



The NEWSLETTER

Asian
American
Resource
Workshop

November / December / January 1995

Contents

Proposition 187.....1	by Lihbin Shiao
The Culture War.....3	by Helen Liu and Helen Lee
November Elections.....4	by Michael Liu
Parcel C Victory Dinner.....4	by Terri Oshiro
Leadership Interns.....5	
AARW News.....6	
APAAC Report.....8	by David Moy
APAAC Workshops.....9	
Workshop Events10	
<i>Threading thru History</i>	by Helen Lee
<i>Visualizing a New World</i>	by Wen-ti Tsien

Proposition 187: Human Rights for All?

by Lihbin Shiao

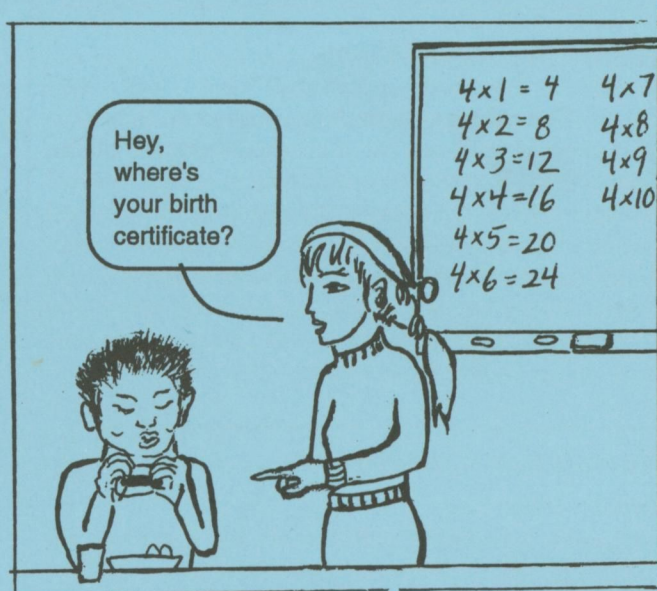
Who suffers?

California's Proposition 187 cuts off most public social services for undocumented immigrants. Food stamps and welfare, education, nutritional programs for disadvantaged adults and children, non-emergency health care, prenatal care, immunization, health education, homeless services are among some of these services. 187 mandates that public employees, teachers, health care workers, social service providers, and law enforcement officers identify and report undocumented immigrants to the Immigrant Naturalization Services and deny those immigrants services. Furthermore, with the November 8 passage of Proposition 187 in California, advocates for similar racist, anti-immigrant legislation in other states have been trying to figure out how to create an atmosphere in which they

can get similar provisions passed. Ezell and Nelson, co-authors of 187, have founded Americans Against Illegal Immigration with the intention of exporting 187 to other states (Village View, "State of Siege: The People and Paranoia Behind the SOS Initiative").

Proposition 187 is the culmination of the anti-immigrant backlash in America. Its purpose clearly moves toward a strategy of denying illegal and legal immigrants basic

(Proposition 187, cont. on p. 12)



Under Proposition 187 & the proposed Republican federal bill, undocumented children and native-born children with undocumented parents will be ineligible for the school lunch program and public education. It is mandatory that teachers report anyone suspicious.

inside:
the culture war: NEA cuts media arts

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About the AARW

The mission of the Asian American Resource Workshop is to work for the empowerment of the Asian Pacific American community to achieve its full participation in US society. We are a member based organization that seeks to document the diverse Asian Pacific American histories, experiences and social conditions. Its resources and activities are used to respond to current Asian Pacific American issues and to promote Asian Pacific American identity.

Newsletter Committee

Editor: Helen Lee

Writers: Anne Marie Booth, Janet Gee, Zenobia Lai, Helen Lee, Andrew Leong, Helen Liu, Michael Liu, Frank Mark, Koshy Mathews, David Moy, Jeff Moy, Terri Oshiro, Lihbin Shiao, Wen-ti Tsen

Production: Staff

At the Editor's Desk

The other day, Murphy Brown interviewed an all too despicable Congressman, played by Wallace Shawn, the unforgettable pirate from Rob Reiner's movie *Princess Bride*. Inconceivable? I am not quite sure. Reading from his pre-prepared cuecards, he answers Murphy Brown's question on his views about Governor Pete Wilson and Proposition 187, stating: "We should get rid of all the illegal immigrants, and while we're at it, let's get rid of the legal ones too." Shawn was "kidding." He explained almost in tears, that he had become so obsessed trying to find his campaign, he didn't realize till after he had been elected, that powerful business elites and white supremacist groups had foot his campaign bill. And they did not consider their large tax-deductible contributions free. It was just a television program, but the point was quite clear. America is in for rough times.

