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FREE

the asian american newsmagazine

Issue 11.4

BLACKVote
BROWNVote

but... what
about ME?



Featuring:

Nihao Biculturalism

Curse of the Paper Ballot

**Things White People Should Know About Asian Americans
and more...**

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While spending my warm winter break in sunny Little Tokyo of Los Angeles, I overheard a Japanese American elderly man exclaim how "half-Japanese kids are diluting Japanese American culture and its community!" I was appalled. I know that this is not the stance of the majority of Asian Americans who are so-called "full Asian." However, I do know of people within the Asian American community who think of me and other Hapas (a debatable term itself) as somehow unable to retain or even understand what is Asian American culture. Is it because "half-Asians" can only understand "half" the plight of the Asian American struggle? Is it our not-quite-Asian nor not-quite-the-other looks that prevent us from being a fully active participant in the Asian American community? Did one of our non-Asian parents in one way or another dilute our ability to understand what are rightfully also our culture and our struggle?

The notion of someone who is "half" versus someone who is whole is highly disturbing. The 100% Asian is viewed by some people as the ideal in order to sustain an ethnic community – marrying outside of one's ethnic group only weakens the ties of an already vulnerable community. While some may hold this to be true, who determines the definition of who is half and who is whole? What does it mean to be 100% Asian? Is it the food? Is it the ability to speak in your parent's native tongue? Having hot water constantly boiling in the house? What is it really? The underlying notion is if you're not "whole" you're not really part of the community. It is these people that forget that identity and culture are not concrete solid entities; rather, it incorporates the multitude of experiences we face as individuals. Identity and culture are in constant flux. In the end, it's not our genetic makeup or a set cultural identity that defines the strength and sustainability of a community - it's the ability to perceive beyond whatever "full" means and to understand that we are all a part of the same struggle.

naomi oren
art director

editor's note

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THINGS WHITE JOURNALISTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ASIAN AMERICANS by erin wong

To the failed satirists of college journalism:

To summarize your offenses, your articles use Asian American stereotypes as botched humor. Especially you, Colorado University student Max Karson. Your recent article, published in The Campus Press on February 18, "If it's a War Asians Want..." describing Asian Americans as having "pure hate" for whites only serves to showcase your derogatory vocabulary. Your strange stories and outrageous proposals seem to have more basis in racist stereotypes than in truth.

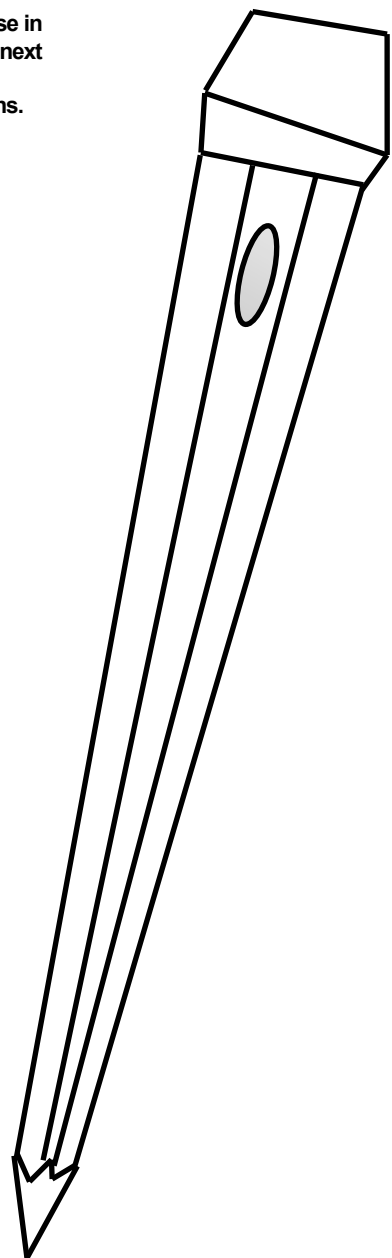
As any good journalist should know, fact checking is the backbone of your articles. However, there seems to have been a lapse in due diligence. Take Karson's recent and compelling claims that Asians wish to incite war on white people, which is perhaps the next step after UCLA student Jed Levine's article on the so-called "Asian invasion" at UCLA.

After failing your first shot at funniness, this article should serve as your cheat sheet to clarify the "facts" about Asian Americans.

- 1** The term "Asian" is an oversimplifying generalization for many different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities. In other words, Chinese people do not make wus.
- 2** Asians are Americans, too. Don't forget, America is not 100% white people.
- 3** Asian Americans are not social prudes. If your faces became bright red beacons whenever you had any alcohol, maybe you'd find other ways to spend your Thursday nights, too.
- 4** Asian Americans are not evil cyborgs. Thank you for noticing. Please take the time to actually convince yourself of this obvious fact.
- 5** Accent or no accent, Asian Americans still understand English. You should think twice about writing a racist article as if we would be blissfully unaware.
- 6** Asian Americans know how to use forks. It doesn't take much dexterity to figure out how to stab your food.
- 7** Asian Americans' culinary tastes go beyond just plain rice. But fried snickers are just too far.
- 8** References of "bamboo," "pandas," or "Maos," are not representative of Asian Americans. And the same goes for Hello Kitty and Dance Dance Revolution.
- 9** Of course Asian Americans don't want to hang out with you. As your articles have shown, you're bigots that openly mock Asian and Asian American people.
- 10** One encounter with one Asian American does not constitute an "epiphany" about all Asian Americans. Don't make sweeping generalizations about a group of people based on one meeting.

No matter how big or how small the Asian American populations are at your universities, your experiences are no excuse for your crappy articles. Please reference this article before confusing your lack of cultural understanding with Asian American hate. The combination of this article and the diversity training you will receive will hopefully help keep you from committing journalistic suicide again.

peace.



Welcome to ...

by alice lee

LITTLE SAIGON?

If you were to walk down Story Road, a mile-long business strip located in San Jose, you would see Lee's Sandwiches, Pho Hoa Restaurant, and about 1300 other thriving businesses, most of them run by Vietnamese business owners. Forty years ago, this same street and the surrounding areas were absent of such life.

The wave of Vietnamese refugees during the 70's and 80's transformed a sketchy neighborhood into a flourishing commercial center with restaurants and a shopping mall. In fact, San Jose is the city with the most Vietnamese residents outside of the country of Vietnam. Considering this, it is no surprise that this district—essentially built by these refugees—has become more than just a place to live for these expatriates.

