

AARCC connections

February/March 2007

Volume 2, Issue 4

America's Concentration Camps

By: Joyce Yin

Did you know that during World War II, over 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans were put into "War Relocation Centers" (also known as internment camps) around the country because of their questioned loyalty to the US? Sam Ozaki, grandfather of AARCC student assistant Phillip Ozaki, is a survivor of the relocation centers and a World War II veteran of the all Japanese 442nd Regimental Combat Team and was kind enough to share his experience with us.



What was it like in the internment camps?

I was 17, a senior in high school, when I was in the camps. There were just so many people crowded into a very small space and there was just no privacy whatsoever. You just kind of feel lost among all the people and at the time, you made friends and you tried to pass the time. So they had sports that the young people could participate in. And they also had people working, so my job was to work at the recreation department and umpiring games. Not only had we lost our liberty, we lost everything. We needed money and we were paid at the rate of \$12 - \$19 a month. They did not let me finish high school. They sent me my diploma because they knew it was not my fault that I missed 2 or 3 months of my senior year.

Why do you think it's important to learn about what happened?

I think it's important that people know what the camps were like from our point of view because when historians write about it, they look at it and interpret it differently from people who spend time in

there. I think it's important to tell the American public about it so they know what happened and so they realize the violation of our civil liberties so this kind of thing will never happen again.

Why did you enlist in the US army even though it was the same government responsible for forcing you into the camps?

Well this was the only home we knew. This was our country and even though we were put into the camps, we felt we had to prove our loyalty to America so they would accept us. That was kind of a stupid thing - why should we have to prove our loyalty? But at the time, I thought it was important to prove our loyalty to Americans and of course we did.

What was it like being in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team?

We wanted to show our fellow American soldiers that we were loyal. We felt very special and had a lot of pride because we were segregated whenever we did anything and we felt we wanted to show America that we were the best.

What was life like after internment camps?

It was particularly difficult for our parents' generation. Many of them were farmers and lost their farms or small businesses and they never really got back on their feet. And now for the younger generation, most of us went to school and in time went into different careers. It was a difficult adjustment because we didn't have the homes we once had. We didn't have the family support that was once available to us and we didn't know how the general public would react to us returning. But for the most part, we made it but on the other hand there were many that were never able to adjust once again to mainstream America.

How did you end up in Chicago?

The way I got out of the camps was that I volunteered for the Army. When I was discharged, we didn't have a home to return to in California and my sister was here working in Chicago. So I decided I would be discharged here in Chicago and then I went to Roosevelt University and started my teaching career.

What relevance do you think your experience has with 9/11?

It's absolutely related. In fact, when I was watching what happened on 9/11, when I began to find out that the people who had perpetrated the incident were from the Middle East, Saudi Arabia for the most part, the first thing I thought of was, "Here we go again" and that they would focus on Arab Americans and question their loyalty to our country.

Do you feel enough has been done for Japanese Americans in terms of redress?

Not really, but at the least the government admitted to the war crime. We fought and finally found redress from our government, the President himself wrote a letter of apology and they paid all the survivors of the camps \$20,000. It's important that they paid us, even though it wasn't a lot, it was a token amount. They have to live up to the words of the Constitution and when they talk about liberty and justice for all, they need to truly mean it - not just for one group of Americans.



Hear Sam Ozaki in person: "Remedying an Injustice"

Along with William Yoshino, Midwest Director of the Japanese American Citizens League

Monday, February 19th, 2007 @ 3:00pm in Lecture Center D2

Be a Peer Mentor!

By: Cuong Vu

Do you remember when you came into UIC Freshman year and you had absolutely no idea what you were doing, who anybody was, where you were going, or why it was all happening?

