Wakamatsu and Jack Nakagawa.

When I met him – Smoky was responsible for the *Pacific Citizen* Holiday ads. These ads are a significant source of revenue for both the *Pacific Citizen* and the Chicago JACL. During the year, Smoky would tirelessly walk the streets of Chicago soliciting ads for the *Pacific Citizen* Holiday Issue. He did this until about 4 years ago. Since then I have taken over solicitation of the *Pacific Citizen* Holiday ads and inherited the legacy left by Smoky.

Smoky was not loud nor was he the center of attention. Rather, he was quiet, determined, and reliable. Those of us from the Chicago JACL will always remember Smoky's dedication and contribution to the organization.

About Smoky

"Smoky" Hirao Sakurada was born in 1917 in Suisun, California, the oldest of four children. His mother died when he was four years old. His father worked as a gardener in Monterey where they were living when

World War II began. Smoky and his family were placed in the Merced Assembly Center and later were sent to Amache in Colorado.

In camp, Smoky was a truck driver for the security police, escorting individuals leaving camp to the train depot. Following the internment, Smoky moved to Blue Island and worked for Libby Canned Foods, and later to Chicago where he worked in shipping and receiving for the American Tara Company, a carbon paper manufacturer.

Smoky volunteered for the JACL and other community organizations. The first people Smoky remembers meeting in the Japanese American community were Shig and Dorothy Wakamatsu and Jack Nakagawa. He fondly remembered attending JACL Credit Union meetings and procuring advertisements for the *Pacific Citizen* newspaper, which he faithfully continued to do for fifty years. He was a strong supporter of the JACL and served on the Chicago Chapter Board of Directors for many years.

A Look Inside the Education Advocacy Working Group

By: Jacqueline Mac Ford Fellow

For the past several months, I, along with Midwest Regional Director Bill Yoshino, have been involved in an aggressive grassroots group headed by the Asian American Institute made up of community organizers, professionals, and educators called the Education Advocacy Working Group. The name can be quite a mouthful and somewhat mundane but neither of those descriptors reflect the important work done by this group.

By definition, the overarching goal of the Working Group is to advance the em-

powerment and educational opportunities of Asian American youth in Chicago Public Schools (K-12). The Working Group has identified two main issues on which to focus their efforts and is broken up into two subcommittees to work on their respective issue: attaining support for parent-school partnerships and including Asian American studies in the K-12 curriculum in Illinois.

The subcommittee on attaining support for parent-school partnerships is looking to organize with parents, youth, teachers, and schools to create a report card for identified schools as a form of needs assessment. The ultimate goal is to create and maintain successful part-

nerships between Asian American families and public schools through funding and programming support.

The curriculum subcommittee is currently drafting recommendations to integrate Asian American studies into the Illinois Learning Standard, outlining a list of talking points regarding the need for Asian American Studies curriculum to present to key education officials, and looking for future opportunities to lead teacher training workshops.

If you'd like to know more information about the Education Advocacy Working Group, please contact April Lewton, april (at) aaichicago.org.

From Chicago to Ithaca

By: Laura Yamasaki
Youth Committee Chair

The largest Ivy League school, Cornell University in Ithaca, New York is notorious for its rigorous academics and diverse curriculum. Despite the university's wide academic range, many of these students, however, come to Ithaca bearing surprisingly similar backgrounds – ones filled with all-nighters, Advanced Placement credits, summer internships, and near-perfect SAT scores. International students are certainly no exception to the ensuing hyper-competitive atmosphere. In particular, Korean and Chinese international students have a penchant for being at the top of classes, garnering top jobs and internships, and, perhaps as a consequence, spending lots of time in the libraries on campus. Asian students – who make up roughly 16% of the student population (as of 2005) – have a wealth of resources on campus, includ-

ing the Cornell Taiwanese-American Society, Asian-interest Greek organizations, and a Chinese dance troupe. One wonders, however, to what extent these organizations foster the oft-boasted diversity present in the pamphlets, advertisements, and viewbooks distributed by the university. Does it instead encourage self-segregation and fiercely intraracial friendships?

With nationally ranked science programs, Cornell University attracts students from all around the world. Rarely would an international student be found in, say, a philosophy major – unless it was seen as a step to law school. Both the Cornell Consulting Club and Women in Investment Banking (“85 Broads”) organizations are headed by Asian Americans. Kappa Phi Lambda, an Asian-interest sorority with an active Cornell chapter, has one of the highest house GPAs in the 60-plus large Greek system on campus. The high-achieving tendencies of the “model minority” are

well known, but I was nonetheless surprised to see it carried out to such an extent. Naturally, my transition from a Chicago public high school was a tough one – with a steep learning curve.

Coming from a Chicago public high school, my background differed from those of my classmates, many of whom came from private schools in the suburban Northeast. The largest difference, however, didn't seem to be my Midwestern accent or loyalty to the Chicago Cubs. Many Asian Americans I met had exclusively Asian friends, spoke the language of their native country, and openly dismissed things like Greek life as “white”. When I mispronounced the Vietnamese dish “phở”, I was told that I had been pronouncing it the “white” way. An international student from Kyoto told me that he decided to attend Cornell over Princeton because the latter was a “rich white boy's club”. I found their intolerance both surprising and disheartening. I felt extremely lucky

(ITHACA Continued on page 2)

Electronic Version of JACLER Now Available!

The Chicago JACL is now offering you the option of receiving a PDF version of the JACLER electronically.

To receive your copy, please fill-out and mail-in (or send an email to Chicago@jacl.org) the information below.

First Name _____

Last Name _____

I would like to receive the electronic version of the JACLER. I understand by choosing this option, I suspend my receipt of the JACLER by mail.

Email address where you wish your E-Newsletter to be sent:

Place
Stamp
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Chicago JACL
Attn: Communications
5415 N. Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60640



Chicago Chapter JAACL

5415 North Clark Street

Chicago, Illinois 60640-1294

Telephone: 773-728-7171

Fax: 773-728-7231

Email: Chicago@jacl.org

Website: www.jaclchicago.org

The Japanese American Citizens League is a non-profit human and civil rights organization dedicated to preserving the civil liberties of Japanese Americans and of all Americans.

We welcome your participation.

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

Happy New Year! 新年快樂! A new year is like running through sprinklers on a hot summer day. An opportunity to start anew and forget the bad and ugly that happen in the year that passed. However, I think it is important to remember the good, the bad, and the ugly in order to make the new year that much more fulfilling. A new year is a chance to renew our energies and keep charging forward to meet the bad and ugly head on.

My new year's resolution is to take better care of myself by exercising regularly, eating in moderation, and stressing less about the little things. Did you know that writing down goals and placing them in an obvious location increases your chance of achieving them? Have you written your resolution down yet? I just did.

Jacqueline Mac

JAACL Ford Fellow & JAACLer Editor

Calendar of Events

Jan. 24	AACC Lunar New Year Dinner
Jan. 27	2010 Convention Committee Meeting
Feb. 11	Chicago Board Meeting
Feb. 15	Day of Remembrance
FOR MORE EVENTS	Please keep checking the Chicago Chapter website at http://jaclchicago.org

NOTICE TO ALL CHICAGO JAACL MEMBERS!

We are currently updating our listserv!

If you haven't already done so, please submit your e-mail address to Chicago@jacl.org.

And keep checking www.jaclchicago.org for pictures of past events and more information on upcoming events!