This location has become a place of refuge, hope, and recuperation from the political turbulence that plagued their first homes. For those whose family members are still in Vietnam, this community's accomplishments have been a beacon of hope. Though Saigon, the capital of Vietnam, fell and was renamed Ho Chi Minh City in 1975 after the communist takeover, the Vietnamese Americans currently living along Story Road want to celebrate their motherland and build a spirit of hope and restoration.

In this regard, it is understandable to see why there has been a great deal of controversy over the naming of Story Road and its surrounding area. The city distributed an advisory survey to the businesses along Story Road, and of the 117 responses, 44, or 38 percent, of the responses favored "Little Saigon."

Yet Councilwoman Madison Nguyen, who shepherded the project of naming this strip, announced in last year's November city council meeting that "Saigon Business District," a choice that only received six votes, would be the official name. "Saigon Business District to me symbolized neutrality. This is not just for the Vietnamese Americans. The name also has to resonate well with the entire community," said Nguyen.

Unfortunately, the Vietnamese members of the community reacted negatively to the decision.

"We came here 32 years ago for political reasons, empty handed. Story Road is like our child. If we cannot name our own child, something is terribly wrong," said Thuan Nguyen (no relation to Councilwoman Nguyen), a real estate broker and founder of the Vietnamese Chamber

of Commerce.

To this day, there are still protesters holding signs for a "Little Saigon" name change every Tuesday in front of San Jose City Hall before the 2 p.m. meeting. Ly Tong, a former South Vietnamese air force pilot who led anti-communist leafleting campaigns, said he would sit in front of City Hall and only drink water until the city officials "listen to the voice of the people".

The negative sentiment felt throughout the Vietnamese community is not simply an issue of choosing one name over another. Their disappointment is on two levels. Firstly, the Vietnamese community supported Nguyen as the first Vietnamese American in California to be publicly voted into office. Of all city officials, the Vietnamese community expected Nguyen, a refugee herself, to share their sentiments regarding the historical and emotional connotations to the name "Little Saigon." Secondly, in light of the survey's results, Vietnamese business owners felt that the American system of democracy had failed. "We came here [America] and learned about the beautiful democracy. Then there was the meeting. How could it be so undemocratic?" said H. G. Nguyen, founder of the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce.

Before Vietnamese business owners charge

"We came here
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legally charged for undemocratic political tactics.

In addition, one should try to understand the position that Councilwoman Nguyen is in. As the first Vietnamese American to be elected to office, she undoubtedly carries a lot of weight for the Vietnamese community in San Jose. But Nguyen is a councilwoman for the city, not just this ethnic community. This would explain her decision to choose the name "Saigon Business District" as a means of not leaving Story Road exclusive to the Vietnamese residents.

Yet Councilwoman Nguyen has received much criticism for her supposed disloyalty to the Vietnamese community. She has faced a certain level of shunning from the Vietnamese, who did not invite her to the annual Tet parade for the Vietnamese New Year in February. They have also made efforts to recall Nguyen, though she is protected by the Santa Clara County Democratic Party's anti-recall resolution issued in January.

As a result of the community's lack of support for this new name, Councilwoman Nguyen issued a statement saying that the city will reconsider the name in their March 4 meeting.

Nguyen's willingness to please the members of the community and come to a compromise should not be overlooked. Politics aside, it is interesting to note the development and progression of this

naming controversy.

Though it is commendable to see the Vietnamese community uniting to fight for representation, it is also important to know how to pick one's battles. In the end, the cause of all this controversy is the renaming of a small strip of land.

The community should pause and ask itself if it is really worth \$300,000 to place this topic on the ballot to revote for a name change. How detrimental can the name "Saigon Business District" be to the strong spirited Vietnamese expatriates who have thus far worked so hard to successfully build this flourishing business center?

A community should be recognized by its spirit and unity, not just by its name. This controversy has already demonstrated the unity and cohesion of the Vietnamese community. Whether they are known to the rest of the world as "Saigon Business District" or "Little Saigon," then, should be of secondary importance.



<http://www.merccextra.com>

San Jose's first elected Vietnamese American Councilwoman Madison Nguyen sits at a crucial meeting for the naming of Story Road in November 2007.

the San Jose City Council as being "undemocratic," a clear understanding of the workings of this system must be addressed and clarified. The city's system of government operates under representational democracy, which means that the majority does not necessarily rule. Considering these facts, the city and Councilwoman Nguyen cannot be

Sentenced Home?

Vietnamese and Cambodian Deportation

by yer yang

After up to thirteen years of living in the United States, an agreement between the US and Viet Nam has made it legal to force repatriation upon Vietnamese individuals who arrived on or after July 12, 1995 and who have not yet acquired their citizenship. This agreement between the two countries was made on January 22, 2008 and applies to any Vietnamese in the US who are non-citizens and categorized as aggravated felons.

Since the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act, this term has been expanded thus increasing the number of deportable offenses. Minor crimes such as shoplifting or even writing a bounced check can be considered an aggravated felony. Additionally, even if an individual committed the crime years ago and has served the court sentence, this person is still subject to being deported.

The repatriation effort that brought shock and in many instances worry to an entire community. But it is an experience that is not new to the Southeast Asian refugees who are in America today because of the American War in Southeast Asia (aka the "Vietnam War").

This happening is very similar to the continuing deportation of Cambodians from the US back to Cambodia. In March of 2001, the US and Cambodia made an agreement which allowed Cambodians who had previously committed aggravated felonies to be deported back to their homeland.

of 2001 yet again tore these families apart. When this repatriation agreement was made, many of the Khmer deportees had already served their time for the crimes they committed during their adolescent years and had started families. In addition, even if their spouses were US citizens, they were still subject to deportation.

The agreement between Viet Nam and the US is very recent thus consequences are yet to be seen and predicted. However, if the parallels are drawn between these two deportations, the fate of these Southeast Asian refugees becomes very similar. Mention of the recent case with the Vietnamese repatriation cannot go without referencing the deportation that Cambodians have faced since 2001.

Similar to the Khmer community, the Vietnamese also have a history of flight from Communists in their home country. A number of the Vietnamese in the US were supporters of the former Vietnamese government before the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975. Subject to persecution after the Communist party took over Viet Nam, the citizens of South Viet Nam fled when Saigon fell.

To this day, there are still Vietnamese on the borders of China and Viet Nam resisting repatriation from China back to Viet Nam. To many of the Vietnamese, leaving Viet Nam is looked down upon. When Vietnamese who fled in 1975 and the later years return, they are not always welcome by the current residents or the government.

In essence, assuming that

these people who are being repatriated can return to their "homeland" and fit right in as if they had never left is a supposition made without context. Many of these Vietnamese refugees were uprooted from Viet Nam, placed in the refugee camps which are equivalent to being in a state of limbo because one does not know where or when he or she will.

