

# Nikkei News

**USC Nikkei Association, January - March, 2008**

## President's Message:

Welcome, family and friends of USC Nikkei! The USC Nikkei Association was created in 1995 to fulfill these three purposes: to explore and promote cultural awareness and a sense of identity in Japanese American Trojans, to share our culture with non-Japanese American people, and to participate as a member of the Los Angeles Japanese American community. Although USC Nikkei has been around for 13 years, this year has really been a year of firsts. This year marked the production of our very first culture show, titled "In Progress." It was also the first year we started our committee program, initiated a Nikkei blog, worked with South Bay Keiro on programs for their residents, and com-

pleted this, our very first newsletter. It has been a busy year for all of us, and this newsletter is our way of sharing some of our events with you. I hope from this newsletter, and the others to follow, you will be able to see that Nikkei members are a diverse group of individuals who enjoy building a community and making memories while bettering ourselves as individuals. Thanks for reading!

—Penny Ishizuka

P.S. I just want to give a huge thanks to Craig, Taka, and Cody for putting together this newsletter so we can share our experiences with you.



## Week of Remembrance 2008: Connecting the Past With the Present

By Craig Shimizu

February 16-23<sup>rd</sup> marked the USC Nikkei Association's 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Week of Remembrance, a time for our organization to remember and reflect upon the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. Day of Remembrance commemorations are held throughout the Japanese American community every February 19<sup>th</sup> to remember President Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066, a directive that allowed the United States government to uproot 120,000 west coast Japanese and Japanese Americans (many of whom were US citizens) and detain them in internment camps located across the country. USC Nikkei expanded our Day of Remembrance into a full week of events that sought to put the memories and lessons of internment into a contemporary context.

The week kicked off on Saturday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, when we attended the Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress (NCRR) Day of Remembrance program at the Japanese American

National Museum and watched two of our own participate in the event. Sean Miura, our Publicity Chair, performed a spoken-word piece, and our President, Penny Ishizuka, shared her per-



Traci Kato-Kiriyama (L) leads a workshop as Chantelle Takata (C) and Takako Kuze (R) watch.

sonal perspective on Day of Remembrance and also represented USC Nikkei in a report on the collegiate Day of Remembrance scene.

On Monday, we took a trip across town to watch our counterparts in the UCLA Nikkei Student Union put on their 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Cultural Night. The student produced show, titled "This Movement of Ours," followed

the efforts of four young-adult Japanese Americans as they worked on the Redress movement (a campaign that fought for and won a formal government apology for internment, as well as monetary reparations for camp survivors) of the 1980's. The show, which was based on actual events, gave viewers a great insight into the personal experiences of the internees in camp as well as the activists working for Redress.

A small, but perfectly sized group gathered on Tuesday night to participate in our "Voice Moves: Building Community in Creative Expression" workshop, led by community organizer and artist Traci Kato-Kiriyama. The room was full of laughs and energy as we took part in a number of activities and hilarious theater games, all designed to help us find our voices and tell our own personal stories. The night culminated in a creative writing session that produced several excellent pieces that were shared with the group.

(Continued on page 2)

## Upcoming Events

### April

April 8<sup>th</sup>: General Meeting – Elections and Officer Auction  
April 13<sup>th</sup>: INC Meeting @ UCSD, CN Full Rehearsal  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>: General Meeting – Culture Night prep.  
April 26<sup>th</sup>: **CULTURE NIGHT!** 6:30 @ Bovard Auditorium

### May

May 3<sup>rd</sup>: Revisions Youth Conference @ JACCC, 9:00am-5:00pm, End of the Year Banquet, 7:30pm  
May 4<sup>th</sup>: UC Irvine Tomo No Kai Culture Night  
May 14<sup>th</sup>: Finals End – Summer Begins!  
May 16<sup>th</sup>: Graduation Ceremonies

## Week of Remembrance 2008

(Continued from page 1)

Traci's workshop received unanimous praise from all who attended.

The centerpiece of the week came on Thursday night when we hosted a discussion and screening with filmmaker Tadashi Nakamura and his Sundance selected film "Pilgrimage." Tadashi Nakamura, a 2003 UCLA graduate, depicts the beginnings of the now annual journey to return to the Manzanar Relocation Camp in his short film "Pilgrimage." In keeping with the theme of the week, the film also captures how the site and the event have taken on a new meaning in a post 9/11 world. After the film screening, Mr. Nakamura took questions and discussed various issues, such as remarking on the similarities he saw between the situation



USC Nikkei Officers and DOR Committee with Tadashi Nakamura (center, wearing hat).

of Japanese Americans in the 1940's and Arab-Americans in the present day.

To finish out the week, on Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, we took a tour of the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo. One of our tour guides happened to be a junior at USC in 1942 before he was interned

and later drafted, a poignant reminder of the internment experience that hit close to home for many of those on the tour.

