

AARCCONNECTIONS

FEB/MAR 2009

ADVENTURES IN SPACE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ASTRONAUT, DANIEL TANI

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Why did you decide to become an astronaut?

I didn't really seriously think about being an astronaut until I was over 30. It wasn't something that I thought was within reach of something I could do. I was an aerospace engineer, and worked with some astronauts and their work seemed exciting. So I looked back at my career and resume and realized that I had a pretty relevant background for being an astronaut and might actually be considered so I applied.

What is the most unusual thing you've seen/done as an astronaut?

Since we go to the space station and live for a long period of time, 4 months in my case, with a very small crew, we're studying the psychological aspects of that—getting along, small crew—small space dynamics. So we've developed some training to both help us learn about those aspects of space station life or to screen out any problems.

One time we had to live in this habitat underwater off the Florida Keys, 60 ft underwater on an 8 day mission. So we'd be eating dinner or something and see fish, sharks, and turtles swim by, we'd scuba dive twice a day, and I thought how strange it was that we were training for space by living 60 ft underwater! So I have sometimes been surprised what we do for training.

What is the representation of Asian Americans in the space program? What about people from Illinois?

I actually don't know the actual numbers. There are 2 Chinese American astronauts who just retired. I'm the 2nd Japanese American, the first was Ellison Onizuka who died in the Challenger accident in 1985. There's

also an Indian American astronaut. I see a number of Asian Americans as engineers, staff members, just like any other engineering community or business office. But I'd certainly like to see more Asian Americans in the space program, or any kind of diversity.

In terms of Illinois, there are a few, again I'm sure I'm going to leave some out, we have astronauts from all over the country and the world. But one of the female astronauts, Joan Higginbottom is a Chicagoan. It's great to represent Chicago in the space program. One of the cool things I did was to take some really great pictures of Chicago from space. I'll show them when I come to visit.

I've heard that your family was affected by the Japanese internment in the 40s, can you tell us a little more about that?

My parents were in San Francisco, married just a year and a half. They were relocated with tens of thousands of others, and my oldest brother was 5 weeks old when they had to move. First they were taken to the Tanforan Race Track, then after a few months living in horse stables, they went to the Topaz internment camp in Utah for 1 ½ yrs. It really is an amazing story that my parents were forcibly removed from their house by the federal government, but just one generation later the same government gives me the opportunity to represent our country in space. I think that says great things both about my family and the government in terms of righting the wrong.

Are you involved with Japanese or Asian American communities?

I'm a member of the Japanese American Citizens League, I've also appeared and served the Japanese American community in San Francisco, since that's where my father was from—he was born in Japantown—I feel a responsibility to honor and serve the Japanese American and Asian American communities.

What are your future plans?

Right now I'm doing the desk job, but there are lots of missions coming up in the space program. There are a couple more missions to be assigned before they retire the shuttle, so I'm hoping to be a crew member on one of those. But it's up to my boss—well, I say it's up to my boss at work and my boss at home. As long as it's OK with all of them to go fly, I'm in the pool with everyone else waiting to be selected.



"More Than Rocket Science"

Tuesday, March 10th

**Student Center East,
Room 302**

4 p.m. (tentative)

**Co-sponsored by AARCC &
Northrop Grumman Corp.**

BECOME A PEER MENTOR!

BY MADELLE OLEA, AAMP PEER MENTOR IN 2006, 2007, & 2008

The Asian American Mentoring Program (AAMP) is a Fall Semester program to help new students to transition to UIC. Paired mentors work with a small group of mentees, staying in regular contact with them, planning small and large group outings, and sharing their experiences and knowledge.

Being a Peer Mentor in the Asian American Mentor Program (AAMP) was a good learning experience. I learned about resources and information I wished I knew about when I was a freshman, which I was able to use to help out my mentees, and also myself. I saw a different perspective of my peers that I was not

aware of before, that they are just like me, with school, work and family issues. At the end of the day, it was nice to have somewhere to go to, where I could see familiar faces, and the mentoring program introduced me to that place:

AARCC. This year in particular, we've had great turnout at our events and impressive participations from mentees; it was almost as if we had some form of family while we were at school.

