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Governor honors international students

Carol Byrne, presiden, Minnesota International Center, led students from around the world that are studying in Minnesota to a May 4, 2009 reception with Governor Pawlenty and First Lady Mary Pawlenty at the Governor's Residence.

The event was in recognition of International Center's speakers events and its impact to educate and inform K-12 students in Minnesota about native cultures, lifestyles and perspectives. Many of the students present were speakers at schools around the state.

"The international speakers are students at local colleges and universities, especially the University of Minnesota, who are in our state to pursue education," said George Jerzy Hornik, program manager, K-12 Education, Minnesota International Center A World Affairs Council. "Some of our speakers are also Amity exchange



Governor Tim Pawlenty (seated, right) talks with international students at the Governor's residence May 4, in appreciation of their efforts to educate school children on culture. Photos courtes of George Jerzy Hornik, program manager, K-12 Education, Minnesota International Center A World Affairs Council.

scholars, exchange high school students, as well as local residents who immigrated to the United States.

The classroom program is designed to link K-12 students with international speakers,

providing them with opportunities to learn about the world from first-hand sources, said Jerzy Hornik. There are two main activities that the ICC program facilitates: individual classroom presentations

and World Cultures Days.

The individual classroom presentations give Minnesota teachers the opportunity to

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Utah Governor Jon Huntsman nominated as China Ambassador

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 16, 2009) - The White House News Service reported Saturday that President Barack Obama has named Utah Governor Jon Huntsman as his nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. The two made the announcement from the White House Diplomatic Reception Room.



Republican Utah Governor Jon Huntsman is President Obama's nominee as United States Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Obama called Huntsman a distinguished public servant who is better suited than anyone he can think of to take on the assignment. He said that he appreciated the post would require a popular governor to give up his seat after just being reelected to a second term.

Huntsman, who has lived in Asia three times and is fluent in the Mandarin Chinese language, is a former United States Ambassador to the Republic of Singapore from 1992 to 1993. He was twice unanimously confirmed by the Senate as an ambassador and was the youngest appointed U.S. Ambassador in more than 100 years.

He also served as Deputy United States Trade Representative to Asia and Africa from 2001 to 2003. He started his career as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Commerce, Trade Development Bureau for East Asia and the Pacific from 1989 to 1990. He has a degree in International Politics from the University of Pennsylvania.

These experiences make him intimately familiar with the pressing challenges confronting Asia, according to Obama.

"Jon is well prepared to build a partnership that reflects a new understanding between our two countries," said Obama.

"What Jon brings to this post isn't just a steadfast commitment to advancing the interests of the American people; it's a lifetime of knowledge and experience that will help advance this important partnership," he added.

Obama said Huntsman would be an ambassador who has a deep respect for China's proud traditions, and that he also understands what it will take to make America more competitive in the 21st century.

"With Jon Huntsman representing the United States in China, I'm confident that we will

launch a new era of partnership between our two nations that will advance our shared dreams of opportunity and security in America, in Asia, and around the world," he said.

Huntsman was present with his spouse Mary Kaye. They have seven children, including two adopted daughters from China and India.

He said that as the national co-chair of the Senator John McCain presidential campaign, he did not expect to be called to serve by the opposing campaign that won the election. He said that after his final term as the 16th governor of Utah he expected to look for a job in the private sector.

"But, I grew up understanding that the most basic responsibility one has is service to country," said Huntsman. "When the President of the United States asks you to step up and serve in a capacity like this, that, to me, is the end of the conversation and the beginning of the obligation to rise to the challenge."

Huntsman accepted the position noting that it would bring unique challenges as one of America's most important strategic bilateral relationships.

"You have my commitment that we will take the U.S.-China relationship to new heights, focused not just on that which divides us, but more importantly, on that which unites us, knowing that this will be critical for lasting peace and prosperity for citizens on both sides of the Pacific," he said.

Huntsman concluded by noting his favorite Chinese aphorism, in and speaking in Mandarin Chinese: "Together we work, together we progress."

"This, more than anything else, I think captures the spirit of our journey going forward," he added. ■

Second Minnesota Hmong Spelling Bee

Tzianeng Vang, an organizer and co-founder of Minnesota Hmong Language Group in 2007, said this year is the second year for the annual the Minnesota Hmong Spelling Bee. He said the Spelling Bee is a way to help student learning but also a way to develop teaching and articulation of the complex Hmong tones.



Mai Kaying Her, at left, from New Millenium Academy listens to her word being called. At right, contestants watch each other compete as they wait their turn to walk to the judging table. (Photos by Bety Rostandy)



Tzianeng Vang shares more information about the Minnesota Hmong Spelling Bee.

What would you like to achieve from this event?

