

# APALA

NEWSLETTER

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ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN LIBRARIANS ASSOCIATION

## THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



APALA PRESIDENT SANDY WEE

Thank you for a great 2010-2011 year. Thank you to the hardworking 2010-2011 Executive Board: President Florante Peter Ibanez, Secretary Liladhar Pendse, Treasurer, Angela Boyd, Member-at-Large Cecilia Poon, Member-at-Large Eileen Bosch, Member-at-Large Eugenia Beh, Member-at-Large Lessa Pelayo-Lozada, Immediate Past President Sherise Kimura, and Executive Director Gary Colmenar for all the great work, enthusiasm, feedback and guidance.

APALA's success is due in part to our many committee accomplishments. Our 2010-2011 Standing Committee, Ad-Hoc Committee, and Task Force Chairs had a successful year. Thank you to the following committee chairs: Constitution and Bylaws Chair Ben Wakashige; Finance & Fundraising Chair Angela Boyd; Literary Awards Chair Dora Ho; Literary Awards Category Chairs Michelle Baildon, Buenaventura "Ven" Basco, Lana Adlawan, Yen Tran and Susan Hoang; Membership Chair Rebecca Kennedy; Mentoring Chair Linda Absher; Newsletter & Publications Chair Gary Colmenar; Program Chair Eugenia Beh; Publicity Chair Elnora Tayag; Research & Travel Awards Chair Safi Safiullah & Gayatri Singh; Scholarship Chair Heawon Paick; Website Chair Richard Kong; Task Force on Library Services to Asian/Pacific Americans Chairs Michelle Baildon & Mitchell Yangson; Task Force on Family Literacy Focus Chair Lessa Pelayo-Lozada; JCLC Representatives Alanna Aiko Moore and Florante Peter Ibanez; ALA Diversity Council Representatives Anchalee (Joy) Panigabutra-Roberts and Michelle Baildon; ALA Presidential Task Force on Traditional Cultural Expression Representative Anchalee (Joy) Panigabutra-Roberts; Local Arrangements 2011 San Diego Committee Gary Colmenar, Cora Dompore, and Florante Peter Ibanez; Local Arrangements 2012 New Orleans Committee Kim Tran and Linda Nguyen.

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My goal for the coming year is to continue where Florante left off. At our retreat during midwinter, we identified two projects for Florante's January—June 2011 term: publicizing and marketing APALA and the APALA website and increasing visibility of our Literary Awards. The natural step is to continue these projects through June 2012. I will also be working on a succession plan with various committees and cultivating new leaders into our organization. Finally, I would like to start building our fundraising committee. APALA gives out many awards, and it would be great if we received support from businesses and/or grants.

*Sandy Wee,  
APALA President*

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Dear APALA members,

This issue inaugurates the collective work of the newly formed APALA Newsletter Editorial Committee. A few months ago I sent out an invitation to join the editorial committee to help me with the publication of our newsletter. Several members responded bringing with them energy and creativity to help with editorial work and content production, with the goal of producing a publication filled with stories, news, reviews, and relevant information about our members, APALA activities, and librarianship in general.

On behalf of the editorial committee, we are excited to bring you the Fall/Winter issue of the APALA Newsletter. In this issue, you will read articles, news, and book reviews submitted by APALA members and APALA affiliates. The articles cover a range of topics and reflect the diverse interests of our membership. We hope that with this latest issue there is something for everyone to enjoy and share with others.

I want to thank Kaela, Miriam, Naomi, Nicci, and Melissa, members of the APALA Newsletter Editorial committee as well as, Karla (newsletter designer) for their help in putting together this issue of the APALA newsletter.

We hope you enjoy reading this next issue.

We want to see your submissions for the next issue.

Take Care,  
gary

# THE STOREFRONT LIBRARY *spawns new projects in* BOSTON and NEW YORK

In 2009-2010 APALA members visited and supported the Chinatown Storefront Library [LINK <http://www.boston-streetlab.org/projects/storefront-library/>] in Boston MA, a temporary library in a vacant storefront. The project transformed a vacant space into a community-run library with a goal of jumpstarting advocacy for library services in the neighborhood, piloting a smaller-scale approach to offering those services in an urban setting, and reminding neighbors what it feels like to have a library nearby.