This issue takes a look at the November elections and the Republican coup d'etat over Congress. Lihbin Shiao examines Proposition 187 and its all out attack on human rights. Michael Liu does an analytical overview of the elections and the devastating blow that "Brave Newt's World" and "Contract with America" will unleash on the progressive movement. My piece "The Culture War," speaks about what is at stake if, Gingrich and Co. succeed in eliminating federal funding from public television and the independent media arts.

Facing this new Congress, we also report back to you about the Asian Pacific American Agenda Conference, held last November, and let out a sigh of relief to know that coalition-building is not beyond our means. We face a difficult challenge.

On the same note, in AARW's endeavor to continue its effort to build strong communities, Wen-ti Tsen and I have written about AARW's upcoming community art projects, and hope that members, artists, engineers, teachers, mothers, fathers, and children participate in planning events, constructing multimedia installation and conceptualizing themes.

Lastly, we welcome Koshy Mathews who began as AARW's newest executive director on January 3rd 1995. Congratulations Koshy and good luck. Meanwhile Michael Liu ended his five-year term as ED of the Workshop. We will miss you Michael. Both Koshy and Michael have also written a few words about themselves.

P.S. does anyone have a fax or copy machine that they can donate to AARW?

Happy New Year

HL

by Helen Lee & Helen Liu

The Culture WAR

Last October, the NEA announced its decision to eliminate 7 re-grant programs in the areas of the Media Arts, Music and Presenting and Commissioning. The decision was based on the 3 million budget cut Congress had already imposed on NEA before the elections. Out of the total budget cut, 40% will come out of Media Arts Programs, which will effectively close the doors on many independent media artists and small organizations of color.

The Media Arts Re-Grant Programs Eliminated:

1) The Independent Film & Videomaker Program, administered by the American Film Institute, which provided subgrants to independent media artists working in animated, documentary, experimental and narrative film and video.

2) Regional Fellowships to support regional film and video artist. These funds have been administered by six media arts organization, including the Boston Film/Video Foundation.

3) The Film Preservation program, administered by the American Film Institute, to help organizations locate, preserve, and catalogue films of artistic value.

4) The Media Arts Fund, administered

by the National Alliance for Media Arts & Culture (NAMAC). This funding encouraged the development of media arts projects and organizations in communities that previously had no such activities.

The cuts will effectively stop many projects from ever being realized, making art even less accessible for artists and audiences. Although NEA grants are not the only source of money, they constitute a vital percentage of the total pool of available funding for the media arts. "NEA funds simply made the difference between doing the film or not doing the film," says Leslie Harris, director of *Just Another Girl on the IRT*. "A young Black woman coming of age in Brooklyn is a subject too risky for studios." Others who have received funding in the past through the NEA re-grant programs include Christine Choy, Gregg Araki, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Mira Nair, Barbara Kopple, Marlon Riggs, etc.

Lerner (AIVF), explains that re-grant programs are the lifeline to artists and small organizations such as Visual Communication, Asian CineVision, NAATA, (to which I add Asian Ameri-

can Resource Workshop), the Black Filmmakers Hall of Fame, Blacklight, Cine Acción, the Guadeloupe Cultural Center, Women Make Movies. As described by Ruby Rich, journalist, editor

"The idea that a black homosexual has anything to say is impossible to these people. They want to keep the discussion narrow, to homogenize it."

and professor at Berkeley in California, these culturally distinct cultural production groups came into fruition in the eighties, "clear about their mission, connected to communities, committed to

(Culture War, cont. on p. 14)

Leadership Interns Farewell Dinner

If you didn't come to AARW's Annual Dinner on December 4, you missed good food and good company. About 60 of us took over the small Angkor Wat Restaurant in Brookline to celebrate the graduation of our four 1994 Leadership Training Project (LTP) interns and to take care of some organizational business.