It all started at Summer Orientation for me, where all the Orientation leaders gave us 'Freshies' advice on matters related to UIC such as what buildings were called what, whether it was CCC, AH, LC 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, SEL, ABC, or whatever acronym it was, even though you would always look at the weekly schedule you printed the day before school started in order to find where your classes were. And even then, you still didn't remember what the buildings were called or where they were located. I know it took me 4 years before I even realized there was such an area called the 'bat cave', or I don't know, a little building called the 'library'.



But seriously, there was this other issue Orientation leaders 'helped' us incoming Freshies with, and that was the almighty Registration For Classes. I'm not sure if this happened to your group, but my Orientation leader 'advised' my group that Freshmen should take 15 credit hours per semester in order to graduate on time. However, since we were Freshmen, and they were the smart 'Orientation Leaders', they STRONGLY suggested we take 12 hours for our Freshman year, just so we can acclimate to this new and exciting life-changing experience called...college. Well, I ended up taking 13 credit hours, 6 of which (don't ask me why) did not count towards my degree. So really, I only 'took' 7 hours that first semester, and ended up being behind in on my college career from the very beginning. It only took me 4 more straight semesters of 18+ credit hours before I was able to officially call myself a Senior at the start of my fourth year.

The point of this digression was, Freshman have it hard when they first get to college, specifically UIC. The support that UIC provides students with in order to 'advise' us sometimes don't know what they're talking about. I know I had it hard, and I'm pretty sure you've found it difficult when you came. Didn't you ever wish you had a 'mentor', that could help you learn the ropes here at UIC? Didn't you ever wish you had somebody who you could email, call or, even hang out with, when you had a question about why you should copy ISBN numbers down instead of actually buying the books at the UIC bookstore? Or if the Lecture Centers beginning with A started on the northwest (right) side and went clockwise, or if it started on the northeast (left) side and went counter-clockwise?

I remembered exactly how I felt when I first came to UIC, and so I wanted to help out this year's Freshmen. With the creation of the Asian American Peer Mentor Program, I was able to do just that. If you ever thought, 'I wish I had somebody who could have showed me around here', why not be the person who somebody else can say 'I'm glad I had [you] to show me around here'... Join the Asian American Peer Mentor Program, if you want to make a difference in somebody's life, and at the same time, make a friend or two, or three, or eight...

To learn more about becoming a Peer Mentor, attend an information session

Tuesday, February 20th @ 4pm or Friday, February 23rd @ 2pm AARCC, 101 Taft Hall.

Or visit the AARCC website at <http://www.uic.edu/depts/oa/AARCC/index.html>

Applications are due March 2nd. Contact Corinne Kodama at ckodama@uic.edu for more information.

Person on the Street: What is your favorite Asian American movie?



**Dave Der, Senior,
Finance**

"*Dim Sum*. I like it because it's a movie about trying to find the balance between Chinese and American values."



**Charlyne Sarmiento,
2nd Year M.A., English
Studies**

"*Saving Face*. It's about a family trying to figure out and help each other. It also deals with Asian American identity issues and queer issues."



**Rachel Poon, Senior,
Neuroscience**

"I don't really know of any because there aren't many mainstream Asian American movies."



**Madelle Olea, Sophomore,
Biology**

"*Leave it to Chance*. I like it because it deals with relationship issues through a Filipino perspective."



**Josh Go, Sophomore,
Pre-pharmacy**

"*The Joy Luck Club*. I like it because I can easily relate to many of the Asian American family experiences that the characters go through."

February 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

Tuesday, February 13

IRSHAD MANJJI is a journalist, author, and activist. Ms. Manji self-identifies as a lesbian, a feminist, and a Muslim. Her talk, *The Power Of Asking Questions*, is free and open to the public at 7:00 pm in SSB rooms A, B, and C.

Thursday, February 15

Alpha Kappa Delta Phi sorority inc. will be volunteering at the Boys and Girls club. They meet every Thursday at 4:30pm at the Newman Center. Next week, Feb. 22, they will be volunteering at UIC's Medical Center. To help out contact sjoves@gmail.com.