Finally after a decade or two, many of these refugees who are currently subject to deportation were resettled in the US. After finally starting to feel a sense of stability, they are now being uprooted again, forced to go back to a

place they and their families have been trying to escape for the past 30 or so years. Both the Vietnamese and Khmer communities have undergone multiple dislocations since the American War in Southeast Asia aka the "Viet Nam War". Putting them through another dislocation especially after they have started to finally reestablish themselves is immoral and cruel. Since the deportation started for the Khmer community, there have been reported suicides among the young men in Cambodia.

Even with such outcomes, the US policy makers have still been adamant about implementing a similar agreement that will possibly bring out a similar outcome to yet another community. As of now, there are currently about 1500 Vietnamese nationals who are awaiting deportation. Judging from the terms of the agreement, it seems this number may only increase with the years. If neither the US nor Viet Nam give a written request to cancel this agreement, it will continue for five years from March 22, 2008 and then be renewed for durations of three years thereafter.

Julie L. Myers, the Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement, expressed in the news release, "This agreement between our countries reflects the commitment of our respective nations to come together and craft viable partnerships that work for both of us. Agreements such as this are the building blocks of diplomacy. This agreement allows us to carry out a judge's order to remove individuals from our country in a safe and humane manner."

The news release then states, "The missions will be carried out in an orderly and safe way, and with respect for the individual human dignity of the person being repatriated."

In opposition to Myers' perspective, I personally do not see how sending back a group of people who are no longer connected to their "homeland" and who will most likely not be accepted with open arms benefit the relationship between two countries. In response to the latter quote, I don't know how anyone can describe a situation where a human being is being removed from their family, home and life with the word dignity. One other thing I can't help but ponder is, "what country is next?"

“One other thing I can't help but ponder is, 'What country is next?'”

“I don't know how anyone can describe a situation where a human being is being removed from their family, home and life with the word dignity.”

What is problematic here however, is that many of these Cambodians who were subject to being "returned home" have no recollection of Cambodia at all nor do they have strong ties to this country. After the communist take over by the Khmer Rouge in 1975, those who were able to flee Cambodia immediately did. The majority of its people however, spent the next 3 to 4 years in labor camps under the Khmer Rouge rule, working and starving in rice fields.

From 1975 to 1979, the Khmer Rouge killed approximately 2 million Cambodians many of whom were the educated and elite in hopes of creating a utopian society. While doing so, mass amounts of people were dislocated and the majority of families were broken and separated. A lot of the men were killed, leaving a number of the households led by women. After experiencing so much violence and dislocation, many of the Cambodian refugees escaped to refugee camps and were then eventually resettled in some of the poorest communities in the US with higher than average crime rates.

Many of these men who have been deported or are still awaiting deportation are 1.5 generation, the majority of them are actually unfamiliar with Cambodian traditions and some do not even speak Khmer (the Cambodian language) fluently. Although the structure of many Khmer families was already disrupted, the deportations that started after March



The California Primary:

by susan moua

Asian American Ballots For Clinton



http://www.smh.com.au/ffximage/2007/01/29/hillaryclinton_wideweb__470x308,0.jpg

VS.



http://woodburydems.com/blog/uploaded_images/obama_sc_04_01_2007-731285.jpg

Asian Americans have been criticized for lack of participation in elections due to the community being less politically engaged than others. This could be the reason why many politicians running for office, whether it is for Congress or for president, do not place gaining the Asian American vote as a high priority. However, this past February 5, when Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton went head-on, racing to win the democratic electorate for California, it seems as though the Asian American ballots that were cast in California might have made a difference.

“The result of the California Democratic primary for the Asian American vote was 75 percent for Clinton and 23 percent for Obama, a surprising 3-1 ratio.”

On February 5, while many were racing to the polls to cast their votes, Asian Americans were doing the same along with a few other things as well; some were learning how to vote and some were figuring out where they could go to vote. Korean Americans in the United States that day were calling the Korean Resource Center from as early as 7:00 A.M. In an online article, “Did Asian Americans Swing California for Clinton?”, found on newamericamedia.org, Dae Jung Yoon says that five hundred calls were made to their hotline and over a hundred people visited the resource center with questions about the election. Common questions, according to Yoon, were about polling locations and ways to obtain provisional ballots. The results revealed that, for Asian American voters at least, the choice between the two Democratic candidates appeared to be an obvious one.

The result of the California Democratic primary the Asian American vote was 75 percent for Clinton and 23 percent for Obama, a surprising 3-1 ratio. Many believe that the overwhelming amount of Asian American ballots cast for Clinton led to her win in California. According to newamericamedia.org, Asian Americans are currently 5 percent of the U.S. population, and are the fastest growing population group in America. In a study by the U.S. Census, the Asian American population is expected to double by 2050, from 14.4 million to 33.4 million. With this prediction in hand, it is evident the Asian American vote can be powerful, and presidential candidates have begun to dedicate some of their campaign to gain the Asian American vote. However, David Lee, the executive director of Chinese American Voter's Education was quick to point out that this primary just proved that Asian Americans can participate in a political process

and make a difference. “It's too premature to conclude that Asian [voter]s made a difference because both parties still haven't nominated their presidential candidates.”

During a CNN election report about Asian Americans and who they were voting for president, the three minute report was quick to emphasize that Asian Americans were comfortable with Hillary Clinton because during the 90's, Bill Clinton helped Asian Americans and because he is her husband, she will most likely do the same. Other reasons given were they did not want a Black president, or were fearful of change. After this aired, the Asian American community was outraged. Anderson Cooper, the host, interviewed only Asian Americans with heavy accents and even made a light joke about an Asian American woman who said Clinton that sounded like “Lincoln.” Overall, CNN's portrayal of Asian American involvement with the presidential election is racist and misleading of the Asian American population. Why does Asian American support for Hillary Clinton over Barack Obama translate into not wanting a Black president?

Over all this talk about the statistics that show an overwhelmingly support of Asian American for Hillary Clinton has me thinking about the huge supports from Cal Students for Barack Obama. Walking to class on Super Tuesday, it seemed many more students were supporting Obama. That is why, to be honest, I was surprised when I heard Clinton won the California Primary. At Cal, I was walking in Obamafest but it did not show in the ballot results for California, let alone just Asian Americans. Andy Morales, a Cal Student and an Obama supporter, says, “For Asian Americans in college, I think the majority of us voted for Obama because we are a

“Anderson Cooper, the host, interviewed only Asian Americans with heavy accents and even made a light joke about an Asian American woman who said Clinton sounded like Lincoln’.”

generation that is knowledgeable about the election. I am not saying that elder Asian Americans do not know what they are doing when they are voting, I just feel maybe they do not know fully what and who they are voting for. I do believe that older Asian Americans are voting for Hillary Clinton because of the Bill Clinton era but, I do not believe it to be anything racist.”

