

# hardboiled



**THE ASIAN AMERICAN NEWSMAGAZINE!**

## **In This Issue:**

- Hate Crimes Against Hmong Hunters
- Celebrities on YouTube ... but not in the mainstream?
- Letters from Iwo Jima Review

**10.5**

**April 2007**



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marianne kim

## editor's note

It is the last day of spring break today, and that makes me very, very sad. I'm dreading going back to the routine of classes and lack of sleep. It's funny to think how excited about college I was in high school because I had no idea what college was.

With my end-of-vacation bitterness in mind, it impresses me that there are people at Cal that stay passionate. Thinking about the energy and effort that goes into stopping global warming, promoting safe sex, increasing minority enrollment, saving the gay baby whales and the myriad of other movements on campus makes me tired. The professors that rant crazily deserve respect. The hb crew keeps on trucking (10th year of hb!!). Here's to all the people who care.

wendy gu  
layout editor

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hb meetings  
Wednesdays 6-7PM  
105 Dwinelle

**hardboiled** is a highly organized, take-no-prisoners, paramilitary journalistic juggernaut based at UC (United Corporation of) Berkeley. We live under self-imposed martial law to bring you the best in political rabblousing, community muckraking, and pop culture machinations in the Bay Area and the world. We run a finely-honed machine that eats rusted nails for breakfast and lives and breathes information intelligence all day.

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# letter to the editor:

I wanted to point out that although I enjoyed and largely agreed with Adrienna Wong's points in her editorial, "Belittling Asian Americans on the Hill," she makes a repeated and critical mistake in believing that the author of the *New York Times* article is referring to the Puritan idea of the "City Upon a Hill." The original author's reference in the title "Little Asia on the Hill," is that of Berkeley's long standing nickname "Harvard on the Hill." The nickname originated with Berkeley's original academic template being mirrored on Harvard's curriculum and the overall impression that UCB is the intellectual equivalent of America's oldest university. While her points about Puritan ideals pervading American societal and academic thought (take any class about the emergence of industrialism to confirm this to some degree) may be true, the conflation of this to the title of the *New York Times* article is simply misguided.

Ivan Goering  
UC Berkeley student, Philosophy and History  
via e-mail

## Editor's note:

We appreciate Mr. Goering's attentiveness to the nuances of both our article and the *New York Times* article it refers to. He is correct in pointing out that it was probably not the intention of Timothy Egan (author of the *New York Times* piece) to draw a parallel between "Harvard on the Hill" and the phrase "City upon a Hill." Nonetheless, we must note that the phrase "Harvard on the Hill" is not a familiar nickname for Berkeley, as Egan incorrectly used it, but rather a commonly used phrase used to refer to public/community colleges and second-tier colleges across the country, often in a derogatory or self-deprecating manner. We respectfully decline to refer to the University of California as a second-rate version of Harvard, since in our opinion, Berkeley is a far superior school, quite distinct from that conservative bastion of privilege, which, according to Egan's criteria, we could easily describe as "Little Caucasia on the Hill."

We understand why Mr. Goering would be confused by Egan's use of the phrase. Nevertheless, when Egan says "the world's finest public university – Harvard on the Hill" and connects the paragon of academic success with essentialized cultural and ethnic characteristics by subbing in the word "Asia", we see a negligible difference between the message in the title, whether it is a City or Harvard that is on the hill.

# Fear and Nativism in the NEW ELLIS ISLANDS

*anti-immigrant sentiment hits small town america*

by adrienna wong

Mayor Lou Barletta wants to make his city "the toughest place on illegal immigrants in America." At a city council meeting last year, Barletta sternly warned illegal immigrants, "I would recommend they leave." With his brazenly xenophobic, anti-immigrant rhetoric, one might assume that Barletta is a hardened local politician entrenched in a city close to the US-Mexico border, an area, according to mainstream media, that lies under siege from swarms of ravenous Mexicans scaling barbed wired fences. But Mayor Barletta isn't from California, or New Mexico, or even Texas – he's from Hazleton, Pennsylvania, a former coal town about 80 miles northwest of Philadelphia.

**Although the issue of undocumented immigration is primarily connected to the Latino community in the mainstream discourse, recent estimates note that there are 1.5 million undocumented Asian immigrants in the United States.**

Mayor Barletta has been a figurehead for the recent slew of local anti-immigrant ordinances being passed in cities and counties across the country that are experiencing significant in-migration for the first time. These new patterns are the result of South Asian and Mexican immigration, as well as resettlement of Southeast Asian refugee populations. The recruitment

of Asian guest workers for reconstruction of areas damaged by Hurricane Katrina has also brought in new immigrants to the Southeast; the *New York Times* recently reported on the trafficking of Thai and Indonesian workers to New Orleans, where they were cheated and abused by their employers. In recent years, immigrants have started to settle in areas outside of traditional magnet regions like the West Coast, moving to new areas in the South, New England, and the Midwest. Georgia and North Carolina are two states where the immigrant population has increased at an especially rapid pace in the last decade.

Many of these communities have responded with xenophobia and hostility to their new neighbors. In 2006, over a hundred new local ordinances passed nationwide sent the message that immigrants are unwelcome. Local councils in areas like Beaufort County, South Carolina and Valley Park, Missouri have passed legislation that punishes landlords for renting housing to undocumented immigrants and requires employers to check the immigration status of their employees. Other towns, like Pahrump, Nevada, have chosen to assert a nationalist agenda by passing ordinances that ban the flying of non-United States flags and declaring English the official language of the city. Another trend has been the increased use of state and local officials to enforce federal immigration laws, which immigrant advocates have argued may lead to racial



Immigrant workers wear signs to remind Congress of their humanity during a protest.  
Bay Area Immigrant Rights Coalition <http://www.immigrantrights.blogspot.com/>

profiling of people who do not look or sound "American."

Karen Narasaki, president of the Asian American Justice Center, has said that such measures "lead to the erosion of hard-won trust between the police and the diverse communities that they serve, thereby making all Americans less safe." Immigrants may avoid seeking help for health problems or domestic violence issues because they are scared that hospital workers and local officials will act as immigration agents and turn them in.

Undocumented immigrants include a wide spectrum of people, from those who once had valid visas which have since expired, to those who seek asylum. Most all of them have faced the problems of the United States' flawed immigration system, problems that extend to all levels, from recent local measures to federal policy. In March of this year, Bay Area protesters spoke out against the immigration raids that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has been carrying out across the nation. According to an ACLU press release, these raids have included "inappropriate tactics related to children, including conducting round-ups near schools and leaving minor children unattended upon their parent's arrest," as well as "ethnic profiling, violations of due process, and abusive treatment."