The LTP interns — Lisa Chice, Jenn Ching, Gee Quach, and Tum Sout — were congratulated on their accomplishments over the past eight months including major projects such as the Parcel C Recreation Day and the Asian Pacific American Agenda Coalition Leadership

Conference. To show appreciation for all their hard work and dedication, we presented them with plaques, one-year AARW memberships, and AARW gift certificates.

A staff update was presented by Terri Oshiro, who was then still the interim director, and members were given a chance to meet AARW's newest staff addition, Lihbin Shiao - Program Coordinator. Board Chair, Vivian Wu reminded attendees of our current funding appeal — asking people to dig deep and consider matching our largest donation of the

season: \$1000 from Jeff Moy. Proposed amendments to our 15-year-old by-laws, presented by board co-vice chair Debbie Tom, were approved by the membership. A question concerning the number of members needed to overturn a board decision raised by May Louie will be looked at further.

Although organizers were a little disappointed not to have received any donations, it was encouraging to see some new faces, and we hope that members will continue to invite friends to our events. ■ Marie Booth

The November 1994 Elections

by Michael Liu

ANALYSIS

The Mid-Term Temper of the Times

In the 1994 mid-term elections, vindication for the Republican vision of a laissez-faire state was complete. Republicans won control of both houses of Congress and the majority of governorships. White anger and business money fueled these gains.

The White Electorate

While non-whites, particularly African Americans, voted Democratic, 58% of non-Latino whites voted Republican. In particular, angry, white, male voters voted 63% Republican.

Much of this anger is driven by global economic dislocation, which has produced immigration and instability in both employment and wages. Many middle class and formerly comfortable workers are being driven down into a low wage and

embittered stratum of the workforce. The new global economy has created greater inequality. Alongside a professional, knowledge-based elite, lower-skilled or obsolete-skilled blue and white collar workers are falling behind. While corporate profits are up during this recovery, the median family income has fallen for the fourth year in a row. The top one per cent of the workforce now earn nearly as much as the lower fifty percent.

The global economy has also created a demand for immigrant labor. They fill the demand for workers in small scale electronic assembly and garment production; they clean the office buildings and provide personal services for the professional workers. Such work is both discontinuous and pay at or below the

minimum wage rate. As shown by the mid-term elections, downwardly mobile workers have turned their animosity toward these immigrant workers of color and others. Proposition 187 is only the beginning.

Follow the Money

Greater competition has driven corporate America to unite with some of the laissez-faire, small government ideas of the Republican Party. The Republican Party received record donations from business PAC's. Corporations have abandoned the idea of a welfare state necessary to maintain domestic peace. Labor content is less important to the corporate profit margins when manufacturing facilities are primarily overseas. As a result of this election, for the first time in history, businessmen

(November Elections, cont. on p. 7)

Update

Parcel C Victory Celebration

by Terri Oshiro

The Coalition to Protect Parcel C for Chinatown threw a victory party for all members of the Chinatown and broader Asian American community who were part of the struggle to win Parcel C for community use. The celebration was held in the Quincy School cafeteria on November 29, 1994. Over 250 people attended. Tickets were practically sold out even before they were printed. The program included lion dancers from the Eastern Kung Fu Federation, traditional Chinese dance by Wong Sai Wong's students, and Hong Kong pop music by Contempo. Rousing Parcel C victory speeches were given by Kam Lee and Andrew Leong before the microphone was handed over to members of the community.

For a year and a half, the Chinatown community has been fighting against further expansion of New England Medical Center (NEMC) into the Chinatown community, specifically

to build a 455 car garage in a heavily residential section of Chinatown. At the heart of the struggle was the community's demand that the City keep its promise to Chinatown for a community center on Parcel C, that NEMC withdraw its proposal for a 455 car on Parcel C, and for a Democratic process for the community to decide what should be built on Parcel C. On October 21, 1994, Chinatown won a major part of its demands. Mayor Menino announced that Parcel C would be preserved for community residential use and that NEMC would move its garage over to the Tremont St. site.