Friday, February 16

TOGETHER HIGHER DANCE TROUPE is Vietnam's first contemporary dance company making their Midwest debut at The Dance Center of Columbia College. The choreographer is offering a FREE movement workshop on improvisation is at 4:00pm in the Rathskellar. For more info contact Phillip Ozaki at pozaki2@uic.edu.

Sunday, February 18

THE VIETNAMESE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (VSA) will be helping with the Lunar New Year's event at 11:00 am at Furama Restaurant. More info contact rfe2@uic.edu.

Monday, February 19

THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE is the anniversary of Executive Order 9066 which ordered Japanese Americans to internment camps during WWII. The internment is remembered in hopes that history will not repeat itself. Panelists include Bill Yoshino and Sam Ozaki. 3:00 pm in Lecture Center D2.

Tuesday, February 20 and Friday, February 23rd

ASIAN AMERICAN PEER MENTOR PROGRAM info session at the AARCC (101 Taft Hall). Tuesday at 4:00pm and Thursday at 2:00pm. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 2nd.

February 21 & 22

Practice for *ImaginAsian*, AASIA's yearly fashion show, starts at 4:00pm. If you're interested in participating contact jmerca4@uic.edu.

Sunday, February 25

Filipinos in Alliance (FIA) invites you to BATTLE OF THE BAMBOO, a competitive showcase of traditional Filipino folk dances performed by students from universities and high schools around the Midwest. FREE admission, 3:00pm in the Inner Circle.

Wednesday, February 28th

The Asian American Coalition Committee (AACC) will hold a bake sale in the Link in SCE. From 11am—2pm.

March 2007



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
					AARCC Peer Mentor Application DEADLINE	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
					MAASU Conference @ UIUC	
11	12	13	14	15	16 Vijay Prashad 6pm APAGSO Conference @ UIC	17 AASIA's ImaginAsian 7pm
						Ed Bok Lee 6pm (APAGSO)
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
						FIA's Uproot
	Spring Break !					

Friday, March 2

Peer Mentor Application DEADLINE!

March 9 - 11

The Midwest Asian American Student Union (MAASU) conference was started in response to a need for political unity among Asian American students in the Midwest. This year's conference will be held UIUC. Website: <http://www.maasu.org>

March 16 - 18

The UIC chapter of the Asian Pacific American Graduate Student Organization will host the second APAGSO national graduate student conference on Asian American Studies.

Friday, March 16

VIJAY PRASHAD is a Professor and Director of International Studies at Trinity College as well as a celebrated author of *Karma of Brown Folk and Everybody Was Kung Fu Fighting*. He will be giving the keynote speech to kick-off the APAGSO Conference. 6:00pm at SCE Room 302.

Saturday, March 17

Award winning poet and spoken word artist ED BOK LEE will perform selections from his book, *Real Karaoke People*. Part of the APAGSO Conference. 6:00pm at SCE Room 302.

Saturday, March 17

ImaginAsian is Asian American Students in Alliance's (AASIA's) annual Fashion Show. This year's theme is "I love the Eras." The show starts at 7:00 pm in the Illinois Room.

Saturday, March 31

Filipinos in Alliance (FIA) celebrates their 10th years as an organization at their yearly show, UPROOT. Uproot is a showcase of FIA's talents through singing, dancing, and other ways of expressing Filipino-American culture.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

By: Liz Thomson

What do you get when you have some comfy sofas, dvds, books, microwave/refrigerator, and great company all the time? It would be The Rainbow Resource run by the Office of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Concerns (OGLBTC), in room 181, in the Behavioral Sciences Building (BSB). The Rainbow Resource is a space for all UIC community members to study and socialize.

What can you expect at The Rainbow Resource? There are over 300 feature films and documentaries, over 1000 books (fiction and non-fiction), and three computers for student use. Many students describe the space as “a great place to hang out.”