Although the issue of undocumented immigration is primarily connected to the Latino community in the mainstream discourse, recent estimates note that there are 1.5 million undocumented Asian immigrants in the United States. Approximately one in five Korean Americans do not have legal status, the National Korean American Service and Education Consortium estimates. Another estimated 300,000 undocumented Chinese Americans and 400,000 undocumented immigrants from India currently reside in the United States.

These numbers make it clear that the issues of xenophobia and immigration reform are of crucial relevance to the Asian American community. It is especially important for us to take notice of problems facing Asian American communities in new areas where historical support networks have not been set up as they have been in places like the Bay Area. As the recently published "AAPI Principles of Immigration Reform," signed by over 30 Asian American organizations, emphasizes, we must "stand in solidarity with all immigrant communities... in demanding fair and humane immigration reform... and oppose efforts to divide communities against each other" in order to affirm the human rights of all people and combat narrow definitions of what being "American" means.



Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer <http://www.watchermagazine.com>



# Tension in the Woods:

## Hmong hunters fall victim to hate crimes

by susan moua

In November 2004, a Hmong man named Chai Soua Vang was convicted of killing six and wounding two hunters in Wisconsin. The case brought negative media attention to Asian Americans in the midnorthern states, Hmong in particular, and escalated racial tensions between Asian Americans and Caucasian hunters in the region. In 2005, Chai Soua Vang was found guilty and sentenced to six life sentences in jail; yet his imprisonment has done little to alleviate the ethnic conflict. Just a few months after the shooting incident took place, white hunters began to display bumper stickers that read "Save a Deer, Kill a Hmong" on the backs of their pick-up trucks. Fast forward to this year, when another hunter is found dead in the forests, this time a Hmong American. Which begs the question: how did Cha Vang die?

Cha Vang was found dead on January 7th, 2007 while on a hunting trip in northern Peshtigo, Wisconsin. When his body was discovered, authorities and investigators concluded that this case was in fact a homicide. Cha Vang, like Chai Soua Vang, immigrated from Laos as a refugee. Like many Hmong American men, Chai Soua and Cha Vang both enjoyed hunting because it was a homeland hobby. But unlike Chai Soua, who arrived in the eighties, Cha Vang had just arrived in 2004. In a CBS article written on January 8th, 2007, Vang's wife of 13 years, Pang Vue, explains how she and Cha had grown up in the refugee camps and had looked forward to coming to America. "Our dream was just starting, just now beginning, and now it falls apart again," she says.



Family and friends mourn Cha Vang's death.

Hmong today are dispersed around the country, the largest Hmong community can be found in Minnesota, right next to Wisconsin.

The man convicted of Vang's murder is 28-year-old James Nichols, who is currently awaiting arraignment. On the first night of Vang's disappearance, Nichols stumbled into a local hospital with a gunshot wound in his hand. Although he admits responsibility for Vang's death, he is claiming he acted out of self-defense. According to his testimonies, Nichols said that he and Vang had a dispute after he had told Vang to leave the hunting area. He said that Vang then tried to shoot and choke him and also claims that Vang had threatened to kill him if he

did not leave the area. Investigators, however, found no bruises or injuries on Nichols' neck or eyes when he had checked himself into the hospital. Pang Vue also pointed out that Vang did not speak English.

The charges against Nichols are first-degree intentional homicide, concealing a corpse, and being a felon in possession of a firearm. Authorities found Vang's corpse covered and hidden with leaves and debris. Vang's body was found to have been shot with a shotgun and stabbed six times, five times in the throat. Inside Vang's mouth was a stick, shaped like a stake. The autopsy shows that Vang was shot at a closer distance than Nichols had claimed. The official criminal complaint, as reported by the Marinette County newspaper, stated "It appears that at the time he was shot, Mr. Vang was turning away and had

his right arm across his chest."

In the beginning, this case was considered a hate crime due to current events like the Chai Soua Vang case. Just recently, however, the hate crime charges have been dropped. Many people, including Asian American activists, are angry and upset, since the dismissal of hate crime charges seems to ignore the current racial tension as well as the gratuitous stab wounds on the victim's body. Upon being brought in and interrogated at police headquarters, Nichols made disparaging remarks about the Hmong; when asked about hunting, Nichols stated, "The Hmong are mean and kill everything that moves." The criminal complaint classifies these as racist remarks, but friends of Nichols have told the press, "He isn't a racist."

Sher Moua, a fourth year Hmong American student at Cal, disagrees. "It's just one of those things that is obvious - the stage for a hate crime is there," Moua said. "You have the event that sparked this event (the Chai Soua Vang case), you have the racist remarks that Nichols made, then you have an event that is similar to the Chai Soua Vang case, where again Hmong and Caucasian hunters are involved, and someone ends up dying. I think Nichols



Cha Vang, a Hmong immigrant, was killed this January

had racial motive. I don't know the facts entirely but I feel like this is a hate crime and that Nichols should be charged for that as well. Although he isn't, I hope that he does get the highest cost for murder."

Cher Chang, another Hmong American student from Cal, agrees. "This case should be recognized as a hate crime," she said. "It might be hard to prove because it may just be one of those things we'll never know, but there are just some things that stand out, like the way Vang was murdered." Both Cal students agree that when they first heard the news about Cha Vang, they immediately thought it was a hate crime based on what happened with Chai Soua Vang. "It could just be a Caucasian man retaliating, angry because of what happened," Chang said.

After this series of events, will our hunters, especially visibly Asian American hunters, be safe? These events have caused intense racial tensions both within and outside of the communities in which they occurred. In Fresno, California, there are also a substantial number of Hmong male hunters who feel like they face racial tensions when they come in contact with Caucasian hunters.

Chang Yang, a 30-year old Hmong hunter from Fresno, notes his own apprehension. "I have Caucasian friends who joke about it but I don't think it's funny," he said. "It is a little scary to go hunting in the forests because sometimes I can't help but think what has happened in Wisconsin. I don't feel safe because I think a lot of people who hunt in areas close to Fresno know that a lot of male Hmong hunt. I think it has gotten different for me. My hunting experiences have changed since these two events have occurred. I'm much more aware when I'm hunting and I try not to cause trouble."

Yang says that he loves to hunt and is glad that he does not live in Wisconsin or Minnesota, where Hmong deal more directly with the racial tensions. "I talk to my cousins who go through the same, racial jokes and actual racism. But they really live in it. I'm just affected by it."