Week of Remembrance 2008 had a great turnout and was undoubtedly successful in its mission to educate students and create awareness of internment and its lessons. USC Nikkei would like to thank our guests Traci Kato-Kiriyama and Tadashi Nakamura, as well as NCR, the Japanese American National Museum and USC APASS and APASA. We would also like to recognize our Day of Remembrance Chair Melissa Machida and her committee members, Kelly Ishizuka and Kazuma Kitagaito, for all of their hard work in making this week happen!

Great job guys!

## Looking Back at First Semester

By Takako Kuze

I remember it was a hot Saturday in September, but many students came out despite the heat. It was Nikkei's first event, a tour of Little Tokyo. First, we went to Orochon and ate ramen for lunch. After that, we were divided into groups and walked around to specific locations where USC Nikkei officers stood and explained the important history of Little Tokyo. I did not know anyone at that day, but because of Nikkei's friendly atmosphere, it was very easy to fit in. Since I was born in Japan and did not know anything about the Japanese American community, this activity motivated me to join Nikkei because it aroused my curiosity in Japanese American culture.

The next event I remember is Car Rally in October, one of Nikkei's annual events. In this game, members are divided into several groups and they compete for points by taking pictures at specific locations all around the Los Angeles area. It was a really fun event and my team got first place! One incredible thing we did was to spell out "USC" with our bodies inside a UCLA frat house for maximum points! We were running around for about two hours so I was

very tired after the game. Not only did I have fun, but I'm proud of how our teamwork led us to victory.

USC Nikkei also works with other Nikkei student associations from Southern California schools (called the Intercollegiate Nikkei Council or INC). In late October, all of the schools gathered at a park in Irvine to participate in various activities. Each school prepared several ice breaker games. All of the students got a chance to talk and get to meet students from other schools through the games. After playing games, we ate snacks and chatted. We spent the whole afternoon socializing and making connections with other schools. Gatherings like these are one of the most important events for USC Nikkei to build strong community connections.

In November we all went to Meltdown, which was a big clubbing event in Garden Grove with other INC schools. All of the schools helped plan and organize this event and successfully made connections with other schools. It was my first clubbing event and I had a lot of fun dancing and hanging around with my friends from USC Nikkei and the INC schools.

At the end of year, we had a Christmas party. We had Secret Santas, made gingerbread houses and

had great conversations with everyone. I had never had such a big Christmas party with my friends in Japan. I was very glad to attend that party before winter break started. It was the best event to finish the semester!

As I did not know anyone at USC before, I cannot imagine how my school life would be without Nikkei. This club gave me many opportunities to meet people and make connections. My first semester was the best school life I ever had, and I look forward to have more fun with USC Nikkei in the future!



Elise Nakamura (left) and me having fun at the INC gathering in Irvine.

## The Year in Review

By Cody Lopez & Craig Shimizu

### September

USC Nikkei started off the year with a huge turnout for its first general meeting on September 28<sup>th</sup>, where we played icebreaker games and feasted on Japanese/Hawaiian food while getting to know each other. Later in the month, we had our first Iron Chef competition with rice as the secret ingredient. Rice burgers, salad, and even desert made for good eating for everyone!

### October

In early October we drove all across Los Angeles taking crazy pictures in our annual Car Rally race. General meetings favored the artistic, as we made origami and paper lanterns. At the end of the month, we took a night off and went out to Knott's Scary Farm to celebrate Halloween.

### November

November was a busy but exciting month that included our annual clubbing event, called Meltdown, where we go dancing with Nikkei student associations from all of the Southern California colleges. We also took a trip up to the Bay Area for USC's Football Weekender and watched USC beat Cal on their own turf. Our volleyball team took home 7<sup>th</sup> in UC

Irvine's volleyball tournament. Nikkei ended the month with a ton of food at our Thanksgiving party.

### December

Finals and Winter break cut December short, but we still made time to throw a Christmas party complete with food, Secret Santa, gingerbread houses, and presents for all!

### January

USC Nikkei kicked off the Spring Semester by getting together to eat ozoni, a traditional dish eaten around New Years, bringing many of the members together in discussing how their family celebrates New Years and how a traditional Japanese American New Year is celebrated. Over the Martin Luther King Jr. three-day weekend, many members took a trip up to Big Bear Mountain to go skiing and snowboarding.

### February

In February, a special Valentine's meeting featured a "dance competition" of sorts between male and female members, and also showcased how Valentine's Day goes about in Japan. February 16-23<sup>rd</sup> was our Week of Remembrance series of events, commemorating the internment of Japanese Americans during WWII. This month, we also had a workshop learning Soran Bushi, a traditional Japanese dance, which will

also be showcased in Culture Night.

### March

This month, we had a Culture Night retreat and went down to San Diego to watch the UCSD Nikkei Student Union's Culture Show. March 8<sup>th</sup> was our very first Sports Day, where we spent a Saturday afternoon running around campus completing sports related challenges. General meetings gave members the opportunity to play a game in which the Japanese language could be utilized and taught, and in another we held nominations for next year's Board and made Hurricane popcorn.



(Clockwise) Emily Kim, Michelle Kawate, Daniel Shimura, Cody Lopez, Melissa Machida form a human pyramid during Sports Day.