Another Cal student, an Obama supporter who asked to remain anonymous, believes otherwise. She says, “I have talked to my parents and tried to convince them to vote for

Obama. For my parents, I can say that Obama's skin color played over Hillary being a woman.” She also believes that older Asian American voters during the Bill Clinton era played an important role during the primary that showed extensive Asian American support for Hillary Clinton. “For myself at least, I can say that I voted because I am familiar with Obama's campaign. I only hope that Asian American voters out there are doing the same and not relying on past president, skin color, or gender to make the decision for them.”

From what has been said, whether from online articles, blogs or even three-minute CNN reports, theories have been constructed, but there are not any real reasons as to why Hillary Clinton has so far been winning the votes of Asian Americans. It makes sense, that because Bill Clinton was very popular with Asian American community when he was President that his supporters followed Hillary. We can not also forget that Hillary Clinton has the support of politicians that are popular among Asian Americans, like San Francisco's Mayor Gavin Newsom, who has contributed to her win in California. As for Barack Obama, perhaps he needs a little more work done if he wants the Asian American vote. Morales says, “What I have seen does not discourage me. I still support Obama and hopefully, after the coverage that Asian Americans have gotten, Obama's campaign will be considered by Asian Americans.”

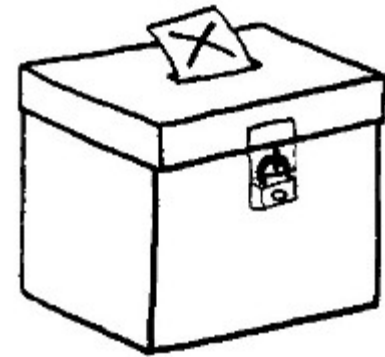
on a sidenote...

For Asian Americans who are planning to vote for the next president of the United States, here are some things that were considered and can still be considered for who you will vote for. The following information can be found on [AsianWeek](http://AsianWeek.com) and asianamericansforobama.com websites.

Hillary Clinton has always been interacting with the Asian American community, even during the days of President Bill Clinton. For her presidential campaign, she promises to the Asian American community that she will reunite families that were separated by the immigration system, introduce the Access to Employment and English-Language Acquisition Act to provide more job training funds for individuals with limited English-language skills, and express support for legislation for Filipino World War II veterans to receive compensation from the U.S. government.

Barack Obama has his fair share of campaign commitment to Asian American as well. So far, he has created the Asian American and Pacific Islander National Leadership Council, consisting of key Asian American leaders and activists to advise the campaign to identify Asian American issues of concern and outreach. Working with these leaders and activists, Obama has outlined a comprehensive plan to reclaim the American Dream for Asian American and Pacific Islander families. Obama also promises to reform and fund No Child Left Behind, give more high school students access to college courses, increase federal college aid, free up money for student aid, and reform H-1B Visas.

Curse of the Paper Ballot



by melani sutedja

Waking up at 4:30 AM on the chilly morning of Big Tuesday stings. Huddling in the back of a van with a cup of Folgers and a clipboard, I was headed towards a polling station in beautiful San Mateo County, south of San Francisco County, to gather data on voting behavior and its relation to the efficiency of what voting system each county had. I had to observe how long the lines were, especially if one of the direct-recording electronic (DRE) machines broke and people left as a result of long waits. By the end of the day, however, there were no problems—people left happy, each taking an average of only 10 minutes to check in at the front desk and vote.

Across the bay, however, people in Alameda County had to wait longer, some even 45 minutes, to cast in votes. A larger-than-expected Democrat turnout caught many polling stations off-guard, forcing voters to wait while poll-workers made copies of provisional ballots. As the electoral process slowed, it forced some to leave the lines and miss out on their opportunities to vote. The problem? Alameda County uses paper ballots, not the convenience of DRE machines. Hence, workers had to photocopy ballots themselves. By the time they finished, some had already “balked,” or left the line due to prolonged waiting.

It is interesting when considering the racial and socioeconomic makeup of these different communities. How is it that, instead of using easier and assistive high-tech machines, a county is forced to use a more exhaustive and confusing form of punching ballots? When taking Alameda’s demographics into consideration -- a 26% Asian American population, of which, the Asian Law Caucus and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center estimates, are 40% Democrat -- there seems to be

a trend towards whose votes become filtered out, or discouraged, from the voting process. Compare this to the San Mateo district, where a 2006 Voting Modernization Board decided to invest over ten million dollars in new voting equipment for elections. While taking into account the city’s median income level of \$73,916 (compare to Alameda’s \$56,285) amongst its 66% White and 15% Asian American population, one thinks there should be some government policies that help the lower income districts of Berkeley, Oakland, Hayward and Fremont at least upgrade from paper ballots. Only 1.7% registered voters use paper ballots in the United States; why are these counties the select few?

Henry Brady, Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, is heading an ongoing study on the phenomena of voting technology and their consequences on wait time. Working alongside a few graduate students from the Department of Public Policy, they have organized a team of students to collect data from San Mateo, Alameda and Napa County during the California primaries. Finding trends will hopefully “maximize voter convenience by selecting the optimal voting

systems and procedures for their counties,” according to the Election Survey website. If trends amongst certain precincts develop—possibly distinctions between affluent and lower income neighborhoods—the Election Survey team will hope to bring the case before the agenda of the National Association of Secretary of State in hopes to even out the electoral playing field.

More importantly, this might mean fewer obstacles for the Asian American community in a process already made difficult by language barriers, the need for translations, and at times, sentiments of apathy. “There’s a social justice component to this,”

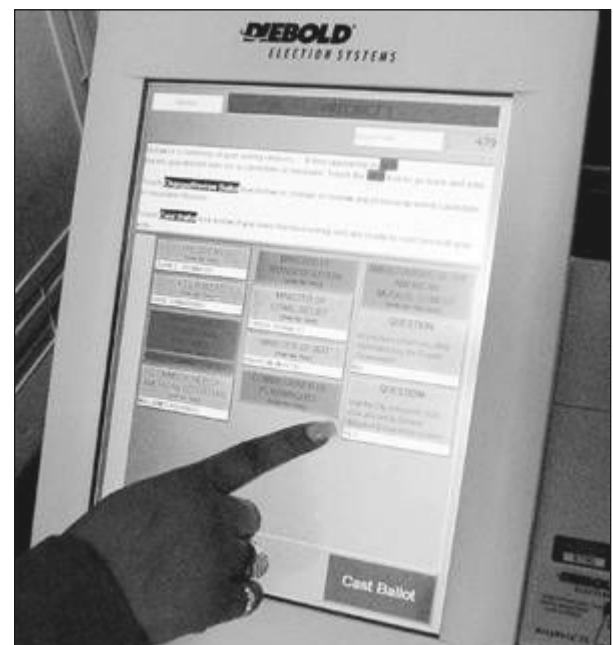
“Alameda County uses paper ballots, not the convenience of DRE machines. Hence, workers had to photocopy ballots themselves. By the time they finished, some had already “balked,” or left the line due to prolonged waiting.”