If it does not become its own institution, then I would hope that the Hmong language schools and/or programs would adopt it and incorporated into its annual event so it could continue to benefit us all, the Hmong language learners.

Do you see a different purpose this event serves

besides as a competition?

For the school, it builds collaborative efforts. For the instructors, it affirms and adds value to our work toward providing proficient speaking, listening, writing and reading in the Hmong tones. For the parents, it gives an opportunity to showcase the talents of their children. For the students, it helps in listening, speaking, writing, reading and self esteem.

Do you think this

event is beneficial to Hmong community in Minnesota?

I hope it does. It is important that we initiated such event for we have the most Hmong language programs in the nation. How many are there? Currently we have over 15 Hmong language programs here in the Twin Cities areas.

Are there many of school have Hmong curriculum in Minnesota statewide?

No, that's a process that the MN Hmong Language Group is trying to identify; we are currently meeting on the second Thursday of every month at Lao Family Community Center to do that. Members attending include all of the MN Hmong Spelling Bee Club's and other institution such as the University of MN's Hmong Language

SPELLING BEE Continued on Page 8

Nguyen-Tran receives research grant

By TOM LAVENTURE Managing Editor

Thuy Duong Nguyen-Tran of Richfield, the eldest daughter of Thinh Nguyen and Phuoc Thi-Minh Tran, has received a \$1400 Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program grant.

Nguyen-Tran is a 2006 graduate of Richfield High School, and currently a senior with double majors in biochemistry and physiology at the University of Minnesota. She also has a minor in leadership.

"For my project, I will be studying the effects DNA-protein crosslinking has on cells and their role



Thuy Duong Nguyen-Tran

in causing cell death," said Nguyen Tran.

She said that DNA-protein cross-links (DPC) occur when a protein reacts

with a DNA strand. DPC can lead to cell death if it is not repaired due to its potential to interfere with cellular processes.

"Thus, with its potential lethality to cells, DPCs have been studied by researchers as a possible cancer treatment by trying to target its production in tumor cells," she said.

"However, the specific effects of DPCs and the mechanisms in which these lesions can be repaired are still unknown. Thus the aim of this project is to gain a better understanding of DPCs so it can be manipulated and controlled, which can lead to the development of new cancer treatments."

Nguyen Tran was recently interviewed on Crossroads - Minnesota's Future Doctors (http://mnfuturedocs.com) by Sheletta Brundidge. Watch the video online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3rF11Dizew&feature=channel_page.

Phuoc Thi-Minh Tran said that their other daughter Thuy Duong Nguyen-Tran is a college junior. Two of their other children, Viet-Duong Nguyen-Tran, a high school senior, and Hai Duong Nguyen-Tran, junior are also attending the U of MN in the PSEO students (Post Secondary Enrollment Options) program.

Phuoc has worked

for the U of M Libraries for more than 20 years in the Technical Services Department and at Hennepin County libraries for the past seven years as a reference librarian.

"We are so blessed to be part of the University

of Minnesota," said Phuoc Thi-Minh Tran. "My children are very active in volunteering at the community. The most recent ones are Cinco de Mayo and Spice of Slice of Asia: Vietnam Legends and Rituals." ■

Asian American Press

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Publisher-Editor
Nghì Huynh
nghì@aapress.com

Managing Editor
Thomas J. LaVenture
aanews@aapress.com

Layout & Design
Thomas J. LaVenture

Contributing Writers
Bruce Kagan
Carlos Gallego
Tim Montgomery
David Sterling
J. Lee
Bob San
Bryan Thao Worra
David Zander

Interns
Maria Rajajah Jamero
Bethel University

Photographers
Emmett Timmons

Administration and
Classified Advertising
ads@aapress.com

Asian American Press
417 University Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55103
Phone: 651-224-6570
Fax: 651-224-7032
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Norman Y. Mineta said that he had known "Mo over 35 years...[he] always remembered from whence he came and set high standards for himself and everybody around him." The William H. (Mo) Marumoto Memorial Fund has been set up "to honor his demonstrated lifetime commitment to public service to the Asian Pacific American community," said David L. Kim, Chair of APAICS.

Martha Choe is the Chief Administrative Officer for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. She oversees the Foundation's Information Technology, Security, and Site Operations teams. Before joining the Foundation in 2004, Choe served as the director of the Washington State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development under former Governor Locke. ■

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Collection," Lai's private research material, which he donated to the library.