I'm pleased to share with APALA two separate but related outcomes from the Storefront after it closed as planned in 2010:

I'll be meeting with the new start-up manager of a small cultural center planned for Boston's Chinatown, which will include books and library services. The seed of the collection? The 5000 books from the Storefront Library, which have been sitting in storage. I'll be sharing everything we learned from the Storefront Library to help ensure their success. Great news for Boston's Chinatown.

by Sam Davol  
[www.theuniproject.org](http://www.theuniproject.org)  
A project of Street Lab, Inc.,  
a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization  
@findtheuni

We launched a project which was also born in the Storefront Library. On a beautiful day, the library was actually quite empty, and the staff and I realized that everyone was just a block away, outside, in the park. I remember saying to myself: if only I could wheel this library over to the park...

On the morning of Sep. 11, Leslie and I launched a new project called The Uni, a portable reading room for public space. [LINK <http://www.theuniproject.org/>] The first Uni was built for New York, and we put it into service for the first time on that day in Lower Manhattan. In the coming months, the Uni will go to other locations in New York, serving as a prototype and test kitchen for new ideas for transforming urban space.

Thank you to APALA for supporting the Storefront Library, and for showing how libraries—even temporary ones—can have a dramatic effect on what we think is possible for books, cities, and people alike.



*Uni at the New Amsterdam Market*



*Leslie and Sam setting up the Uni*



# APALA Bus Tour of Versailles in New Orleans East, June 2011

By Janet H. Clarke



Lunch stop at Dong Phuong Restaurant and Bakery



Chef Menteur Landfill

Attendees at the ALA Annual Conference had the opportunity to tour the main Vietnamese American community in New Orleans East known as Versailles. While Hollywood celebrities like Brad Pitt and the mainstream news media brought attention to the Lower Ninth Ward and other parts of New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and more recently the BP Gulf oil spill in 2010, there was little or no coverage of the plight of the Vietnamese American community that was directly affected by these disasters in eastern New Orleans. But this community found a collective voice and stood up to injustice and neglect when the city decided to locate a toxic landfill in their neighborhood. The remarkable courage and conviction of the Versailles residents in fighting for their community are captured in Leo S. Chiang's moving documentary, *A Village Called Versailles* (2009), which has put Versailles "back on the map." The bus tour was led by Minh Thanh Nguyen, the young and energetic Executive Director of the Vietnamese American Young Leaders Association of New Orleans (VAYLA-NO). Nguyen, a native of New Orleans, was directly involved in organizing the community in the fight against the landfill.

Our first stop was the Dong Phuong Restaurant and Bakery, which Nguyen called "the pride of New Orleans" because of its great food, but also symbolically because it didn't get flooded during the Hurricane and was one of the first restaurants to reopen afterwards. On our way to lunch, Nguyen explained that one reason why so many residents didn't heed the warning to evacuate when Katrina hit was because they had had two false alarms before, with all the concomitant inconveniences and expenses. So Nguyen was one of those who ignored the warning to evacuate until the very end, when his father made him evacuate by giving him an ultimatum, as only parents can do. The water level stayed high for 2 weeks after Katrina. As the bus made its way from the downtown convention area to New Orleans East, the participants could see the high watermark stains on some commercial and residential buildings, as well as the notations left by emergency rescuers on doors. They were an indication, and a somber reminder, of the terrible disaster and the unevenness of the rebuilding process 6 years later.

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Tap Bui and Minh Thanh Nguyen showing plans for Versailles Community at MQVN-CDC building



Tap Bui at MQVN-CDC building



VAYLA Office



# Report on the 77th IFLA Conference

By Smita Joshipura

I attended 77th IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) conference, which was held in San Juan, Puerto Rico from 13-18 August 2011. This was my second IFLA conference, and first year of my maiden four-year term as a standing committee member of SOCRS (Serials and Continuing Resources Section). The theme of the congress was **“Libraries beyond libraries: Integration, Innovation, and Information for all,”** which offered about 100 programs sponsored by various sections and special interest groups of IFLA. The programs also included about 80 poster sessions, plenary sessions from knowledgeable speakers, exhibits, satellite conferences, and visits to local libraries. The highlight of the conference was its social and cultural evening, which provided delegates an opportunity to embrace Puerto Rican culture, taste, and dance.

I attended various programs in the areas of serials and continuing resources, acquisitions, collection development, management, marketing, and technology. These presentations were truly diverse in nature, and enlightened my knowledge about the status of various libraries all around the globe.