Now we are entering a new stage for community control over development of Parcel C. Mayor Menino signed an agreement handing oversight rights of the development of Parcel C to the Chinese Consolidated Benevolent Society. Broader access for other community organizations or

residents has been excluded from this agreement. In fact, it took us nearly two months to get a copy of the agreement, even after filing for it under the freedom of information act. We will continue to fight for broad access for the community to approve of any development which happens on Parcel C. Other major concerns are: a) a legally binding contract between the City and Chinatown safeguarding Parcel C for community use beyond five years should a developer be unable to construct something on Parcel C during that time, b) what development will happen, despite the community's demand for a community center, and c) how much Parcel C is being sold to Chinatown for, and whether or not that is acceptable to the community.

Stay tuned for more news on Parcel C and thanks to all AARW members who helped make this victory happen!!! ■

Leadership Training *aarw* INTERNS

Gee Quach

It's hard to believe that it has been less than a year since I first became involved with the Workshop and the community. With all that we tried and succeeded at, or failed, with all the numerous people that I have come to know and befriend, with all that I have learned and experienced, I can honestly say that it has been quite a year.

We acquired basic skills—organizational, working in groups, office support—but these skills can be gained in almost any type of working environment. Unique to the internship at AARW was the training I received in working with the community. Learning to work with and in a community is not as easy as one might assume. What if that community does not want to work with you? What if the community does not see its future in the same light that you do? In fact, this is quite likely. Thus, do you choose not to help them, or do you choose to follow your own agenda? Community work means working for the community, or does it?

The internship also allowed students an opportunity to experience all aspects of grassroots organizing.

Many people see the final products of community work. They see Rec Day filled with balloons and wrapped in red ribbon. They see the Agenda Conference. They see the exciting victory for Parcel C. What people don't see is the less glamorous side, if you will, of the fight—the million and one phone calls, endless meetings, lit drops, time, effort, frustration, and undying commitment—which are all essential parts of the process. A community center director once told me that he hated volunteers. When asked why, he responded by saying that volunteers come in not realizing what type of commitment is needed to work in the community. They come with the idea that community work is for self-gratification. Although I see his point, the leadership training internship at AARW gave us an understanding of the broader picture of what we were doing and why, and

(Leadership interns, cont. on p. 14)

Jenn Ching

Before I came to work at the AARW this past summer, if you had asked me about an Asian American community, the picture that would come to my mind would have been "someplace on the West Coast." Hm. The whirlwind of activities that I got the chance to witness and participate in as a Leadership Project Intern and as a summer staff person for the Coalition to Protect Parcel C for Chinatown have shown me what an incredible, vibrant, and strong community exists in the Boston area. The word "community," too, has come alive for me, with its diversity of thoughts, loyalties, and agendas. Meeting with the Asian Pacific American Agenda Coalition and working on the Parcel C issue have shown me how powerful unity can be and how needed Asian American political activism is. On every level of interaction, I have been inspired by the people here, whose commitment to social change continually amazes me. I don't think I can stress this enough—I know it sounds so trite, but I guess I've grown up in a time where "selling out" isn't a bad thing anymore.

From the personalized and opinionated discussions of our seminars to deciding whether we should get a dunk tank for the Parcel C Recreation Day, I am lucky to have worked with a diverse, wonderful group of interns who are each role models to me in every aspect—compassion, generosity, criticism, and commitment. I've learned a lot about my limitations, and working in a close-knit group, with its ups and downs, has been an invaluable experience.

I guess I'm walking away from the past eight months with a distinct feeling that I can't just walk away from these issues. This past summer has enabled me to see how bridges can be formed between the often isolated "campus activism" and the Asian American communities that share the same ideals (not another Coalition!) ■



From left to right: Jenn Ching, Anne Marie Booth, Lisa Chice, Gee Quach and Tum Sout Photo by Helen Liu.

We've had quite a few changes at AARW recently. After a year of searching for a new executive director, Koshy Mathews came on board after the New Year. As you may know, Michael Liu — our ED for the past five years — is assisting in the transition currently in place, and will leave the staff at the end of January.