It is important to remember victims like Cha Vang and cases like Chai Soua Vang. In a way it is true that we will never completely know what happened between Chai Soua Vang and the six hunters in the woods, nor will we ever truly occurred between Cha Vang and James Nichols. But we do know for sure that Cha Vang was murdered, and that Nichols hid Vang's mutilated body under leaves and branches. We need to seriously consider whether this crime was racially motivated or simply self-defense. Nichols is getting away with a hate crime; hopefully, he will not get away with murder.



A black and white photograph capturing a moment of physical activity in a park-like setting. In the foreground, two young men are running towards the right. The man in front is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, and a cap. Behind him, a woman is running, wearing a light-colored t-shirt and dark pants with a white stripe down the side. To the left, another young man is crouching low to the ground, holding a long, thin object, possibly a starting block or a measuring tape. To the right, another person is also crouching, looking towards the runners. The background is filled with large, leafy trees and a building with a balcony. A bicycle rack with several bikes is visible in the distance. The overall scene suggests a school or community physical education event.

by **krystle ignacio**

Pilipino Culture Night's "Anatomy" is on April 22, 2007 in Zellerbach Hall. More information and tickets can be found on the website: <http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~paa/pcn/>

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milk and cereal **asian backstreet boys** youtube: a love song david choi **fart** it's rad to pick your nose myspace dot com that girl if you were here i'd be okay chad hugo **dj hahn** from linkin park bio: not co asian i'd b : a lo n fro 's ra bio: asian backstreet boys youtube: a love song david choi **fart** it's rad to pick your nose myspace dot com that girl if you were here i'd be okay chad

# Asian Americans up, up, and Away?

on YouTube: by sun kwon

Say goodbye to long lines, contracts, and lots of paperwork. Say goodbye to Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul, Simon Cowell and that pretty boy Ryan Seacrest, too.

Those long lines you've been desperately standing in, waiting for someone to tell you that you've got that special talent, are no longer necessary. Musicians, artists, and solo careers are being launched with one click, or more correctly, with one YouTube click. Within a moment's notice, YouTube claims motherhood and gives birth to thousands of new "at home" artists who can't easily access a world of platinum plaques and Grammys, especially for those artists of Asian descent. With YouTube highlighting poll rates and popularity levels, a slowly growing Asian music industry occasionally finds itself on the front page of the site, on feature covers saved only for those select few who succeed in making it to the top. YouTube sets the stage for the entrance of Asians into the field of entertainment, and shows the bigger impact they are beginning to make, at least in cyberspace. Asia Pacific Arts celebrated a "Best of 2006: YouTube clips" and emphasized that "particularly for Asians and Asian Americans, web clips have shown different facets of the community, composing a wider range than what the mainstream is used to seeing from Asians and Asian Americans. In a few clicks, the average user can see that Asians and Asian Americans can be funny, serious, creepy, or ridiculous -- effectively producing, rather than arguing for, representation." Asians take on new grooves in the realm of music, showing that they can do much more than play the piano or the violin.

A quick search of the term "Asian people" into the YouTube search engine garners 37,900 hits. Big names such as "David Choi," "Jeong Hyun Lim," "Asian Backstreet Boys," "Milk and Cereal boys," "biostudentgirl," "two korean girls" and etc, appear, revealing waves of response videos and comments. The singer, songwriter, and producer David Choi, who recently appeared on YouTube's front page, was able to skip the long lines and work directly from the comforts of his very own studio turned room. Any questions about the limitations and stereotypes that could come with his race were eliminated by his 916,503 views, four-out-of-four star hit, "YouTube: A Love Song." While he literally "wake[s] up in the morning [and] YouTube[s]," the song gained immediate success and made its way into the most responded, and recently featured sections out of the thousands of videos posted daily on YouTube. The blue jeans hanging in his room serve as the only backdrop to his recordings while

his trusty guitar guides him into his own catchy rhymes. Balanced by his surprisingly "brilliant voice" according to "fairytalechic1," his simple, yet original, homely lyrics caused over 5,000 stargazed fans to add him to their favorites and comment or respond to his song. He keeps on going, turning on that webcam to the view of his Asian spikes and cutoff shirts, rallying over 20,000 hits to each one of his acoustic sweet nothings. And as his songs "Fart" and "It's Rad to Pick Your Nose" prove, even boogers and farts can make up a lovely part of one's daily musical digest.

But just exactly how much does one's success in the world wide web transfer over into mainstream media? Is



the power of YouTube enough to wash over the racial biases that can cause setbacks in the music industry? Though YouTube has boosted his image, David Choi's ability to step into mainstream media bypasses all categorizations, and comes under one alone: talent. Choi comments that "there are always negative views on every race. There is no hindrance . . . if you work hard and have talent in anything, you'll be successful. You make things happen for yourself if it doesn't work out one way." While Choi is able to rely on the strength of his singing and writing talents to open normally impenetrable doors, the fact is, there just aren't a lot of Asians out there winning Grammys and breaking the hearts of the young and the impressionable. More than anything however, Choi believes that the reason lies "partly due to the fact

that there aren't as many Asians in America as Whites, Blacks, or Hispanics. It's harder for Asians because most of America would rather watch a tall, blue eyed hunk rather than an Asian, and that's the reality at the moment." The success rates for Asians appear to be relatively small in comparison to the large majority of white population; however, making up only 4% of the population in America according to CBS News, it is no wonder that their faces are hidden from a lot of mainstream media. David Choi points out a few cases which prove the ability of Asians to reach greater heights, for instance, Chad Hugo from the Neptunes, or DJ Hahn from Linkin Park. With only a few breakout cases, it is easy to see that negative stereotypes endure. "Stigmas are everywhere," Choi emphasized. "It's something every race has to live with forever. You can't focus on them and use them as excuses for not succeeding. This applies to life in general."