Morgan Hanger, a second-year Master of Public Policy Candidate comments to a group of student data gatherers on Tuesday morning. “Anyone can research for data and write it down for their resumes, but this...this can actually have the power to change policy.” By recognizing a problem as simple as voting machines, and its link to either racial or class voting disenfranchisement, it can. And with that (along with another cup of coffee), the morning sting seems more bearable.



<http://sfgate.com>

Due to the inconvenience of paper ballots, long lines were created and many people had to wait in order to vote. Can something as simple as a voting machine impact the voting outcomes?



msnbcmedia1.msn.com

Can voting efficiency determine the next president?

beijing's

by jennifer min "Undesirables" and Protestors Targeted for the 2008 Olympics

SOCIAL CLEANSING OPERATION

President of Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee (BOCOC) Liu Qi has expressed only the highest of expectations for the upcoming 2008 Olympics. With China's expanded budget of US\$2 billion backing the most dramatic transformation of Beijing since 1949 under Mao, Liu Qi's optimism is with good reason. China seems to be taking the 2008 Olympics as an opportunity to internationally publicize its image as a global power. It is barring no effort to that end, sprawling Olympic Green construction and revitalization across nearly 2,800 acres of Beijing along with a hopeful plan for a new lasting Beijing center.

However, one of the consequences of this extensive renovation on the Chinese citizenry is a social cleansing operation ordered by Beijing's Olympic President. This program is intended to clear Beijing of all deemed "undesirables" by August 2008 in preparation for the Olympics. The program has been in implementation as early as 2001, though it wasn't formally announced until late January 2008. According to Chinese officials, as of May 2005 an estimated 300,000 residents have been evicted, some illegally. However, the Geneva-based Center for Housing Rights and Evictions estimates a total of 1.5 million people to be displaced by the time the Games are held.

"Undesirables" subject to relocation encompass a huge proportion of Beijing residents. Among them are unregistered taxi drivers, mobile snack vendors, suspected fronts for prostitution such as hairdressing salons and karaoke parlors, beggars, hawkers, prostitutes, and homeless people. Religious leaders too seem to fall under the label of "undesirables" following the questionable arrest of Christian house church leader Hua Huiqi and his mother in 2007. Huiqi was allegedly arrested for merely walking near a hotel construction site built in preparation for the Olympics. Any local person without a *hukou* (residency permit) of Beijing are also subject to relocation. Forcible evictions due to house demolitions (attributed to Beijing's preparation for the 2008 Olympics) have also left many of Beijing's once-residents subject to relocation, though notably with a promise of compensation to the evictees. China's ultimate goal for its social cleanup is to create a salubrious image of Beijing in time for the inflow of an estimated half a million tourists, athletes and journalists. In this line, any resident detracting from that image is also subject to eviction and relocation. Chinese authorities have previously announced that only migrant beggars and hawkers would be relocated to constructed special holding centers. However,

the China-based group Human Rights claims all relocated residents are being shipped back to the countryside or to secretive camps, of which information is severely limited.



Photo by <http://noolympics.blogspot.com>

A Korean human right group called 444 Days just launched a boycott of Beijing Olympics 2008. Its recent protest accused China of violation of human rights by deporting North Korean refugees in their social cleansing program.

However, as alarming as the extent and nature of Beijing's social cleansing operation might be it must be noted that Beijing is not the first host city to adopt such measures. Prior to the 2004 Athens Olympic Games an estimated 2,700 Romas were reportedly evicted. Also, according to a 2007 study done by the UK's Center on Housing Rights and Evictions more

"The problems of vagrants, beggars, and unlicensed businesses must be solved before the Olympics"

than 2 million people have been driven from their homes since 1988 to make way for the Olympics. While a controversial topic no matter what nation it's applied to, the evictions are seen by many as a type of necessary evil inherent to hosting the Olympic Games. As such, the persecution of such should not fall on China's shoulders alone.

Perhaps an even greater concern than the evictions my

be China's harsh response to petitioners and human rights advocates protesting the relocations. Beijing police have placed many petitioners and human rights advocates under arrest, among them the well-known Beijing human rights Ye Guozhu. In 2001 both of Ye Guozhu's restaurants in Beijing were razed, as was his home two years later, to make way for parks to beautify Beijing in preparation for the 2008 Olympics. On August 24, 2004 he applied for permission to hold a march in Tiananmen Square to protest against such forced evictions and house demolitions and was arrested on September 17, 2004 on the grounds of "disturbing social order." He was sentenced to four years in prison on December 18, 2004 and wasn't allowed to meet with his family until January 23, 2006. Ye refused to admit guilt to his alleged crimes, insisting applying for a parade permit was entirely legal, and was consequentially sent to the Strict Disciplinary Team. All communication with his family was denied, his right to customary bi-monthly family telephone calls was revoked, and Ye later admitted to having suffered serious abuse at the hands of prison authorities. Toward the end of 2006 Amnesty International received reports that Ye was beaten by guards with electro-shock batons and has declared him a prisoner of conscience. Allegedly other protesters and human rights advocates have experienced similar arrest and imprisonment. While such stories have been slow to circulate, rising international concern for protest suppression has called for China to remediate their ways.

There is growing worry that China's current protest control is only a precursor of what is to come. The UK has recently considered having athletes sign a charter barring "any kind of demonstration or engaging in any political, religious or racial propaganda at Olympic sites," though the idea was retracted. Meanwhile Australia has already openly asked its representatives not to comment on political issues in China. The US, the Netherlands and Belgium have declared they will not restrict their athletes' freedom of expression, though unease remains and apprehension clouds the "positive image" China intends to portray.

That is not to say there is no hope for change. Though China's past is punctuated with severe police enforcement and regulated laws, China is asserting that it is currently taking care to curb such tendencies and to extend decorum to its enforcement as quoted in a recent edition of Beijing News.

"In enforcing the law, [officers] must be civilized, they must explain their actions and be reasonable. They must not create social environment problems," BOCOC President Liu Qi said.

Ni Hao, Biculturalism!