I, along with the other Trustees would like to take this opportunity to thank Michael for all his contributions to build the Workshop. It is with sadness that we see him leave. He has done much to develop the capacity of AARW, including building the staff organization and increasing our budget over threefold (to the largest that it's ever been). He has led us through two Asian American Agenda Conferences, to the important Parcel C victory, as well as other projects and organizing efforts too numerous to mention.

We would also like to extend our welcome to Koshy as our new ED. Although Koshy does not come directly from the non-profit sector, he brings with him diverse community involvement as well as significant experience from the corporate sector.

The President of our Board of Trustees Vivian Wu Wong—who along with her husband Howard Wong, is expecting their first child in February—has just started her maternity leave. In addition Debbie Tom, who has been very active on our Board, has just tendered her resignation due to her "day-job" and other obligations.

Both Vivian and Debbie have worked hard in clarifying and setting Board goals and working and meeting with the staff, especially during this last period, for which we are grateful.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge and say "thank you" to our dedicated staff—Terri Oshiro, Anne Marie Booth, Janet Gee, Helen Lee and Lihbin Shiao. In closing, please join us in wishing Koshy much luck and success in his new position, and thanking Michael, Debbie and Vivian for their many contributions to AARW. ■

Frank Mark, Acting President,
AARW, January 1995

Welcome Koshy...

I came to the U.S. in 1971 for higher education after completing my bachelors program in India. Graduate studies in the field of religion and society at Princeton awakened me to the plight of the disenfranchised, the disinherited and minorities groups. My work with Urban Industrial Mission in India affirmed the need for finding a voice for the voiceless and toward helping people organize themselves for social change. Later on, my work with international students at Syracuse University and MIT helped me realize that modern education without a sense of identity and commitment to serving the human is not likely to benefit the people whom they plan to serve on return to their home countries. My involvement in the Third World Scholar's Consortium in the past decade kept me abreast of the issues affecting third world peoples. It further reinforced my interest in the social, political, religious and community activities even while working in the insurance and investment field.

As the executive director of Asian American Resource Workshop, I hope to draw upon the above exposures and experiences to the utmost. I plan to steer the Workshop in the course that the founding members have chartered for us. I look forward to organizing the best of our resources and provide



leadership in the empowerment of Asian American communities so that we may reclaim our rights more fully as U.S. citizens. I wish to work hard toward increasing membership and to help our members mutually respect our diversity. Through AARW, I hope to continue our task of building coalitions and developing a concrete agenda for social change. I am greatly encouraged by the support I'm receiving from the energetic staff and socially committed and active Board members. I believe together we can create a sense of identity and dignity to Asian Americans which would prepare us to withstand and alter prejudice and discrimination that are prevalent in our society today. AARW, in cooperation with other like-minded organizations must remain at the forefront in fighting for justice, for the dispossessed and for the empowerment of the powerless. ■

...goodbye Michael



It's been a ride. In the July 1990 Newsletter, I introduced myself as the new executive director of the Workshop. I now close that circle. At the end of January, I will resume as a simple member and part-time consultant in Workshop activities.

I thank you for the time here. I wanted to be able to encourage the Asian American community into playing the progressive role in society that it is capable of. The Workshop gave me that chance; for that I'm extremely grateful.

When I took over, I wanted to en-

(Michael, cont. from previous page)

sure the continuity of the Workshop. It was facing difficult financial straits, washed over by the State's red ink. Much of our funding had come from State arts funding, which had drastically shrunk. I felt AARW made a unique contribution to Asian American communities locally and nationally. Believe me, there is no other organization that we have found like AARW. We've stabilized ourselves. In four and a half years, we've nearly doubled our membership, started an endowment, and broadened our sources of income. We have a dedicated and growing staff.

Most importantly the AARW has fulfilled its mission. It has contributed to empowering Asian Americans. There are many such memories that stand out in my mind — the Korean and African American relations forum at the Kennedy School, building the Asian boat in expletive freezing weather on City Hall Plaza for First Night, the Long March to victory around Parcel C, all the intricate and interesting creativity of *Welcome to Asian America*, *Day of Remembrance* and other cultural activities, realizing the Asian American Agenda, bombarding racist commentators in the papers and the radios with phone calls, sitting on the stoop discussing cabbages and kings with the non-stop smoking staff, and staying up late laying out a newsletter or directory with Carlton at Beach St. Like Calvin and Hobbes, the days were just packed.