Excuses are the forte of failure, and just because there aren't enough Asians out there on the red carpet doesn't give you the excuse to throw your hands up in the air and run in the other direction. Choi succeeded not by taking it easy and surrendering, but by broadcasting his talent for all the world to see, not just for other Asians. The frequency of Asians hitting the small, blue, YouTube screen, including Choi, Jeong Hyun Lim, Asian Backstreet Boys, Milk and Cereal boys, biostudentgirl, or two Korean girls, chops down, or rather thinly slices, the heights of mainstream accessibility, and clip by clip, allows Asian entrance into a predominantly white music culture. Perhaps through the help of sites like YouTube and Myspace, and with a lot of effort, Asians can place their foot in the door and expand beyond their minor roles. Though these top hit wonders don't flash on billboards, nor are they the last contestants standing on the latest TV talent show, they contribute to the growing pool of Asian influences that all races respond to, turning the tides for a moment or two. Asians on YouTube are beginning to gather up a little bit of hope as they push forth their talents and make cyberfans everywhere, of every color and shape, click the heart and save their melodious Asian friends to their favorites. And, as Choi notes, "by writing, or producing a hit song which will gain the respect of everyone in the industry," Asians can begin to swim away from the safe shores of YouTube and enter into deeper waters.

share

# it's not easy BEING abc

## A Review of Gene Yang's *American Born Chinese*

by **matthew hui** / images courtesy of <http://www.firstsecondbooks.net>

The term "ABC" stands for "American Born Chinese" and represents those who are second generation Chinese Americans. The common connotation of ABC, as defined in *urbandictionary.com*, is "a person who speaks Chinese with an American accent, English with an Asian accent, and can't use chopsticks properly" (sometimes such definitions hold true). Thus, many ABCs often face issues with their identity in that they cannot fully relate to their own Chinese culture, nor gain full acceptance into mainstream American society. Comic book artist and high school teacher Gene Yang's *American Born Chinese* brings into perspective the issues that affect younger Chinese Americans. It is the first graphic novel to be nominated for a National Book Award and the first graphic novel to win the American Library Association's Printz Award.

*American Born Chinese* is divided into three stories that seem to have nothing to do with one another... at first. The first one is of Jin Wang, who seeks to gain acceptance from his peers when he moves to a new neighborhood but finds it difficult since he is the only Chinese American student at the school. As if life were not difficult enough for young Jin, complications ensue when he falls in love with an "All-American" girl. The second story is a graphic re-telling of the Monkey King legend. In an interview with the web magazine *The Trades*, author Gene Yang explains that he truly admired the parable of the Monkey King. "I've been wanting to do my own version of the Monkey King for as long as I remember,"

Yang said. "I eventually decided to use the Monkey

King legend as a way of reflecting on my own experience as an Asian American." The premise of the story of the Monkey King is one where, the King of the Monkeys, unsatisfied with being merely a monkey and a king, ambitiously seeks to attain deification through a series of trials. He exudes great discipline as he works to accomplish that goal. The third story revolves around Chinese student Chin-Kee, who visits his American cousin Danny every year. With his outsider clothing and indecipherable accent, Chin-Kee embodies every negative Chinese stereotype and ruins Danny's life. Gene Yang explains in an interview at Comic Con that "Chin-Kee was not difficult to draw at all. It was an exorcism. I just took everything I've been angry about since I was young and put it on paper. I was very passionate about Chin-Kee." Although these three stories seem very dissimilar to each other, they all come

together in one unbelievable twist. It is as if three separate journeys converge into one and you get the feeling you've walked them all.

This journey is a colorful and pleasant one since *American Born Chinese* is presented with clean and simple visuals. The visuals are "Archiesque" and if you liked the Archie comic series, then you will recognize these pictures too. No where else would you find a book that you could just flip through random pages and go, "hey these pictures are pretty neat." However, even if you didn't enjoy reading Archie, they still are fun to look at. The characters have great facial expressions and the environments that they are in are elaborate and

thoroughly immerse you into the story. Not only are you able to read what each character is saying, but you will also be able to see it clearly as well. The visuals contrast with each of the respective stories to show that they are distinct, yet the colors work well to show that the novel still has cohesion.

Even though the pictures are brilliantly done, the strength of this novel lies in its writing. *American Born Chinese* is extremely well-written. As a page-turner, it keeps its reader thoroughly interested. Since the stories were divided up into sections and are alternately presented, the reader is never bogged down with one story. This style is rarely used in any book, let alone a graphic novel. This change in pace is definitely a welcome change from the conventional novel. Moreover, the novel has many humorous parts that will keep you laughing. The characters were also written with complex and multifaceted personalities. For example, in the Monkey King stories, you are able

to clearly see his character flaws, the arrogance in his head, and how it leads to his downfall. You also see the humanity in the other characters and how they try to find their own identities through interactions with their peers.

Overall, this graphic novel, although simple in its visuals, carries a strong universal message that is backed up by excellent writing. Gene Yang lives up to the title of the work by effectively portraying the struggles of youths in their quest for cultural assimilation. It is definitely a recommend read for anyone who has had trouble at one point in finding their own identity within the American society. The well-drawn visuals and excellently written stories serves as a reminder that we are not alone in our struggles and the journey of life is filled with surprises at every corner.

If you would like to know more about ABC or see more of his other work, visit Gene's site at: <http://www.humblecomics.com/>.





# controversy: so far from the bamboo grove

by emily yu

## 요 코 이 야 기

Korean communities in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York, have strongly criticized Japanese American author Yoko Kawashima Watkins and her new book, *So Far from the Bamboo Grove*. *Bamboo* has drawn the ire from Korean and Korean American parents in particular, who criticize the novel's depiction of Koreans as rapists and murderers of Japanese families at the end of World War II. Watkins reverses the common perception of the Japanese as the aggressors of World War II, instead portraying Koreans as wartime abusers. As a result, Korean Americans, fearing accusation, claim that Watkins wrongly implicates Koreans as perpetrators of war atrocities..

Websites and blogs have appeared on the Internet in discussion of this controversy, many of them written by Koreans indignant of this seemingly blatant disregard for the Korean perspective and the distortion of the Korean image, at the hands of a Japanese American author, no less. One telling summary of *Bamboo* by a middle-school student sums up exactly what the Korean community fears: "America was bad for bombing Japan, China was bad for being Communist, but Korea was the worst of all."

*Bamboo* is the story of an 11 year-old Japanese girl who flees with her family from Japanese-occupied colony Korea to Japan at the end of World War II. Although the book is sometimes labeled as an autobiography of the author, "fictionalized account" seems to better describe the novel. The Korean community has been keen on pointing out the book's historical inaccuracies in hopes of dispelling the content of the book. They have, for instance, drawn attention to the fact that bamboo does not grow in the climate of the setting described by Watkins. Moreover, Watkins' claim of a Korean, anti-Japanese Communist Army in her book has been discredited due to the discrepancy in dates between the establishment of the official Korean Communist Army and the time period in the novel. Another criticism has been that even with the existence of scattered Korean communists, the portrayal of them as "endemically evil" rings historically false.