A rise in culturally based children's shows

by cecilia tran

With the sweeping popularity of the charismatic *Dora the Explorer*, it became unmistakably clear that the days of Barney and his minority quota casts were over. Rather than just having characters of several ethnicities appear on children's shows, there was finally a show that focused on culture and bilingualism. The interactive show that had children everywhere shouting in Spanish at their television sets has now given way to another revolutionary bilingual show.

As an experiment built upon the success of *Dora the Explorer*, the new Nick Jr. series *Ni Hao, Kai-lan!* hopes to continue the phenomenon of preschoolers shouting at inanimate objects while simultaneously learning. The new edge being that this time, the gleeful shouts will be in Mandarin.

The wholesome content of *Ni Hao, Kai-lan!* aims to help preschool children develop important interpersonal skills while also learning to appreciate Chinese culture. The title translates into English as "Hello, Kai-lan!" and of course revolves around the charming cartoon character, Kai-lan. Kai-lan Chow is a bubbly Chinese American five-year-old with a crew of equally exuberant animal friends and a wise grandfather whom she endearingly calls YeYe.

Kai-Lan is the quintessence of cuteness with her large brown eyes and pinned up buns, a cross between Sanrio and Sailor Moon animations. Her smooth, unaccented English and girlish giggle has the very ethnically-neutral quality of her predecessor Dora. Clearly the emphasis has been on developing a character that is distinguishably Asian yet very much American. Even more refreshing is that her grandfather, YeYe is also far from being the stereotypical Chinese cartoon.

Toonzine's cartoon critic Ed Liu remarks that YeYe is "refreshingly free of a thick Chinese accent and whose dialogue neatly dodges the usual fortune cookie maxims and faux-Chinese wisdom that infects even the best elder Asian characters on TV."

Thus far, the show has succeeded in fair portrayals of Chinese Americans. Creator Karen Chao based the show on her upbringing as a Chinese American girl who had close ties with her immigrant grandfather.

In regards to her show, Chao claims, "It's really 100 percent American and 100 percent Chinese. What we really don't want it to be is this isolation of one culture." This perfect balance between Chinese and American ideology is great in theory, but can it actually work?

The show does its best to portray the vague concept of Chinese American values. Chinese language and Chinese practices such as tai-chi are incorporated into typical themes such as developing patience and being a supportive friend. According to the show's mission statement, "Ni Hao, Kai-lan! reinforces the idea that being bicultural and bilingual is being American." The term "bicultural" is meant to encapsulate the core ideology and values of American and Chinese society.

The show is said to champion ideals such as taking "the perspective of others to

maintain harmony in relationships with other people." The show heavily focuses on child psychology and teaching ways in which children can handle their emotions and conflicts in calm and rational manners. The grandfather character, YeYe, also provides a unique intergenerational aspect to the show that demonstrates the importance that Asian culture places on respecting elders.

In essence, the show is like any other children's show with the usual lessons of playing well with others, team work and patience. Then why the sudden infusion of Chinese culture? Although it would be ideal to believe that this fascination the media has developed with bilingualism is mainly motivated by a desire to spread cultural awareness, at the end of the day, television is still a marketing institution that wants to appeal to the largest audience possible.

Ted Anthony of the Tribune News attributes the creation of the show to the fact that there are currently 3.6 million Chinese Americans since the 2006 U.S. census not including Chinese citizens living in America. In the same manner, it would be safe to say that *Dora the Explorer*, *Go Diego Go* and *Dragon Tales* would have probably never have come into existence had it not been for the large Latino population in America.

This does not mean that the shows are not beneficial to young viewers. In fact, they are valuable tools in developing racial tolerance and cultural appreciation through non-stereotypical representations. Even more importantly, shows like *Ni Hao, Kai-Lan!* not only demonstrate culture of another country but also what it means to retain a different culture while simultaneously being American. There have been other popular

shows about Asian culture before. For instance, the PBS hit, *Sagwa*, is a well known creation based on Amy Tan's children stories about imperial China.

Yet, *Ni Hao, Kai-Lan!* is a breakthrough show because it portrays Americans as being people with ethnic heritages. However, the creation of such culture-based shows should not be dependent on the size of the ethnic population in America. In a world of expanding technological advances, the global community has become smaller and more accessible. Because of this, it is crucial to teach children early on about the vast array of culture and not simply the ones with the largest population in the United States.

As seen from Kai-lan and Dora, shows have been able to represent a culture without the infringement of stereotypes. Liu enthusiastically says, "It's also fascinating to see the subtle way that Kai-lan and YeYe's designs make it clear that they are both Chinese without resorting to the usual caricatured features." Why stop here? From this success, we can gain motivation to continue along this pathway of developing culturally savvy children's media, extending the concept to many more ethnic groups. With an optimistic outlook, we can bring ourselves to say with the enthusiasm of preschoolers shouting along with Dora and Kai-lan, "Ni hao, biculturalism!"

“...‘Ni Hao, Kai-lan! reinforces the idea that being bicultural and bilingual is being American.’ The term “bicultural” is meant to encapsulate the core ideology and values of American and Chinese society.”

Another One the Dust

COMCAST SHUTS DOWN AZN TV

by albert wang

AZN[®]
TELEVISION

AZN Television, a network devoted to English-language programming for the Asian American community, will shut down on April 9, its parent company Comcast announced January 25. The decision, reached “after considerable review of the network’s financial situation” according to the statement, nevertheless thins the already small market for English-language, Asian-oriented programming.

Comcast will continue to offer 13 “in-language” Asian networks, imported programming from overseas, through subsidiary International Networks. But AZN, with its focus on American audiences and its lack of an established viewership, has suffered from low advertiser interest and limited distribution; with other cable companies declining to carry the network, AZN only manages around 13 million subscribers, a marginal sum against the 100 million average for Comcast’s networks. These factors, despite a major consulting firm’s attempts to salvage the business, resulted in the closure decision.

Does the failure of AZN TV mean that Asian American programming can never be fiscally viable? Not necessarily, according to AZN TV Executive Director of Communications Teresa Wiedel.

“The market is strong, the Asian population is increasing, they have strong buying power, so from that sample there is a market out there,” Wiedel said. “Now is there a demand for English Asian-American broadcasting? How big is that demand...are advertisers willing to come on board to make that a viable business?”

Maybe not, Bill Imada of major Asian American advertising agency IW Group told columnist Jeff Yang in the San Francisco Chronicle.

“We didn’t do enough to support AZN and MTV World,



“Air City” is one of the few dramas on AZN TV. The channel is dominated by imported news, dramas, and variety shows.