I would like to share the program sponsored by Libraries in Central America and the Caribbean Region with Library History Special Interest Group. There were total of four presentations in this area, and all were fascinating, and helped me to visualize the current scenario of libraries in this region.

The following map has been taken from one of the presentations (Source: Beverley Hinds, University of the West Indies, Barbados), which would provide an idea about different regions which falls under Central America and the Caribbean Regions.



Source: [caribeandiving.com](http://caribeandiving.com)

The paper on, **“Library Services in the English-speaking Caribbean - Management, Innovative Services, and Resource Sharing”** by Cheryl Ann Pettier Davis, provided an overview of how the public and academic libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean meet the challenges and demands of a 21st century information environment. The paper discussed in detailed about various services provided by the libraries such as OPAC, Databases & Digital Collections, Reference and Research Assistance, Instructional Services, Web 2.0 technologies, Single search discovery tool such as PRIMO, and development of Institutional Repository and supporting open access initiatives. Another presentation entitled **“Using Web 2.0 technologies to build communities: a Caribbean context and historical perspective”** by Beverley A. Wood discussed new and emerging technologies such as use of web 2.0 to provide library services to the user community, and various tools, which can be used to overcome several challenges faced today by the Caribbean libraries.

Two other presentations provided historical perspectives of this region. One of the presentations was captioned **“Historical overview of public library development in the English-speaking Caribbean”** by Beverly Hinds. The paper discussed the support from Andrew Carnegie foundation in the growth and development of public libraries in Barbados, St. Lucia, and Dominica. In yet another very interesting presentation, Stephanie L. Maatta reported **“El Lector’s Canon: Social Dynamics of Reading from Havana to Tampa”**. It was based on the oral histories and cigar factory documents housed in the University of South Florida’s Special Collections. It covered the period from the mid-1880s to early 1930s, and talked about the role of El Lector, who influenced the Latin immigrant labor community, and how the literature and reading influenced the culture of the community and still influences Tampa’s social and cultural organizations.

In a nutshell, it was a great learning experience attending IFLA conference and serving on the standing committee. It is the most important professional international event within the library and information community. It brings together delegates, experts, and suppliers from all over the world. It provides a wonderful opportunity to meet, exchange ideas, share experiences, and introduce new technologies and to influence the development of libraries and information centers, both nationally and globally.

Smita Joshipura  
Electronic Resources Management Coordinator  
Arizona State University Libraries

# Nisei American Soldiers: In Good Company with Tuskegee Airmen and Navaho Code Talkers

By Evelyn Shimazu Yee M.L.I.S.

Three and ten years ago respectively, the Tuskegee Airmen and the Navaho Code Talkers, segregated U.S. military units, were honored as recipients of the distinguished Congressional Gold Medal. Only 142 of these medals have been granted since their inception in 1776 (Rafu Shimpō, 2011). Now, nearly 70 years since the U.S. entry into WWII, President Obama signed a House Bill introduced by Rep. Adam Schiff from Pasadena that established that Nisei veterans (second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry) be added to those recipients of the esteemed medal; joining the Tuskegee Airmen and the Navajo Code Talkers. This fall's Washington DC ceremony will bring healing and honor back to the community and to the families of those soldiers who were killed in action, those who survived the war but passed away prior to the fall of 2011, and any elderly Nisei heroes still living today. It is expected to be a well-attended event of historical significance.

## **Segregation in the Military:**

The Nisei served in segregated units. These included the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the MIS, Military intelligence Service. Sworn to secrecy, the MIS served as translators, assisting U.S. troops by posing as the enemy, putting themselves in harm's way and assisting with the "democratization" of postwar Japan (Rafu Shimpō, 2011). California Nisei soldiers fought for their country while their parents and siblings remained incarcerated behind barbed wire in "U.S. concentration" camps.

Executive Order 9066 ordered the military evacuation of all persons (men, women, children, elderly, infants and orphans) who had at least one-sixteenth Japanese ancestry. Our Nisei soldiers were included in some 120,000 persons that were force evacuated from their homes, businesses and schools.

## **The Most Decorated Military Unit in the History of the U.S.**

Little does the average Americans know that the Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team was named the most decorated military unit in the history of the United States military (Baldwin, Roger in Bosworth, A.R., 1967) for its size and length of service (National Veterans Network, 2011). The Nisei soldier proved he was a valuable member of the "greatest generation" (Brokaw, T., 1999) in both the Pacific and European Theatres.