Kawashima Watkins' liberal attitude towards history runs fundamentally counter to the autobiography genre and factual narration as a whole; ultimately, it can be taken as a cheap way to embellish the book's appeal to the readers. Given the grimness of a war setting in *Bamboo*, the appeal is, more or less, to elicit a greater emotional response of sympathy and pity to the struggle experienced and violence witnessed by the author. The resulting tradeoff, however, has been the Korean and Korean American community up in arms over what they see as the novel's lack of attention toward Japanese war

abuses.

Koreans assert that many Koreans fell at the hands of Japanese brutality and execution even after Japan surrendered. To the credit of some bloggers, comments such as "raping and murdering were consistent traits of the Japanese army" are not outrageous observations of Japan's quest to conquer Asia. But such acts are not limited to only certain people at certain times. Murder and rape are universal (especially in wartime), and are not ethnically exclusive. Here, it is interesting to note that the problem at hand is not about the book's exposure of rape and murder to children, but the exposure of rape and murder committed by Koreans. While the atrocities of the Japanese army still stand, it would be faulty to say that the group with the greater number of victims is innocent. Some have applauded the book's introduction into the middle school curriculum as a move away from American ethnocentricity, which does include anti-Japanese sentiment. So while the novel fails to encompass the larger picture, it offers another perspective. Just as many Koreans were victims, so too were the Japanese.

Nevertheless, sixth graders are impressionable. As Carter Eckert, a Korean history professor at Harvard University, wrote in *The Boston Globe*, "[To] teach *So Far from the Bamboo Grove* without providing historicization might be compared to teaching a sympathetic novel about the escape of a German official's family from the Netherlands in 1945 without alluding to the nature of the Nazi occupation or the specter of Anne Frank." The book would be better taught at levels where the book can be put in context at the reader's discretion or in tandem with a historical discourse on Asian relations with Japan around the period of World War II.

The controversy has certainly spread. North Korea, in all its introversion, has made it a point to criticize the U.S. for allowing the book to be published. China has banned the publication of this novel. In South Korea, the publisher of the novel temporarily halted sales. Interestingly enough, the novel did not originally stir any controversy when it first hit the stores in South Korea, and there might well be an answer for that. The book is anti-war, not anti-Korean. And in order to fully advocate pacifism, one must include the gruesome, brutal setting of war in comparison. The message, therefore, is that war always affects everyone involved no matter which side one is on.

The Korean outcry reflects the controversy that persists today, with both Koreans and Chinese still harboring potent anti-Japanese sentiment, much of it the result of the Sino-Korean massacres committed by the Japanese before and during World War II (as documented in the book *The Rape of Nanking* by Iris Chang). Moreover, the lack of apology from the Japanese government for its war crimes has further deepened the Korean and Chinese animosity toward the Japanese. What this controversy sheds light on is the fragility of inter-Asian relations and the existence of conflict and historical tensions even within the Asian-American community.



<http://www.glencoe.com/>



<http://joongangdaily.joins.com/>



by erin wong  
[REVIEW]

# THE FACE OF THE OTHER FRONT

a review of Clint Eastwood's new film *Letters From Iwo Jima*

Compared to the traditional war movie, *Letters from Iwo Jima* presents a side less seen. From an overall American perspective of World War II, the Japanese role is limited to two primary events: Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima, America's tragic introduction and emphatic conclusion whereby a wounded yet morally just America rises from the ashes and crushes evil Japan. What is lost in this perspective is the perhaps irreconcilable damage done to the Japanese reputation in the four years between the two cataclysmic events. American treatment and judgment of Japanese and Japanese Americans transcended simple nationalistic hate and evolved into virulent dehumanization through such crippling stereotypes as maniacal bucktoothed slant-eyed caricatures, crazed banzai screams, desperate kamikaze killings, disciplined to lack all compassion. No Japanese person, not even an American citizen, could sufficiently prove their loyalty or citizenship against the paranoid American public, leading to an ever-resonating blemish on America's record that lasts until this day: the internment of 120,000 Japanese and Americans of Japanese descent.

With internment only two generations behind us, director Clint Eastwood is brave to revisit World War II from an entirely overlooked perspective. *Letters* portrays the hopeless battle by the Japanese for the sacred soil of Iwo Jima. The film is inspired by a bag of letters found in the extensive tunnels on the island, written by Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi who, with 20,000 other Japanese soldiers, died in the battle. *Letters* provided a refreshing contrast to the Anglo faces of the other Best Picture nominees in this year's Academy Awards. Nominated for four awards in total, *Letters* managed to take home the award for Best Sound Editing. At the Golden Globes, the film took the Best Foreign Film award. The lofty acclaim for *Letters* derives, ironically, from its subtlety. From its character portrayal to its cinematography, Eastwood's *Letters* is a masterwork of understatement.

One of the film's most refreshing aspects is the portrayal of the Japanese characters. Other war movies tend to depict the "enemy" as either faceless or highly stereotyped from a Western perspective. By telling the lesser-known side of the battle, Eastwood could have easily followed pro-American, anti-Japanese stereotypes, or he could have played it safe and sidestep the topic of race, thereby neglecting a complex cultural and historical context. However, Eastwood chooses neither route and simply humanizes his characters. These characters follow instinct, rely on others, show humor and fear, make mistakes, and have flaws. They are nationalists, lofty generals and lowly privates, conscripts and volunteers, fearful for their lives and their families, torn between the commands from superiors and their own instincts. They are neither the one-dimensional, slant-eyed, big-toothed propaganda victims of the 1940s, nor the disciplined, cold and ruthless rumors among American troops.

However, the terrifying reputation of the Japanese was not unfounded. Though warfare techniques were changing at the time of the Battle for Iwo Jima, the film shows a definite dissonance between the old commanders and the new ones. Old commanders required that disobedient soldiers be punished by death, even if there was a shortage of men. The old ways also called for "honorable deaths," in which a Japanese soldier taken prisoner alive was disgraced, and all means should be taken to prevent this. *Letters* is, at times, alarmingly true to the sacrifice of these desperate soldiers.

For the soldiers who still have hope to return home, Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi (Ken Watanabe), the newest army commander to arrive on the island, is a savior and a sign of change in the Japanese military. He, like his soldiers, is not thinking about the honor he will receive for dying for his nation, but is just hoping to see his family again. Instead of allowing his soldiers to be brutalized by both sides, Kuribayashi takes a more Western approach, in which all men capable should fight. Kuribayashi grew to respect the West by



photo credited to Yahoo! Movies

traveling and studying across the United States and Canada, even brushing elbows with some of America's military elite. His background resulted in the distrust of the other Japanese commanders and he was labeled an "American sympathizer".