Now is there a demand for English Asian-American broadcasting? How big is that demand... are advertisers willing to come on board to make that a viable business?

because I think that we tend to be a little selfish...the biggest bang is on the conventional (ethnic-language) side,” Imada said.

Imaginasian Entertainment, one of the few remaining Asian American TV outlets, would not comment on the viability of the Asian American media business outside of its official statement that, while “there are very few in the industry who were surprised...there is a tremendous market for this type of content.” And such groups as the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA), which compared AZN to other ethnic niche channels like BET in a

statement, would agree.

For deputy AAJA Executive Director Janice Lee, moreover, the profit to be had only comprises part of the importance of Asian American-oriented programming.

“I think that Asian American advertising companies will tell you that there’s different percentages that show that the buying power of Asian Americans is pretty high, so I think that that’s something for the networks to consider,” Lee said. “But in terms of programming, I think that just having more representation through the news media and programming is important for everybody to know what kind of diverse experiences there are outside of the home.”

Precisely how much representation AZN TV provided, however, is a matter of some contention. Yang, the publisher of Asian-American-themed A magazine before it folded in 2002, characterizes AZN as a shadow of its former self.

In his column, he describes the high hopes for AZN when Comcast acquired the International Channel in March 2005 and repurposed it to focus exclusively on Asian programming—and how these hopes were dashed when Comcast, by December, laid off 75 percent of the staff, “including all of its non-sales senior management and its entire programming team.”

Although Comcast promised in a statement that the layoffs constituted only internal readjustments and would not affect the channel’s content, Yang claims that they scuttled

the chances for original Asian American programming and AZN sponsorship of independent media alike.

Indeed, although AZN TV promotes original Asian American programs on its website, they are all sold on DVD—for prices ranging from 75 cents to 90 dollars, none of which are currently airing. AZN’s airwaves are dominated by imported news, dramas and variety shows, with a smattering of Chinese films and English-dubbed anime, programming that Yang would describe as “valuable content, but nothing groundbreaking—and nothing targeted specifically at Asian Americans.”

Hardly a fulfillment of Comcast’s initial lofty promises, this kind of programming is nothing that cannot be found on channels like Comcast’s in-language offerings, channels that have established bases in their mother countries and are more attractive to advertisers like Imada.

Yang goes on to impugn Comcast’s commitment to the Asian American community, suggesting that AZN was only an expedient in a lucrative deal with Liberty Media, virtually liquidated as soon as regulations allowed; he lays the blame ultimately upon “corporate bean-counters resistant to long-term risk.”

Yet regardless of what they think of AZN’s adequacy as a resource for Asian America, the pundits agree that its loss will be deeply felt. And if the English-language Asian American media cannot produce unique, marketable and original content, AZN may not be the last of its kind to fail.

Questionable Goals

Superbowl ad offers 100 free sales leads and racial insensitivity

by omar geoffrey narvaez

For many, the Super Bowl is an annual event that invokes many images: beer, chips, live musical performances, and mass exodus from churches across the nation. But for others, the Super Bowl plays a very important role as a symbol of mass media in today's society. Advertisements played during the Super Bowl sometimes gain more attention than the game itself. They can be everything from exuberantly expensive, to silly, to downright thought-provoking.

A range of companies vie for airtime during the Super Bowl as it is the most widely watched broadcast every year, paying millions of dollars to screen a thirty second commercial. Those that acquire a spot attempt to make the most of it; however, one company, Salesgenie, not only made the worst of its advertisement time during the biggest sports event of the year, but it managed to offend Asian Americans in the process.

The two ads that ran during the game had very basic premises. A struggling salesman struggles to keep up with the pressures placed on him by either his immediate superior or the customer. Facing imminent failure, the salesman turns to Salesgenie.com in order to find a way to increase their sales. As is the case with most advertisements, this basic premise attempts to capture the audience's attention by presenting itself using several gimmicks. The first of which is that the ads are animated. The cartoon characters attempt to make a commercial about marketing solutions more interesting than it sounds. The reflexivity and the overused gimmick of cartoon characters alone is enough to make these poorly written and produced commercials, but the Salesgenie ads take it one step further and uses stereotypical Indian American and Chinese American characters to sell their product.

One ad features the Indian American salesman "Ramesh" who is pressured by his boss to double his sales. Ramesh is the father of seven children and can't afford to lose his job. Calling upon the powers of Salesgenie, he successfully doubles his sales and is awarded with an Academy Awards-like ceremony with his entire family on stage. The other ad features "Ling Ling's Bamboo Furniture Shack" and its declining sales due to lack of customers. As if the name of the shop wasn't bad enough, Ling Ling is a cartoon panda with a thick, stereotypical, supposedly Chinese accent – an accent that fell out of style when ignorance became less commonplace and is usually seen today in bad comedy shows. The rest of the ad follows the formula of the Ramesh ad, with Ling Ling calling upon Salesgenie to help turn his struggling



Snapshots from youtube.com

Family Priorities: Being yelled at by his boss, Gumptra replies, "But Hank, I have seven kids," when threatened to be fired. This line showcased the stereotype that Indians have many children.



Snapshots from youtube.com

Offensive Marketing: Salesgenie.com aired a commercial during the 2007 Superbowl featuring two pandas eating bamboo and talking in thick Chinese accents.

bamboo furniture business into an Ikea-like megastore.

Salesgenie is owned by infoUSA, a provider of business information and marketing solutions. The Salesgenie ads featured in this year's Super Bowl offered "100 free sales leads for every sales rep in your company." With over four million customers worldwide and revenue of \$700 million, infoUSA can afford to have a TV spot during the Super Bowl; however, the recent controversy over the racially insensitive ads that Salesgenie used this year puts into question the legitimacy of the process used to determine who will ultimately get their ad broadcast. Officials from Salesgenie commented that they were aiming to create the worst Super Bowl ad ever. The chairman and CEO of infoUSA, and the writer of both of the commercials is Vinod Gupta, an Asian American himself. With both of these facts in mind, the question remains: does the amount of money a company has, the mindset they have in producing a commercial, and the heritage of their writer legitimize the production and broadcast of stereotypical and racist media? That last question in particular is one that has come up various times in all sorts of media. Why does an Asian American writer or a writer from any background for that matter, feel that they have the right to perpetuate stereotypes or create racist media as long as it's their own culture they're ridiculing? One has to try and figure out where Gupta was coming from when he thought up of these commercials. Perhaps, when he thought he would make the *worst* commercial possible, he drew from his own background as an Asian American man and thought of the commercial he would think was the worst had he seen it aired on television. As a company that deals with marketing solutions, Gupta was probably thinking with two mindsets – his mindset as an Asian American and his mindset as a businessman. The advertisement delivers – it is the worst they could possibly come up with – but at what cost? Gupta sacrificed his integrity as an Asian American public figure and chairman of a multimillion-dollar company in order to generate publicity. Asian Americans in these types of positions have a lot of responsibility, not only to their company, but also to who they are and where they come from. Gupta didn't live up to that responsibility and as a result many people were offended by an ad that didn't have to be offensive.