Ronald Takaki, an author and historian, was born in 1939 in Hawaii. He is regarded as a key civil rights expert due to an unwavering dedication to educating on multiculturalism in the US. Most recently, Takaki was a professor emeritus of ethnic studies at the UC Berkeley, and educator of U.S. race relations who taught Berkeley's first black history course and helped dispel

Most challenging legislative session in a generation

By State Sen. Mee Moua

ST. PAUL (May 29, 2009) – The 2009 Legislative Session met under the cloud of the biggest deficit in Minnesota's history. The \$6.4 billion shortfall was the sixth budget deficit in the seven years that Tim Pawlenty has been governor, and the Senate DFL put forward a common-sense proposal to balance the budget for the long-term, according to state Sen. Mee Moua, (DFL-67) in St. Paul.

"We proposed to balance the budget for the long-term the way Minnesotans wanted us to, with a mix of cuts and revenue," said Sen. Moua. "Minnesotans can clearly see the Legislature did its job but, unfortunately, we're only half the equation. The Governor refused to work with us in good faith, and instead of offering compromises, he issued ultimatums."

The House and Senate traveled the state to hear input and suggestions from citizens in communities across Minnesota. Thousands of Minnesotans attended and shared their ideas. Thousands more visited special budget web pages on the Senate and



State Sen. Mee Moua appreciates the input she receives from constituents and she may be contacted at 651-296-5285, sen.mee.moua@senate.mn or 120 State Capitol, 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1606. Phone: 651-296-5285..

House websites to get the facts and express their views. The Senate used that input to put together a balanced budget that relied on one-third cuts, one-third ongoing revenue, and one-third federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

"The message from the people was clear: Balance the budget for the long-term," said Sen. Moua. "The public requisite was to avoid borrowing, shifts, and gimmicks, and instead streamline and reform government. Minnesotans also saw the need to fairly raise revenue to maintain

vital government services, like funding for hospitals, nursing homes, and schools."

The Governor's proposed budget was assembled without public input. To provide the illusion of balancing the budget, it relied on shifts, one-time money, and borrowing to pay for ongoing expenses. Throughout the session, lawmakers worked to compromise with the Governor. However, in the last few days of the session, the Governor put forward his plan to "unallot" to fix the budget on his own terms without compromise, according to Sen. Moua. The unallotment process Pawlenty has chosen has been used only five times in the state's history, twice by Pawlenty, and never as a sole budgeting tool.

"The Governor's choice of using an emergency tool to fix the deficit goes against the spirit of cooperation and the very foundation of our democracy," said Sen. Moua. "It's clear from his lack of compromise that using unallotment was the Governor's intention the entire session, and his actions will have a devastating effect on the lives of every Minnesotan." ■

Support "Day of Inclusion"

By Steve Yee

When we think of May as API Heritage Month we are reminded that America was founded on the principles of "liberty, equality, and justice for all" and proclaimed her shores with the motto: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

The first Asian pioneers numbered 25,000 strong by 1852 and came from China to the gold fields of California embracing these American values. Between 1849 and the early 1880s 1/4 million Chinese had arrived in California.

By the 1900s these Chinese pioneers performed every type of menial job that was deemed unsuitable for any free man, working in the gold mines, railroads, the lumber industry, the fisheries and canneries, and as migrant farm laborers.

The Chinese in 19th century California moved mountains completing the Transcontinental Railroad, parted the waters building the vital California delta levees, and laid the foundation of California's world-class agriculture in the 1870s and fisheries beginning in 1888.

Shamefully, from 1850 through 1906 the early Chinese Californian pioneers were subjected

to state-sponsored brutal discrimination, deadly violence, and racial programs, being herded and "Driven Out" out of cities and towns throughout the American West.

Federal, state, and local laws were passed to eliminate the Chinese from California and the US culminating in the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, marking the first time U.S. immigration policy singled out citizens of a particular nation for wholesale discrimination.

But, with spirit and strategy the Chinese fought for their place in America through a US court system that they were denied access, bringing 17 cases to the U.S. Supreme Court between 1881 and 1896, hundreds of appeals locally, and essentially redefining the 14th Amendment of the United States.

The Court's 1896 decision in Yick Wo v. Hopkins held that "race neutral" laws could not be selectively enforced against one disfavored group. And, in Wong Kim Ark, the Court held that all persons born in the United States are citizens by birth, thus redefining the values of freedom for all Americans, essentially protecting the newly freed Black slaves and many Native Americans. So, the

was critically acclaimed.

"Him Mark Lai and Ronald Takaki were pioneers of Asian American Studies who paved the way for Asian Pacific American inclusion and recognition. OCA is grateful for the contributions to education, and they will be sorely missed," said OCA National President Ken Lee.

Headquartered in Washington, DC, and with several chapters nationwide, OCA is a national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans. ■

founding principles of this country -- liberty, equality, and justice for all -- comes to mind every December 17, as the anniversary repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act by the US Congress.