But is everyone who comes to The Rainbow Resource gay? “There’s a lot of different kind of people who visit Rainbow,” says Coordinator of The Rainbow Resource Liz Thomson. “The space is a safe and welcoming space for anyone, but specifically those who identify as GLBT, curious, or a straight ally. As an out Asian American female who identifies as bisexual, I know having multiple identities can be challenging. That’s why The Rainbow Resource is great place to have.”

Some films that may be of interest to those who know AARCC are *Saving Face*, *The Wedding Banquet* and *Brokeback Mountain* by Director Ang Lee. Films can be rented for \$1-2 for two days at a time. Some books that may be of interest include *Q&A: Queer in Asian America*, *Queer Japan*, and *Lotus of Another Color: An Unfolding of the South Asian Gay and Lesbian Experience*. Books can be checked out for free and for two weeks.

The Rainbow Resource is open Monday-Friday, from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in BSB 181
For more information about the collection or the space, call at 312-413-3036 or visit www.glbc.uic.edu.



APAGSO: Immigration, Transnationalism, and Diaspora

By: Charlyne Sarmiento



On March 16th and 17th, the Asian Pacific American Graduate Student Organization (APAGSO) UIC chapter will be hosting a graduate student conference entitled, “Immigration, Transnationalism, and Diaspora: Issues for Asian/American Communities.” While we are providing graduate students with an opportunity to share their work with each other, we also hope to extend dialogues on the shifting formation of Asian American Studies by examining how Asian/American immigration, transnationalism, and diaspora are currently being re-imagined across disciplinary boundaries.

Programming will include graduate student panels from over 15 universities across the nation. In addition, our keynote address will be given by Vijay Prashad, Professor and Director of International Studies at Trinity College, on Friday, March 16th, at 6p.m. On Saturday, March 17th, we have scheduled a faculty panel moderated by Helen Jun, Assistant Professor of UIC’s English and African American Studies Department. Confirmed to participate are Junaid Rana (University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign), Lisa Cacho (University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign), and Camilla Fojas (DePaul University). The goal of the panel is to highlight various models of interdisciplinary and comparative scholarship as well as to give graduate students the opportunity to engage with noted scholars in the field. The final event at the conference will be a performance by Ed Bok Lee, poet and spoken word performer and winner of the 2006 PEN/ Beyond Margins Award.

This conference involves the wider UIC campus outside the APAGSO organization. By including a program with an array of speakers, graduate student presenters, and performances at the conference, we have sparked activity on campus that reaches out to students, both undergraduate and graduate, faculty, staff, and the wider Chicago community in addressing Asian/American issues. Already with the support of UIC’s Asian American Resource and Cultural Center, the African American Studies Department, the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy, the Chicago Organization Fund Review Board, Asian American Coalition Committee, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, APAGSO has begun its initial stages of generating a space of dialogue and community at UIC.

For registration info and volunteer opportunities please contact csarmi2@uic.edu
Visit our website: http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orgs/other/apagso/

**Asian American Resource
and Cultural Center**

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LEARN ABOUT
AARCC EVENTS
THROUGH OUR
EMAIL LIST, JOIN BY
CONTACTING
AARCC@UIC.EDU

Roadtrip to MAASU '07!

By: Corinne Kodama

The Midwest Asian American Students Union annual spring conference will be held March 9-11 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. This year's conference theme is *Embrace, Empower and Envision*. The three day conference, with expected attendance of over 700 guests from over 30 Midwest schools, encompasses many facets of Asian American life including culture, education, and activism. Attending MAASU is a great way to learn about Asian American issues, develop leadership skills, and meet Asian American students from around the Midwest (and particularly in Illinois this year given the location). UIC will be providing transportation for a limited number of students who attend MAASU and will also help in coordinating accommodations. The student registration fee is \$45 (AARCC will sponsor 2 officers from each Asian American organization).



For more information on the conference or to register, visit <http://sc.maasu.org/index.html>,
or contact Corinne Kodama at ckodama@uic.edu or 312-413-9653.