### Culture Show Update

By Victor Lee

We started planning in August, but now it's only a few short weeks before our very own Culture Show! It's the first time that USC Nikkei has put on a culture show, and as far as we can tell, it also seems to be the first student-written, student-produced Japanese American culture show ever at USC. We are very proud of this!

This year our show is entitled



(From left) Jeni Takasumi, Akemi Imai, Lauren Maki & Brad Ramos practice taiko at the Culture Show retreat.

*In Progress.* It's a show-within-a-show, as it follows five students in Japanese School as they put on their own Culture Show. In writing it, we wanted to explore the different views many people have of Japanese American culture and of culture in general. Is it just "dolls and summer festivals" as one of our characters puts it, or does something else make it a culture? In addition to our play, USC Nikkei will also be featuring performances by Odori, Hip Hop, and Taiko. It's going to be great!

In the beginning of March, we all gathered our cast and crew and put together a Culture Show Retreat. After playing mixer games and having a potluck lunch, each group within Culture Show put on a mini-performance. Then everyone got to learn from another group! (Of course, most people chose Taiko.) You can

check out our pictures from the Retreat on our blog!

Now with Culture Show being less than one month away, we've all been pretty busy lately with rehearsals and set construction. Everybody is riled up and excited to perform though, so please come out on April 26<sup>th</sup> to watch and support us! We can't wait to see you there!



Craig Shimizu answers 3 phone calls while taking a picture of himself during the Culture Show retreat skit workshop.

## 昨年から今年の始めまでを振り返って

久世 貴子

私たちUSC日系学生会は文化的、ソーシャル的な活動を通じUSCキャンパス内にて日系アメリカ人の文化を他の学生に広めることを目的としています。去年の秋、日本食レストランで食事会や、日系文化を学ぶゲームなど多様な企画を開催し、学生同士の絆を深めることが出来ました。新会員が多数入会し、学生会は昨年に比べ遥かに成長しました。約20人ほどのアクティブメンバーが様々なイベントに参加し、40人以上のメンバーが週2回の集まりに参加しました。また南カリフォルニアに所在する他校の日系学生会と共に共同イベントを通して日系コミュニティの輪を広げ、去年の12月のCLYEP コンファレンスにてリーダーシップとは何かを討論し、お互いの学生会の向上のため励み合いました。今年の始めは、日系コミュニティにとって重要な週、Week of Remembrance (追憶の週) にてマンザナ強制収容所をテーマにした映画「Pilgrimage」の中村タダシ監督をゲストスピーカーとして招待し、日系コミュニティの歴史や苦難について演説をしていただきました。約70人の学生が集まり、日系の文化をキャンパスに広めることができました。また私たちは、初めてのカルチャーナイト

(太鼓、ヒップホップダンス、ソーラン節、劇をキャンパス内の一番大規模な劇場での披露)を4月26日に開催します。出演者は各自の公演する役の練習に日々励んでおります。最後に日系学生会は去年と比べ確実に成長することができました、これからも私たちは、日々目標に近づくために精一杯の活動をしていきたいと思っております。どうぞご支援の方よろしくお願いたします。



CLYEPコンファレンスにてUSC 日系学生会代表

他校の学生会との討論の後で・・・スガノ セン (後方左一番目) 三浦ショーン (後方左二番目) 清水クレグ (後方中央) 井上タイラー (後方右二番目) 遠藤 真理央 (後方右一番目) 石塚ケリー (左一番目) タ エイブリアル (左二番目) 高澄ジェニー (中央) 石塚ペニー (右二番目) 久世貴子 (右一番目)

**For the latest USC Nikkei news and events, visit USC Nikkei online at:**

<http://www-scf.usc.edu/~nikkei>

**Nikkei Times Blog:**

<http://uscnikkei.blogspot.com/>

**Contact USC Nikkei at:**

[usc.nikkei@gmail.com](mailto:usc.nikkei@gmail.com)

**Nikkei News Newsletter:**

Editors: Takako Kuze, Cody Lopez & Craig Shimizu

Contributors: Penny Ishizuka, Takako Kuze, Victor Lee, Cody Lopez, Craig Shimizu



**USC Nikkei Is...**

**Executive Board:**

President: Penny Ishizuka

Internal Vice President: Josh Tran

External Vice Presidents: Mario Endo & Craig Shimizu

Publicity Chair: Sean Miura

Secretary: Jeni Takasumi

Treasurer: Jean Chen

Historian/Webmaster: April Ta

Culture Night Chair: Victor Lee

Day of Remembrance Chair: Melissa Machida

Kazan Taiko Representative: Evan Nishizu

**Fundraising Committee:**

Takako Kuze

Cody Lopez

**Event Planning Committee:**

Stephanie Au-Yeung

Jillian Kobayashi

**Culture Night Committee:**

Tyler Inouye

Elise Nakamura

Chantelle Takata

**Day of Remembrance Committee:**

Kelly Ishizuka

Kazuma Kitagaito