Finally, I'd like to say that being a mentor isn't as rough as it sounds. I gained experience in helping others, and I learned to help myself in the process. Regardless of whether I can answer my mentees' questions or not,

I can at least point them in the direction of someone who could. I've met some really great and helpful people in the process that I otherwise would never have encountered. It's good to know that I'm not expected to know everything. I've grown to like and appreciate my role as a mentor, and I will miss it dearly.

For more information, visit aarcc.uic.edu, or contact Corinne Kodama at ckodama@uic.edu or 312-413-9653.

Deadline for Peer Mentor applications is Friday, February 27.



To learn more about becoming a Peer Mentor attend an Information Session on:

**Tuesday, February 17
4 p.m. OR**

**Friday, February 20
1 p.m.**

(both in Taft Hall 101)

2009 MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FILIPINO AMERICANS CONFERENCE AT UIC!

BY PHILLIP OZAKI, MAFA 2009 CO-WORKSHOP COORDINATOR



For the first time in the 13-year history of the Midwest Association of Filipino Americans (MAFA), the conference is coming to Chicago and hosted by the Filipinos in Alliance (FIA) at UIC! We hope to bring in as many as 1000 attendees! MAFA is an organization that promotes unity and cooperation amongst Filipino and Filipino Americans around the Midwest by promoting Filipino culture and Asian American awareness.

This year's theme is "*Indivisible: I Am Not in the Philippines, But the Philippines is in Me*". On Friday is registration and a Pre-Show Variety Show. Saturday is the bulk of the conference. There will be workshops with topics from Networking to Asian-Americans-in-the-Obama-Era to Filipinos in Chicago.

In the evening will be the main variety show which is FIA's annual event, "Battle of the Bamboo", a dance competition between different Filipino Organizations in the Midwest. To finish off the night, attendees can party away at the conference's Red Carpet Aftersat at RadioStar Nightclub.

You can be part of the conference in many ways. Register to attend. Donate money. Donate time by volunteering. Perform in the v-show or b-show. Or tell your friends about it. Conference registration is \$30 for UIC students which includes the workshop fees, free MAFA t-shirt, free conference lunch, free admission to BOTB, and other conference perks.

February 20th—22nd

For any questions email uicmafa2009@googlegroups.com or go to the MAFA website at http://www2.uic.edu/stud_orqs/cultures/fia/mafa09.html (or just Google "mafa 2009 uic").

VOICEBOX BY: MICAH ESGUERRA**WELCOME TO TONIGHT'S AA MEETING**

MICAH IS A THIRD-YEAR POLITICAL SCIENCE MAJOR WHO IS PROUD OF HIS FILIPINO-AMERICAN HERITAGE.

It's now 7pm, so I'd like to welcome all of you to tonight's "AA" meeting. (For those of you attending the 12-step "Alcoholics Anonymous" meeting, please report to room 211 in this building). For those of you joining our Asians Anonymous program for the first time, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all of you.

"Asians Anonymous" is a 1 step program that intends to dispel the model minority myth and helps Asians break free from these fabricated pressures. This program is for those who don't "fit" the model minority stereotype; this program is for those who want to live their lives without the pressures of success and high paying salaries. So, what is this one step? Acceptance: specifically, learning to accept who you are; learning to accept your faults, your weaknesses, as well as your personal strengths. When you learn to accept yourself for who you really are, the false pressures of a "model minority" will cease to affect how you live. For some, completing this step may take only one meeting. For others, it may take years. But the most crucial thing to remember is that all of you here tonight are making an effort towards completing the 1-step Asians Anonymous program.