## **Politics, & Greed/ Their Role In the Evacuation:**

A good number of the Issei parents of California's Nisei soldiers were highly successful farmers and businessmen who had survived the Depression (Iwata, 1992). The U.S. Entry

into WWII gave their envious competitors fuel to push for the ousting of the Issei farmers and their Nisei children from California farm lands. The ethnic Japanese worked the undesirable parcels of land and turned the unproductive land into "the richest in California." (Stanley, J., 1994). Organized political and vigilante groups lobbied for government removal of the entire population. (Girdner & Loftis, 1969) Peaceful Issei had bullets shot at their homes. They were harassed; had property graffitied, stolen and ransacked. Farms and inventories were sold at next to nothing during the forced military evacuation. Most families had between 48 hours to two weeks to evacuate and take only what they could carry. Nisei and Issei lost (in 1990's dollars), property "valued at 6.2 billion" (Stanley, J.) including businesses, farms, equipment & inventory that took a lifetime to build (Iwata, M., 1992).

## **Still Fighting Discrimination, the 100TH, 442ND and the MIS:**

Senator from Hawaii, Daniel Inouye, a member of the famous 442nd lost his arm in battle.

Captain Inouye, while dressed in full uniform, minus one arm, was refused a haircut from a barber. The racist barber refused to cut the hair of a "Jap" (Inouye, D. in Maki, Kitani & Berthold, 1999). Senator Inouye today currently serves as President Pro-Tem of the U. S. Senate.

## **Nisei Valor : Rescuing the Texas "Lost Battalion":**

The young Nisei soldier had no political influence. His strongest voice was their brave valor-filled service to the U.S. military that would prove convincing to others of his loyalty. According to Maki (1999), 442nd Nisei troops were "ordered" to rescue the famed 141st Texas Regiment, "the lost battalion" of Caucasian soldiers. They were successful in a difficult rescue in which other units had previously failed. After the battle, more than 600 Nisei soldiers were killed in action and nearly 10,000 were wounded in the rescue of the 200 to 300 or so Texans from the 36th Division who were surrounded by Nazi troops. The 442nd's casualties percentages seem incredible; "314 % percent" of their original strength. This was because, the 442nd's Nisei fought multiple battles and when they sustained wounds they got back up and continued to fight, sustaining multiple wounds. (Bosworth, pp.14- 16).

## **The 2011 Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony Recognition Event:**

A frail and proud remnant of surviving fellow Nisei American Veterans now in their late 80's and 90's will enjoy the celebration event in Washington DC this coming month. Honors bestowed posthumously will be accepted by proud surviving spouses or next of kin.

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## MEMBERS ON THE MOVE

A number of libraries in China will co-host a one-day conference on November 17, 2011 in Shenzhen, China to honor Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee, the former Chief of Asian Division, Library of Congress, and the former Dean of Libraries, Ohio University. The conference will focus on the discussion of Lee's library thoughts and professional contributions. At the conference, two major publications about Lee will be launched. They are:

- 1) The Collected Writings of Hwa-Wei Lee (To be published by Sun Yat-sen University Press), and
- 2) The Biography of Hwa-Wei Lee (To be published by Guangxi Normal University Press).

CALA will also be the co-sponsor of the conference.

A long time member of APALA, Dr. Lee was the recipient of the 1991 APALA's Distinguished Services Award.

Pearl Ly joined Shatford Library at Pasadena City College in July as the new Access Services & Emerging Technologies Librarian. She previously held the position of Natural Sciences Librarian at Cal State San Marcos. Pearl is also a 2011 ALA Emerging Leader.

Suzanne Im, MLIS, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011, has accepted the Davidson Library Fellowship at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

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## COMMITTEE NEWS

### **Family Literacy Focus Committee**

FLF is currently looking for volunteers to help update the on-line manual with APA and AIAN Children's titles which have been published since 2009. If you would like to help compile the list, please email Sarah Park at [spark@stkate.edu](mailto:spark@stkate.edu) by November 1, 2011.

### **What does APALA's Publicity Committee do?**

Publicity committee has been somewhat dormant for quite sometime and APALA's President Sandy Wee wanted to revitalize it. So as a result, the Committee with its incredible committee members, Charlene, Harrison, Sangeeta, and Yen, are taking baby steps.