Kuribayashi is just one example of Eastwood's complex characters. In the recovered letters, he openly opposed going to war with America. However, he not only

and meet his newborn daughter.

Not only is *Letters* subtle, it is also fair. During World War II, the Japanese were unjustly pegged as brutal, while the American soldiers who fought them were heroes. Dehumanized images disseminated among American citizens undoubtedly resulted in the dehumanization of the Japanese. Through *Letters*, Eastwood counters this convenient pro-American perspective and illustrates that not all American soldiers are the heroes they are made out to be; he drives the point home with a scene where an American soldier kills Japanese POWs.

The visual elements of the movie enhance the brilliant subtlety of *Letters*. In terms of cinematography, *Letters* is filmed in a sepia-tone. This visual minimalism of drab and neutral shades leaves the superficial image unimposing. The visual chaos is subdued so that the focus is on the darkened, worn, horror-stricken faces of the soldiers. The desperate, emotional trauma is further embodied in the haunting score, a trumpet and piano duet. The subtle computer effects serve the same purpose, with convincing explosions and glances of gore. The blanché cinematography and the subtle computer effects accentuate the superb acting and fulfill Eastwood's ambitious vision.

It is interesting to compare the portrayals of the Japanese and the Americans in *Letters* with Eastwood's complement movie *Flags of Our Fathers*. Both *Flags* and *Letters* deal with misconceptions of World War II events; yet, while *Flags* attempts only to vindicate the lives of three men, *Letters* attempts to amend the American conception of 23,000 Japanese soldiers who defended the island. *Flags* presents an American view of the Battle of Iwo Jima, focusing on the men in the well-known photograph taken atop Mount Suribachi. While the picture is undoubtedly famous, the survivors of the photograph are dubious reminders of the struggle and tragedy of war. *Flags* is a balance between their reception after the battle and flashbacks to it. This film mostly focuses on the experiences of the flag bearers, in which the enemy is the politicians behind the solicitations of the photo. Throughout the film, the Japanese remain mostly faceless.

However, *Letters*' most qualifying feature is its unification of the motivations of Japanese and American soldiers alike. Though fighting on two opposing sides, Japanese and American soldiers share wartime motivations, aspirations, and fears. In American war movies, where causes are reduced to "America is good and the enemy is evil," the audience might forget the wives, children, and mothers that "the enemy" longs to see again, the friendships across nations that are restricted in times of war. One scene in *Letters* includes a conversation between an American POW Nishi (Tsuyoshi Ihara), a Japanese Olympic equestrian champion with famous American friends. This scene confounds the assumed cultural, physical, emotional differences imposed by wartime propaganda.

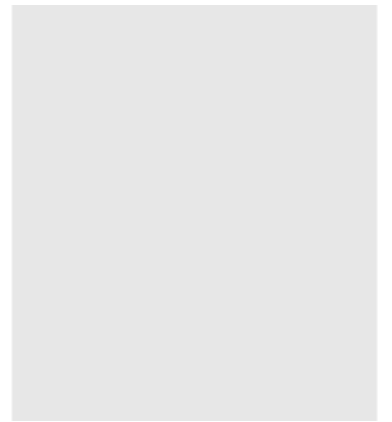
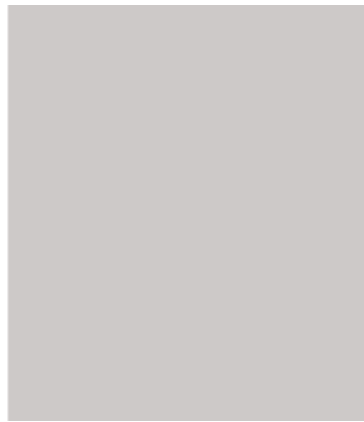
The symbolism in the letters—sent to and received by both Japanese and American soldiers—is meant to illustrate the universality of war. While nations might have different expectations of their citizens, the motivations of the citizens do not change. In the end, even if it is in a different language, we all write the same letters.

Other war movies tend to depict the 'enemy' as either faceless or highly stereotyped from a Western perspective... Eastwood does neither...

returns to his home nation to defend it, he also fights with all his resources and all his men to do as much damage to the US troops as he possibly can. From the beginning, he realized that the American fleet would overwhelm the tiny island. The letters he writes to his family, though, are rosy compared to the predicament he and his men know is coming. He is conflicted in what he is fighting for, but also relentlessly confident until the end.

Another character brilliantly antithetical to the prevalent stereotypes of the '40s, Saigo (played by Kazunari Ninomiya, a member of the Japanese boy band Arashi) is a light-hearted soldier forced into fighting. Unlike Kuribayashi, whose intentions give his character depth, Saigo is carried by his personality, humorously defiant and relentlessly optimistic. He adds heart to the flawed Japanese stereotype. His only wish is to return to his wife





# What Age Are You Really?

Study shows Asians Americans are slowest aging ethnic group in the US

by emily yu

Do Asians age well? According to the results of a study released in 2006 by Harvard University and the National Institute of Aging, they do age wisely. But just what does it mean to age wisely, and moreover, what does it mean to age well?

The Japanese are generally known for being the longest-living people on the planet. In 2001, the expected average lifespan of a Japanese woman was 84.7 years. For the average American woman, the expected lifespan was around 79 years. Now here's the surprise: the average life expectancy of an Asian American woman in 2001 was 86.7 years. Asian American females exceeded the life expectancy of their Japanese counterparts by two years.

In the "Eight Americas" study done by Harvard University and the National Institute of Aging, researchers recorded mortality rates among people from 1982 to 2001, taking into account race, country or origin, gender and income. Researchers found that on average, Asian Americans were the longest-living group in the U.S. with an average life expectancy of 84.9 years. The Harvard study demonstrated that diet and behavior, not necessarily income, were the major factors that played into one's lifespan. Unfortunately, the ethnicities within the Asian American category were not differentiated.