Before the beginning of tonight's meeting, some of you asked me what the success rate was for Asians entering this program. But before I attempt to answer this important question – after all, why would anyone take this program if it didn't deliver results – I'd like to talk about why this seemingly harmless myth has hurt so many of us. It seems like this stereotype, that all Asians are smart and successful, would bolster individual pride and give us, as Asians, the strength to be the best we can be. But unfortunately, this stereotype hurts all of us, because of the simple fact that it's a *stereotype*. What happens to those who don't get accepted into Harvard or Yale? What happens to those who don't have access to a decent education? What happens to those immigrants who never learn English? Are *they* all smart and successful? Are *we all* smart and successful?

Going back to the questions posed earlier, regarding the success rate of this program, I'd like to refrain from statistics and just focus on examples of success. Marianne Yates is a college student, who loved art and photography, but whose parents refused to let her become an art major – they preferred her to become a doctor. In the end, she completed the one step program and refused to be pressured by a mythical stereotype. Now, she's a graphic design and English major. Her parents are slowly warming up to her decision. Jessica Tuan is a biomedical engineering student at a prestigious university. She studies hard, maybe spending more hours in the library than most of her friends. She is also miserable. But after completing the AA 1-step program, she learned to embrace her musical side by going out to concerts and continuing her piano lessons. She still wants to go to medical school, but she is also much happier with her life because she learned that she can pursue her own interests whilst being successful. I hesitate to say how long it took both individuals to complete the single step. Why? Well, the answer doesn't depend on the length of time, but how you learn to accept yourself. Completing this sole step of the program lets you live your life through your personal lens, not through the distorted and unfocused lens of a non-existent stereotype.

It may take a single meeting, or it may take years, but ultimately, once you can learn to accept yourself for who you are and not listen to the mindless stereotypes that define you, then the model minority myth will cease to exist. I'm just a messenger of this simple truth.

The goal of VoiceBox is for any student, staff, and faculty to extend their thoughts about how they view the Asian American community or maybe even a self-evaluation that they might not have thought about before, or anything relevant to Asian Americans. Please submit your writing to: aarcc@uic.edu

NOTE: Opinions expressed in VoiceBox do not necessarily represent the views of AARCC.

FEBRUARY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2009

- Feb 10: Is My Kung Pao Chicken Really Asian? w/ Monica Eng
12pm—see page 5
Jane Addams Hull House Museum
Contact: byung2@uic.edu
- Feb 17 & 20: Peer Mentor Info. Session—see page 2
4pm (2/17) & 1pm (2/20), AARCC, 101 Taft Hall
Contact: ckodama@uic.edu
- Feb 17: Asian American Arts Group Meeting; 3pm, AARCC, 101 Taft Hall. If your passion is dance, writing, visual arts, theatre, film, or something else entirely, please come to our first meeting!
Contact: smalik3@uic.edu
- Feb 19: Chai Arts Group—Kriti Festival in April
4pm, AARCC, 101 Taft Hall
If you're interested in helping to plan the festival, in South Asian arts in general, please come to our next planning meeting!
Contact: mohanraj@uic.edu
- Feb 20—22: Midwest Association of Filipino Americans Conference @ UIC—see page 2
Contact: uicmafa2009@googlegroups.com

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Monica Eng	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Peer Mentor Asian American Arts Mtg	18	19 Chai Arts Group	20 MAFA Peer Mentor	21 MAFA
22 MAFA	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2009

MARCH SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Mar 10: More Than Rocket Science w/ Daniel Tani
4 p.m. (tentative time)
Student Center East 302;
see p. 1
Contact: ckodama@uic.edu
- Mar 13-14: "Low-Wage Work, Migration, and Gender" Conference
To examine the conditions of immigrant women working in the low wage sector in the U.S.
Jane Addams Hull House Museum
Contact: guevarra@uic.edu or nilda@uic.edu

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Daniel Tani	11	12	13 Low Wage Conf.	14 Low Wage Conf.
15	16	17	18	19	20	21

IS MY KUNG PAO CHICKEN REALLY ASIAN?

Monica Eng is a food and culture writer for the Chicago Tribune. Eng has worked as an editor and writer for the Tribune for the past eleven years. A native Chicagoan, Eng comes from a family with a long tradition in the Chicago food industry. Her grandparents and great-grandparents were Chinese American restaurant moguls in Chicago. Eng is a member of the Asian American Journalists Association. She has also written extensively on Asian issues and ethnic communities in Chicago.