At this moment, what the committee does is quite simple but requires pretty lengthy communication. After many discussions among the Committee members and Executive Board, it came up with guidelines of communications. The main focus right now for the Committee is unified communication streamlining line. For example, when each committee, EB or sometimes individual APALA members want to post any announcement on the Website, Twitter, and FB, either Committee Chair, EB and/or APALA members write up a blurb and send it to me, as chair of the Publicity Committee. I, then, forward to the Publicity Committee members. They look over to tweak if needed. Then I forward the polished and completed blurb to Angela, Web Committee Chair, and she posts.

Eventually what the Committee wishes to achieve is to work with Finance and Fundraising Committee in order to raise APALA's awareness and raise funds for various Awards

APALA is providing such as Scholarship, Travel Grant, Emerging Leader, Literary Award, Research Grant.

We, as Publicity Committee, will not be able to accomplish anything without the support of individual APALA members!

Thank you!

Heawon Paick, Publicity Committee Chair

### **Scholarship and Awards Committee:**

The Scholarships and Awards Committee finished its first task! We selected an ALA Emerging Leader and emailed ALA with our decision on Monday, September 19th. We believe ALA will be making an announcement in October. We'll post the news on the APALA blog, so stay tuned!

Next up the Scholarships and Awards Committee will start the application process for the Sheila Suen Lai Research Grant. This research grant awards \$1000 to an APALA member to help with conducting research projects, attending research related conferences and workshops, conducting research workshops and programs, or assisting in research writing. So if you've been thinking about starting some research, or need more funding to work on a current project, keep an eye out for the Research Grant. We'll advertise on the listserv and APALA blog.



# BOOK REVIEWS

By Miriam Tuliao  
Assistant Director, Central Collection Development  
Collections Strategy,  
New York Public Library



Park, Samuel. *This Burns My Heart*: A Novel. Simon & Schuster. Jul. 2011. 320p. \$25.00. ISBN 978-1439199619

Set in 1960s Daegu, this impressive debut novel tells the epic story of a young woman's passions and struggles. Twenty-two year old Soo-Ja Choi has a desire to become a diplomat, but her parents scoff at her ambitions, insisting that she instead focus her attention on getting married. Although she falls in love with a medical student and admittedly longs to lead a life with "more heft," Soo-Ja impetuously decides to marry the son of a factory owner against her parents' wishes. Her rebellion leads to a long journey of sacrifice. ***This Burns My Heart*** is a compelling tale of tradition, womanhood and love.



Shin, Kyung-Sook. *Please Look After Mom*: A Novel. Alfred A. Knopf. Apr. 2011. 256p. tr. From Korean by Chi-Young Kim. \$24.95 ISBN 978-0307593917

Kyung-Sook Shin's moving novel opens with a family in crisis. After losing sight of her husband in a crowded Seoul train station, Park So-Nyo, a 69-year-old mother, has gone missing. Her four adult children all blame each other and feel wounded. Chi-hon, the elder daughter, is overwhelmed with nostalgia and besieged by long-forgotten memories of her mother. Meanwhile, news of the disappearance makes Hyong-chol, the oldest son, reflective ("When she was younger, Mom was a presence that got him to continue building his resolve as a man, as a human being"). And Park So-Nyo's husband is equally heartbroken and filled with regret ("Before you lost sight of your wife...she was merely your children's mother to you. She was like a steadfast tree, until you found yourself in a situation where you might not ever see her again"). Deeply affecting, ***Please Look After Mom*** considers the many roles of motherhood and the complexities of family.