Putting the motives, origins, and insensitivity aside, the commercials do end up being poorly made, poorly animated, non-thought provoking, 30-second flops. The final product not only offends, but is also a waste of time and money. The Super Bowl is a grand event that relies on money from advertising. Over the years it has grown to the point where some people only watch the Super Bowl for the ads. As a result, companies have ended up spending more time and energy in creating great advertisements both to sell their products and to entertain. Ironically, though the Salesgenie ads did neither, the stir generated by the nature of the TV spots has gotten people to start talking. While we may remember Salesgenie.com and infoUSA for giving us a poorly made, racist Super Bowl ad, the sad part is that we end up remembering the company at all, which, in the end, was probably their ultimate goal.



Louisiana's The Times-Picayune report on the historic win of Bobby Jindal, the first elected Indian American governor in the United States.

<http://sajablogs.typepad.com/>

Politics in the Making: Bobby Jindal

by lamia mamoon

Bobby Jindal must have an impressive resume. He attended Oxford as a Rhodes scholar, served as the youngest President of the University of Louisiana system, and delivered his youngest child. Now, he can also add being the youngest current governor in the U.S. and moreover, the first Indian American governor in our nation's history.

On the surface, his election success has been a victory for non-whites throughout the U.S., especially Indian Americans. Immediately following his gubernatorial victory, Jindal's ancestral village of Khanpur in India launched into days of festivities and celebrations, despite the fact that Jindal last visited the village when he was four years old. He also did not spare any time to visit his native village during a visit to India in 2007 as a congressional delegate. From a South Asian perspective, it is disappointing to see how much Jindal has altered himself to appeal to the majority of White Americans in his life. He was born as "Piyush Jindal," but according to his family, he adopted the name "Bobby" after viewing "The Brady Bunch" as a child in the 1970s. He has called himself "Bobby" his entire life, although his legal name is still "Piyush."

Jindal's parents raised him as a devout Hindu, but he converted to Catholicism in college. Sources claim that his family is extremely open-minded and tolerant of other religions, yet most Indians and other South Asian Americans do not share this mindset. Many see his conversion to Catholicism as further alienation from his cultural identity. Jindal married Supriya Jolly, an Indian American woman, in 1997. Shortly after, she too converted to Catholicism. Jindal has used his Catholic faith as leverage throughout Louisiana to appeal to conservative White voters who feel apprehensive about having an Indian American governor.

After losing the election for governor in 2003, Jindal adopted the new tactic of campaigning at conservative Northern Louisiana churches.

While many are excited to see a South Asian American holding such a prominent political position, not everyone shares those same sentiments. A member of the Indian Parliament, Madhu Goud Yaskhi, frowns upon India's need to venerate prominent figures of Indian descent.

"It is meaningless to celebrate the successes of Indians who have no ties with the motherland and are Indian only in name," Yaskhi said. "It shows a sense of inferiority complex amongst us."

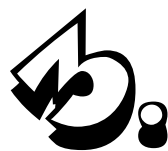
Yet a large voting bloc is seeing eye-to-eye with Jindal's policies. Interestingly enough, 67 percent of his votes during the gubernatorial election came from the most conservative, white-dominated areas of Louisiana. His political stance on abortion is extremely conservative, having adopted the slogan: "No abortion, no exceptions." This would even outlaw abortion in cases of rape or incest, a viewpoint that is even more conservative than his white predecessors. Jindal also opposes hate crime legislation, which many minorities feel are necessary for their safety.

Jindal's level of political success directly corresponds with the degree to which he has "Europeanized" himself to appear more favorable to his conservative Louisiana setting. Even though America has "progressed" to the point where the system legally allows people of color to enter politics, there is still an inherent uneasiness towards bicultural politicians. While he is without a doubt a highly gifted politician, it seems that unfortunately, Jindal may have had to sacrifice some of his personal dignity in order to progress in the political arena.

RACE TO DISGRACE Countdown to Asian American Sellouts

by matthew hui

If our "Race to Disgrace" feature was a part of the Olympic games, Michelle Malkin, neoconservative journalist, would definitely medal. As someone who was proud to be described as the "Asian Ann Coulter," Malkin is as confused about her identity as we are about her convictions. Even though she was born to Pilipino immigrants, her beliefs on tightening immigration policies, justifying racial profiling, and doing away with affirmative action just don't quite make sense to us at hardboiled and probably the rest of America. Here are the top three reasons why Michelle Malkin wins (or loses) her way up our countdown:



No to Citizen-ship or plane? Michelle Malkin epitomizes a walking contradiction. Although Malkin was born to parents who came to America ON work visas, she opposes granting automatic US citizenship to babies who were born to undocumented residents, tourists, and temporary workers. It's like she parked her car in the "Parking Lot of Opportunity" and decided to make a cement wall at the entrance so that no one else could get in once she arrived. Then again, maybe she is afraid someone else would grow up to be like her. In that case, we would be afraid too.

Healthcare for some! Malkin recently attacked a federal health insurance proposal that would provide expanded coverage for many middle and low-income families. Actually, she did more than just lash out against the policy; she made a personal attack on Graeme Frost, the 12-year-old child who suffered from brain damage after being involved in a car accident. In a weekly Democratic radio address, he credited a similar state-funded insurance program with saving his life. After his address, she took it upon herself to travel to Baltimore to do all she could to discredit and humiliate the Frosts. In her blog she writes that the 12-year-old is fair game. We don't know where to start: the fact that she would oppose affordable health care, or the fact that she has no heart.



Malkin's book, *In Defense of Internment*, argues plainly that the incarceration of Japanese Americans was justified during World War II, even though the United States had no formal grounds to incarcerate Japanese Americans. Even more so, no evidence of espionage or sabotage was ever found from the internees. How could we be down with a person who believes that US hysteria was a valid reason why 120,000 people could be legally interned? The United States should have never interned anyone... except maybe for Malkin and her ludicrous beliefs.

It is one thing for Michelle Malkin to have a highly visited blog. It's another when it's competing with "www.michellemalkinisanidiot.com." If she is down with being the "darkest white supremacist you'll ever meet," then we have no regrets with calling her what she is: a sellout.

#3 Michelle Malkin

<http://pegpundit.files.wordpress.com/d.com/>