It is through this repeal that Chinese-Californians have come to lead the nation in API population of 1,122,187 and California being 40% of the total of Chinese Americans in the US (2000 census), being that the Chinese are the largest Asian-American ethnic group in the United States, and China ranks second (behind Mexico) as the nation from which most new immigrants to the United States now come.

It is through this repeal Chinese-Californians have come to lead this fair state into the 21st century with innovations in science, education, commerce, and technology with companies such as Yahoo, Amplify, Computer Associates, Clontech, and California is becoming a leading trade partner with China.

We must join all Californians throughout the state in writing a new chapter in American history by acknowledging December 17 as a "Day of Inclusion" and welcome those who come to California tired, poor, and yearning to breathe free and extend to all in this fair state the hope that every Californian reach out to the angels of our higher nature and recognized the sacrifices and contributions of our immigrant population. We must educate our community and our children of the impact of December 17 as the "Day of Inclusion."

Today, Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 76 was brought to the California State Assembly floor by Assemblyman Mike Eng commemorating December 17 as the "Day of Inclusion."

Steve Yee is the Vice Chair of the Yee Fow Center for History, Culture, and Trade Advisory Board (www.yeefowmuseum.org). ■

APAICS Remembers Frances S. Nam

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 27, 2009) – Frances S. Nam, a Board Member of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies, and Vice President of Government Affairs for Sodexo USA, passed away on Friday, May 15 of complications from lung cancer.

"We have lost a gifted and giving board member in Frances Nam," said APAICS Chair Jim Park. "She was a tremendous asset to APAICS and the API community. Frances was an active participant in APAICS' activities particularly the Fellowship program. She made it a point to meet each Sodexo Fellow and worked to actively engage the Fellows in other Sodexo programs. Our thoughts and prayers go to her two daughters Seanna and Henna, fiancé Scott Loretan, and her family."

At Sodexo, Nam was responsible for government affairs at the federal, state and local levels. This included monitoring legislative and regulatory trends as well as addressing company-wide compliance measures as they related to campaign finance, lobbying disclosure and gift laws. In addition to managing legislative and regulatory matters, she was responsible for ensuring the government relations plan complemented Sodexo's business development efforts, which included relationship management as well as training protocols.

Nam had experience in both legislative and executive branches. She served as Senior Policy Advisor to Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald. In that capacity, she supervised the legislative staff and covered all matters related to foreign affairs and the Congressional Black Caucus while the Congresswoman was Chair of the Annual Legislative Conference. Nam also served for four years at the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service, first as a political appointee in the Clinton Administration then as senior policy advisor to CRS, the federal government's race relations mediation arm. Prior to that, she



Frances S. Nam died of cancer on May 15, 2009. She was 39.

was the primary advisor to U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer on all matters related to appropriations, immigration, housing, judicial appointments and matters under the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee.

Nam began her career in government affairs at Hill and Knowlton, where she worked with several government and corporate clients. Nam received her BS in biochemistry from SUNY at Stony Brook. She earned her law degree from The Washington College of Law at American University where she also pursued post-graduate work at the School of International Service.

In addition to APAICS, Nam served on the corporate boards of various organizations, including the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators, the National Lt. Governors Association (as Vice Chair), and the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership. She was also a corporate member of the National Governors Association and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. Nam was the immediate past Chair and Executive Advisor to Sodexo's Pan Asian Network Group, which is an employee network group (ENG) and regularly contributed to Sodexo's award-winning Diversity and Inclusion culture. As Chair, she worked with the C-Suite in Sodexo to affect progress in recruitment, retention of Asian Americans, and making a direct impact in the area of diversity and inclusion in partnership with Sodexo's other ENG's as well as dozens of external private companies and non-profits.

The family has asked that contributions be made to the American Cancer Society. ■

OCA mourns Ronald Takaki and Him Mark Lai

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 28, 2009) – Two noted scholars of Asian American Studies, Him Mark Lai and Ronald Takaki, recently passed away. Lai and Takaki were trailblazers in the 1960s as new Asian American Studies programs burgeoned on the West Coast.

Him Mark Lai was born in 1925 in San Francisco's Chinatown. He co-taught the very first college course on Chinese American History with Phil Choy at San Francisco State University in 1969, and also taught the same course at University of California, Berkeley's

Ethnic Studies Department in the 1970s. He has written ten books on Chinese American life.

In 1991, Him Mark Lai and Albert Cheng created the In Search of Roots program to teach Chinese American youths how to research their family history through National Archives and Records Administration documents. Students also travel to China to visit the home of their ancestry. In 2003, the Ethnic Studies Library at UC Berkeley announced their "Him Mark Lai

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