## APALA BUS TOUR OF VERSAILLES... *continued from page 4*

The New Orleans East area—including Versailles—was developed in the 1950s. New Orleans East comprises 60 percent of the New Orleans city land mass, with about 40 neighborhoods, one of which is the Lower Ninth Ward. Versailles, the neighborhood we were headed to, is currently home to the most dense Vietnamese population in the US, with about 5,000-6,000 residents in an area of about 1.5 mile radius, Nguyen said. The greater New Orleans area has about 71,000 Vietnamese Americans, down from the 95,000 pre-Katrina figures. Because of the slow rebuilding process in New Orleans East, about 25 percent of the Vietnamese American residents have not returned. The name comes from the Versailles Arms apartment complex, a small group of buildings, where most Vietnamese newcomers start out when they arrive in New Orleans, so that even when residents “move up” out of the actual apartment complex, they say, “I’m from Versailles,” explained Nguyen. Prior to the Vietnamese Americans, African Americans were the main residents of Versailles. As African Americans left, Vietnamese immigrants came in, beginning in the mid-1970s. New Orleans’ climate and fishing livelihood was familiar to the new immigrants, many of whom came from the same village in Vietnam, and found themselves working side-by-side in New Orleans East as fisherfolk. Because of the critical mass of Vietnamese immigrants in New Orleans East, many business transactions could be done in Vietnamese, with little need to learn the English language, thus forming a cohesive ethnic neighborhood, Nguyen explained. He described the role of the Mary Queen of Vietnam Church as a center of the community, with its large outdoor performing stage in the parking lot, where most of the community’s events and celebrations take place. “It’s a central meeting place, much more than just a church,” Nguyen said as the bus stopped there, describing it more like a community center and information source that played a large role in supporting and mobilizing the community.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Versailles residents who returned felt disenfranchised when the community was left out of the rebuilding City’s rebuilding process. Even more poignantly, the community was literally left off of the map of redrawn plans for New Orleans East. This once-quiet, under-the-radar community began to mobilize when the City of New Orleans agreed to locate a landfill only a half-mile from Versailles that was slated to take in 1/3 of all Katrina debris from the entire Gulf region, not just from New Orleans. The 22 million tons of trash was to be “9 stories high,” Nguyen explained, in a neighborhood whose tallest building was only 3 stories high. The Mary Queen of Viet Nam Community Development Corporation (MQVN CDC), whose office was another tour stop, was formed to

gather the community’s concerns about the landfill but also to propose its own plan for rebuilding the community. The community sued the city, state, and federal governments as well as the Army Corps of Engineers to stop the landfill. In all, six community forums were held to discuss the design of a new “Viet Village,” with residential, commercial, and retirement centers, schools, community and cultural centers, community farms, slaughterhouses, parks and open spaces, houses of worship. It was an opportunity to empower the community members to have a say in what they wanted their community to be. Community members took their case to the City’s Bring New Orleans Back Commission meetings. MQVN CDC staff member Tap Bui discussed its role in the current community development plans and showed the tour participants the charrettes and other posters that came out of the forums.

We went to the entrance of the now-closed Chef Menteur Landfill, the main site of the protests. When the landfill was finally closed by court order in 2006, the agreement was to remove the debris, but it is still to be cleared in 2011. Nguyen explained that the landfill was created without the bottom container liner, so any current toxic contents may be leaching into soil and into a nearby canal, whose water the local residents use to water their vegetable gardens. It’s also next to the 23,000 acre Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge, home of the nation’s largest urban wildlife refuge. This situation created an opportunity for groups like the Sierra Club and the Louisiana Environmental Action Network to partner with the Versailles residents in successfully fighting the landfill.

With the rebuilding efforts, there has been an emphasis on green construction. Many homes have been rebuilt, though more of them in the middle class neighborhoods of New Orleans East, where residents have the financial means, as well as insurance payouts. There has been a lot of frustration about the slowness of the rebuilding process, however. Six years after Hurricane Katrina, some community members and businesses have yet to come back. Nguyen explained the need for corporate businesses, like Target and Sam’s Club, to come back. Currently, residents have to drive 30 minutes away to the nearest Target and Sam’s Club, which means their taxes go toward another parish, not their own. The Methodist Hospital, another tour stop, was shut down after Katrina and not rebuilt. While an affordable health clinic has opened since Katrina, there is still no hospital in New Orleans East, and patients have to travel 35-40 minutes to get to the nearest hospital, with the possibility of putting their lives in danger. Like the hospital, the local schools were not reopened for several years, so the community opened its own tri-lingual K-5 Intercultural Charter School of New Orleans East, which now covers grades K-7.

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## APALA BUS TOUR OF VERSAILLES... *continued from page 10*

According to Nguyen, the new Mayor Mitch Landrieu has been much more responsive to the community's concerns than the previous Mayor Ray Nagin and has committed to improving the infrastructure of New Orleans East. For example, the City has committed \$8 million to renovate the hospital in New Orleans East by 2013. A New Orleans East regional library—a 30,000 sq. ft., \$7 million, multi-story building—is also under construction. We drove by the construction site.