Eng began her career in journalism during her sophomore year at Lane Tech High School by working at the Chicago Sun-Times. She has written on a broad range of subjects including movies, theater, and music. For the past ten years, she has focused on food and culture.

In recent years, Chicago has received national recognition for its culinary talent. As a local food expert, Eng has observed a growing trend toward green and local food sources and a growth in authentic ethnic foods. With the downturn in the economy, many restaurants are closing or re-orienting themselves to focus on value.

In her talk at UIC, Eng will discuss Asian food trends in Chicago and the U.S. She will explore the differences between Asian food catered to Asian and non-Asian people.

Presented by the Chancellor's Committee on the Status of Asian Americans and Jane Addams Hull House Museum



**Tuesday,
February 10**

12:00pm—1:30pm

**Jane Addams Hull
House Museum Resi-
dents' Dining Hall
Free soup!**

ASIAN AMERICAN INTERNSHIPS & FELLOWSHIPS

Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership

CAPAL has enabled promising students with leadership potential to explore public service and how to influence public policy that affect our communities. CAPAL is a non-profit, non-partisan, educational organization that was founded in 1989 by APA professionals in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. Its mission is to promote Asian Pacific American interests and success in public sector careers, to provide information and education on policy issues affecting the APA community, and to serve the APA community at large. <http://www.capal.org>

Deadline: TBA

Norman Mineta Internship Immersion Program

The Norman Mineta Program was established by the U.S. Congress to provide internship opportunities within the U.S. Department of Defense and other defense-related agencies for U.S. undergraduate students who are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The goal of the program is to provide eligible students interested in national defense an opportunity to work and gain experience that will qualify them for a future career in this field.

http://www.twc.edu/Mineta_Program_Press_Release.shtml

Deadline: Friday, March 13th

Organization of Chinese Americans

OCA is engaged in developing both leadership and community involvement with over 80 chapters and affiliates across the nation. In addition, OCA is able to build national support and to work in coalition with other national groups around issues affecting Asian Pacific Americans. OCA takes no collective position on the politics of any foreign country, but instead focuses on the welfare and civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States.

<http://ocanational.org/>

Deadline: Sunday, March 15th

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN HOSTS MAASU 2009!

The Midwest Asian American Students Union's annual Spring Conference provides students of Midwestern colleges and universities with speakers, workshops, and discussions that focus on issues relevant to Asian American students.

Workshops may cover a variety of topics such as the model minority myth, stereotypes, identity, community organizing, advocacy, and activism.

AARCC will be sponsoring students to attend MAASU through UIC's Asian American Student Organizations. Contact Corinne Kodama at 312-413-9653 or ckodama@uic.edu.



**MAASU Spring
Conference 2009**

April 3—5, 2009

**University of
Michigan-Ann
Arbor.**

UIC Asian American Resource and Cultural Center

Taft Hall, Rm. 101 (MC 203)
826 S. Halsted St.
Chicago, IL 60607-7029

Phone: 312-413-9569
Fax: 312-413-9732
E-mail: aarcc@uic.edu
aarcc.uic.edu

Learn about AARCC events
through our listserv, join by
contacting aarcc@uic.edu



AARCC ESSAY CONTEST: WRITE • ENGAGE • TRANSFORM

350-word essay on: **Asian Americans Under Construction**

Win \$150 for 1st prize or \$100 for 2nd prize!

Go to aarcc.uic.edu for detailed submission guidelines

Deadline: Monday, March 2, 2009 by 5pm

The Kamal Kishore Kapur Memorial Prize is awarded annually to an undergraduate student at UIC for an essay sharing a perspective on Asian American experiences. The Prize encourages student engagement with social and political issues as a way to create new ways of knowing and being that will transform our community.



For information, contact at Karen Su 312-413-7696 or karensu@uic.edu