One of the keys to the longevity of Asian Americans is their adherence to a traditional diet. Vegetables, fresh fruits, and fish, which feature prominently in the Asian diet, are high in essential vitamins and nutrients, as opposed to whole fat dairy, fatty foods, and red meat more closely associated with American diets. For example, green tea, which is high in antioxidants, contributes to the good health of Asian Americans. In a supporting study done by the Department of Health Services and some UCLA Public Health investigators, low-income Chinese, Hmong and Vietnamese immigrants agreed that freshness was an important requisite for food; frozen, dried, canned, preserved, pesticide-affected, hormone-injected, and fast foods all ran counter to immigrants' ideas of fresh food. Meanwhile, eating in moderation, a "secret" also shared in the book *French Women Don't Get Fat*, is central to the eating habits of older Asian Americans. Regular exercise (and rest) as well as active involvement in the Asian community, religious

or otherwise, allow for a healthy and meaningful lifestyle, something that health experts have noted. In the November 2005 issue of National Geographic, the older Japanese community attributed being in company with one another as a way to avoid loneliness and depression.

The American culture has picked up on some of these tips from both the Asian and similarly healthy Mediterranean diets. The Mediterranean diet has been paramount in spurring the Slow Food Movement, grounded on healthy, prepared

**"Asian Americans were the longest living group in the U.S., recorded with the life expectancy of 84.9 years."**

foods as opposed to the convenience and unhealthiness of fast foods. As the American culture picks up on potentially popular commodities such as green tea, the Asian diet may slowly make its way into the mainstream American diet.

Aging well is an issue that lies at the crossroads of health and beauty concerns. From a health perspective, aging well equates to living to a ripe old age, but from a beauty perspective, aging well means looking younger than one's actual age, sustaining youth and vigor well into life. So a corollary question arises: even if Asians age wisely in part due to their lifestyle, do their appearances also age more slowly – in other words, do they naturally age well?

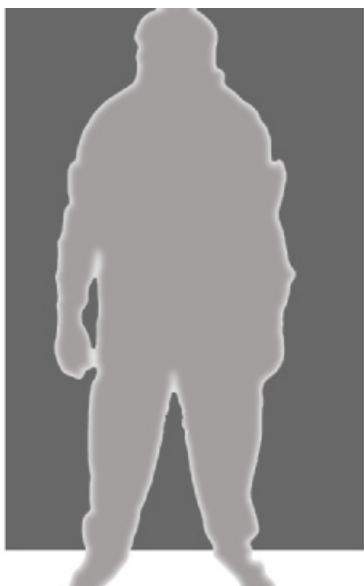
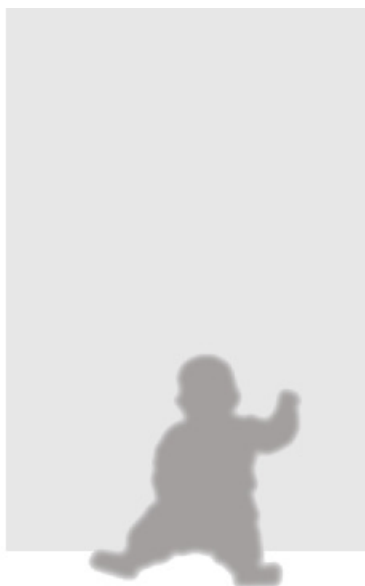
Because "aging" is relative among ethnicities, the answer varies accordingly. For the most part, however, Asians do have benefits when it comes to aging. The Asian diet, again, presents its advantages. A low presence of magnesium at the cellular level speeds up aging as well as the development of diseases. The National Research Council recommends a minimum daily consumption of 300-400 mg of magnesium for adults. Grounded on whole foods, the Asian diet provides approximately 500-700 mg of magnesium per day, compared to the Western diet which provides only one-third that amount, according to Michael Lam and Maria Salindro in their article

"Magnesium and Aging."

In terms of immediate appearance, when one gets older, the eyelids begin to droop, the muscles along the cheekbones sag toward the nasolabial fold, and the jaw muscles sag into the neck. Since Asians have more facial fat, the loss of which expedites the aging process and sagging skin, their wrinkles do not appear until later. Even hair varies culturally, with Caucasians generally experiencing the graying of hair earlier than Asians. Statistics report that about three-fourths of women older than 65 years if age have experienced hair loss, most commonly among Caucasians and Hispanics and less so among Asians and African Americans.

However, this has not stopped the Asian American community from heading to the cosmetic surgery room. According to statistics released by the American Society of Plastic Surgeons in 2006, there was a 58 percent increase in the number of Asian American cosmetic procedures done from 2004. In fact, Botox and injectable wrinkle fillers rank as the most commonly requested, minimally-invasive cosmetic procedures for Asian Americans. It seems that despite the edge that Asians may have when it comes to aging well, the desire for personal physical enhancements persists.

Moreover, while Asian Americans currently hold the title for longest lifespans, there are indications that they might not be title-holders for long. Asian Americans in the Harvard study were largely immigrants, the parents or grandparents of today's younger Asian American generation. Thus, they carried their customs and cultural mindset with them, adapting and adopting little of the American culture and food. However, the younger Asian American generation may not be as impervious to American influences, and their habits are therefore more likely to be less healthy. This has large implications for the lifespans of 2nd and 3rd generation Asian Americans. Nevertheless, it will be interesting to see whether the Asian diet will get caught into the mainstream American diet or if Asian Americans, in the interest of leading long healthy lives, adhere to the traditions and habits of their Asian heritage.





# Ratty Reporting:

## NY Media Perpetuates Asian Restaurant Stereotypes



by jaeran song

In late January of this year television station WPIX-TV Channel 11, the local CW affiliate in New York City, reported that a woman named Deisha Dodds had found a mouse in her takeout Chinese food at New King Food restaurant. The report contained inflammatory phrases like “a disgusting find,” “sickening surprise,” “nasty dining experience,” and “rodent slathered in garlic sauce.” The newscameras zoomed in on an oddly shaped piece of meat in an order of chicken and broccoli. Then, the cameras turned to the supposed “food inspector” who pronounced that the piece of meat was indeed rodent meat.

Viewers expect the news reports they see on TV to be reliable. Yet, the so-called “food inspector” did not have the appropriate license to do laboratory research. He was simply a “health inspector,” renting an apartment to do his job. The news station failed to get a reputable biologist to inspect the food, yet they aired the claim that it was “mice” meat without even getting a second opinion.

The problem is there’s no evidence whatsoever ... They’re standing by their so-called report from this fly-by-night biologist.

Yet the damage may already be done, regardless of whether or not the piece of meat was chicken or mouse. Despite the lack of sufficient evidence, there is a fear of backlash not only at New Food King but also at other Chinese and Asian restaurants in the New York City area, which stems from an enduring stereotype that Asian restaurants throw anything and everything into their food—cats, dogs, mice, whatever. Asian Americans have long had to deal with antagonism and stereotypes of strange eating habits. This news story ultimately helped confirm suspicions and reaffirm beliefs that Asian Americans eat meats that may not be kosher according to American standards.