Nguyen explained that, when the BP Gulf oil spill disaster happened in 2010, many of the Vietnamese American fisherfolk lost their livelihoods. Nguyen's own father was a crabber, but since the crabs have not come back, he's currently shrimping for a living. MQVN CDC hosted another community forum to inform the community of their rights and available aid, and to interpret and translate with respect to BP and FEMA issues. Issues such as language access and mental health concerns surfaced as well. MQVN teamed up with Catholic Charities to provide some financial assistance to the community as well.

Our final stop, the VAYLA office, was an unassuming storefront, but inside was a powerhouse of vision, hope, and dedication. The small staff of 5 works with the community's youth to provide educational counseling, event programming, and, most of all, a safe space that the youth can claim as their own. VAYLA was born out of the activism against the Chef Menteur landfill. And when the landfill was closed, VAYLA was determined to focus on the community's youth. According to Nguyen, the youth comprise a large percentage of the Vietnamese American population in New Orleans East.

But, he said, a high percentage of the New Orleans East high school students do not graduate, making it one of the worst performing schools in New Orleans. In fact, Louisiana as a state has the misfortune of having one of the worst school report cards, second only to Mississippi. VAYLA's mission has been to provide some infrastructure and support services to address these educational woes in New Orleans East by connecting students with college application resources, GED preparation help, empowerment and confidence-building. But there is also an emphasis on health and fun, with sports activities, field trips, yoga classes, and an in-house dance studio. For example, VAYLA sponsors an annual dance talent showcase event that draws about 400-500 participants and spectators and a youth sports tournament that draws about 1,000. VAYLA gets its funding from grants and donations. According to Nguyen, VAYLA is the only youth center in New Orleans East that is dedicated to youth programming. Organizations come from other states to learn about VAYLA's programming and activism. The Versailles tour was enormously educational, informative, and inspirational in giving the participants an understanding of the power of community and local activism in fighting injustice and envisioning a better community for all. Nguyen kept his tour audience captivated by his wit, humor, and humility, inviting us to return for karaoke, fishing, and more New Orleans on a future tour. APALA donated T-shirts to VAYLA and books for the future New Orleans East library.

*Janet Clarke is the Associate Director for Research & Instructional Services  
Stony Brook University Libraries*

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## NISEI AMERICAN SOLDIERS... *continued from page 7*

Evelyn Shimazu Yee is an Associate Professor and Head of Community Relations for University Libraries at Azusa Pacific University. She is a writer/ researcher and is producing a film and a librarian's guide to conducting research on the history and effects of the evacuation, internment and resettlement and how this episode in U.S. history changed Americans of Japanese Ancestry and America. At the Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony in Washington DC, she will be receiving an honor on behalf of a deceased next of kin who served in the Military Intelligence Service during World War II. Shimazu-Yee's mother also served in the U.S. Women's Army Corps during WWII while members of her family were incarcerated.

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## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The APALA Newsletter Committee is always looking for submissions. Please send us your articles, stories, letters to the editor, and announcements. Stay tuned for the next deadline for submissions.

Submissions to the APALA Newsletter may be made by any current APALA Member or APALA affiliate. Please send your submissions electronically in one of the following formats: MS Word, RTF, PDF, or plain text pasted into the body of an e-mail. We ask that submissions be kept to a length of 500 to 1,000 words. Graphics are encouraged. Please submit images as separate files along with a list of file names with corresponding captions. If using images that are already on the Internet, the URL of the image and a caption or description may be added to the text of the submission.

Please send submissions and inquiries to APALA Newsletter Editor Gary Colmenar indicating "APALA Newsletter" within the subject line of your e-mail. A confirmation of receipt will be sent in a timely manner. Notification of our decision to accept or reject your submission for publication will be sent after the submission deadline.

Submissions for book reviews should be submitted to the book reviews editor Miriam Tuliao at [miriamtuliao@nypl.org](mailto:miriamtuliao@nypl.org).

Submissions should be sent electronically in MS-Word format or a Word-compatible format. Reviewers should keep their reviews to 300-500 words; any length much shorter or longer should be discussed with the reviews editor prior to submission. Reviewers should avoid conflicts of interest. Full disclosure should be made to the book reviews editor when appropriate.

For inquiries about placing an advertisement in the APALA Newsletter please contact the editor for pricing. Gary Colmenar, [colmenar\(at\)library.ucsb.edu](mailto:colmenar(at)library.ucsb.edu)

## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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