In response to the news story, New York City councilman John Liu (D-Queens) led a protest against TV station WPIX over their weeknight news team (news co-anchors Kaity Tong and Jim Watkins, as well as news reporter Chris Glorioso) that reported the story. Liu said the biologist that the television station relied upon was not reputable and that the biologist’s report should have been verified before the report went on the air. Liu, who has been very active in the Asian American community, said the coverage “perpetuates [a] ridiculous stereotype that does exist out there - that somehow

mouse meat [is] fair game in a Chinese restaurant.” Liu also questions the reliability of the news report. “If they had the evidence, [then] obviously, it’s hard to complain about it. The problem is there’s no evidence whatsoever,” Liu argued. “They’re standing by their so-called report from this fly-by-night biologist.”

Spurred on by Liu’s comments, about 400 Asian Americans on February 4th braved freezing weather to gather in front of the WPIX television station and protest the report. Protesters demanded apologies, waving signs that read, “Say Sorry.” On February 26th, there was a second protest organized by Chinese and other local Asian American groups to respond to the allegations. Protesters said the WPIX report perpetuated racist prejudices and derogatory stereotypes against Chinese. The station has yet to issue an apology.

The New Food King restaurant has since filed a lawsuit in the New York State Supreme Court against WPIX, its parent

company the Tribune Company, reporter Chris Glorioso, and anchor Kaity Tong on charges of defamation and slander. They are asking for two million dollars in compensation for damages and costs of the lawsuit. WPIX has yet to respond.

This has not been the first time that WPIX has reported stories of questionable accuracy. In 2001, the station ran a story about a Korean restaurant that supposedly served dog meat. It took two years for the news station to apologize for the story so that the restaurant owners would drop the lawsuit against the station. Perhaps in 2009, WPIX will take steps to save face.

Until then, people should remember that a free press is a powerful tool, capable of disseminating both reliable and unreliable information. Journalism is a medium that impacts people and incites discourse. Therefore, journalists have the responsibility to report the facts fairly and accurately, to ensure that the press truly serves in the public interest.



Protesters including Steven Wong (right) demanded an apology from the CW11 Feb. 4.

PHOTO: RICHARD LI

image from [www.pacificcitizen.org](http://www.pacificcitizen.org)



# Asian Pacific American Community









## April 2007 Calendar

### Asian Pacific American Organization Key

Associated Students of University of California (ASUC)  
Asian American Association (AAA)  
Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC)  
Asian Political Association (APA)  
Asian Pacific American Student Development (APASD)

Chinese Student Association  
**hardboiled** asian american newsmagazine (hb)  
Indus the Premiere South Asian Alliance  
Japanese American Services East Bay (JASEB)

Pilipino Student Association (PAA)  
API Recruitment and Retention Center (REACH!)  
Southeast Asian Student Coalition (SASC)  
Theatre Rice! modern asian american theatre (TR!)  
Vietnamese Student Association (VSA)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8-10PM <b>APAC</b> Meeting, Senate Chambers  Queer Pin@y Conference at UC Davis  2PM BRONZE LIT [1]		9-1PM <b>AAA</b> CS Bowling Fundraiser, Albany Bowl  4:30-6PM <b>TR</b> Writer's Block, 100 Wheeler	6-7PM <b>hb</b> Meeting, 105 Dwinelle			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11AM-5PM San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival, Japantown [2]		7-9PM <b>APASD</b> Spoken Word Event featuring Denizen Kane and Ishle Yi Park, Ed Bok Lee Heller Lounge [3]	6-7PM <b>hb</b> Meeting, 105 Dwinelle		3:30-10PM <b>NSU</b> JASEB Bingo Volunteering, SACBC [4]	9:30AM-5PM <b>APASD</b> 17th Annual API Issues Conference  <b>CSA</b> Culture Show  <b>Indus</b> Culture Show  11AM-5PM San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival, Japantown [2]
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
8-10PM <b>APAC</b> Meeting, Senate Chambers  11AM-5PM San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival, Japantown [2]	  		11AM-2PM <b>AAA</b> CS Penny Wars, Upper Sproul  11AM-2PM <b>AAA</b> HC Spirit Week  6-7PM <b>hb</b> Meeting, 105 Dwinelle	<b>REACH! Senior Weekend</b>	    7:30-9:30PM <b>TR!</b> Showcase, 155 Dwinelle	Cal Day  7:30-9:30PM <b>TR!</b> Showcase, 155 Dwinelle   11AM-5PM [2]  5PM <b>VSA</b> Culture Show, Zellerbach  <b>AAA</b> Spring Formal
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
11AM-5PM San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival, Japantown [2]  1PM-5PM <b>PAA</b> Pilipino Culture Night, Zellerbach	  12:30-2PM Lecture [5]		<b>SASC</b> Southeast Asian Awareness Week  6-7PM <b>hb</b> Meeting, 105 Dwinelle	12-1PM <b>SASC</b> Rally on Sproul	  6-7PM <b>SASC</b> Benefit Concert	9:45-1PM <b>ASUC</b> Calnival Dwinelle Plaza/Steps
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Other Asian Pacific American Community Events

to submit your events to this calendar please e-mail [hardboiledmagazine@lists.berkeley.edu](mailto:hardboiledmagazine@lists.berkeley.edu)

[1] BRONZE LIT: Filipino American voices in literature Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission (@ 3rd Street), SF, Cost: Free.

[2] San Francisco Cherry Blossom Festival, Japantown, 11AM-5PM

[3] APASD: Spoken Word Event featuring Ishle Yi Park, Denizen Kane, and Ed Bok Lee, 7-9PM, Heller Lounge

[4] NSU: Japanese American Services East Bay (JASEB) South Alameda County Buddhist Church

[5] Lecture: Perfect Spy: The Incredible Double Life of Pham Xuan An, Institute of East Asian Studies (2223 Fulton), 6F Conference Room

Speaker/Performer: Larry Berman, UC Davis, Sponsor: Center for Southeast Asia Studies

Present Tense, a new visual exhibition showcasing the talents of young, emerging Chinese American artists from the San Francisco Bay Area, On display to May 19th

Location: Chinese Culture Center gallery, 750 Kearny Ste reet, 3rd floor of Hilton San Francisco Financial District Hotel, San Francisco.