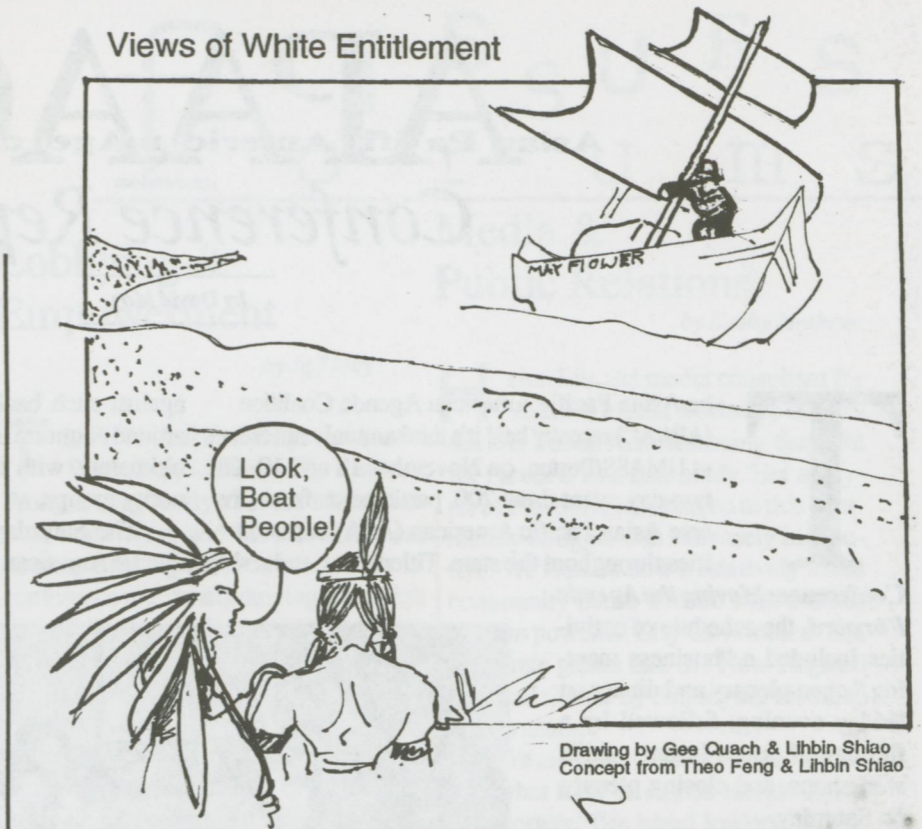
The new crew, Janet, Terri, Anne Marie, Helen, and Lihbin, under Koshy Mathews will guide AARW through interesting times. The Workshop's role can get only get more pivotal as our community's role becomes more pivotal. The Board, under Howard Wong, Frank Mark, and then Vivian Wu has been a source of constancy and is playing an increasing role.

The biggest thing that I regret is that we haven't put more means to get members involved in governance and active support. That is our challenge.

In the July Newsletter, I also said, "My main claims to fame are probably 1) helping to found the Workshop and the Boston Chinese Progressive Association, and 2) marrying May Louie, and becoming the father of Mark Liu..." I can now add that I helped to run AARW.

I now go to my books to begin my dissertation and to work on the Unity Organizing Committee. I'll weigh how to best contribute to the Workshop. With the new political tenor of the times, we've got a lot of work to do. I'll be joining you with a new hat. ■

Views of White Entitlement



Drawing by Gee Quach & Lihbin Shiao
Concept from Theo Feng & Lihbin Shiao

(November elections, cont. from p. 4)
outnumber lawyers in Congress.

What are the elected Republicans planning? Their "Contract with America" describes complete assaults against welfare, denial of rights to legal as well as undocumented immigrants, an end to entitlements and social services for the poor, disavowal of affirmative action and other remedies for minorities against institutional racism, and the affirmation of white cultural values. During the remainder of the Clinton administration's term the Republicans may settle for the reform of welfare and a couple of other issues. Newt Gingrich remarked that they only have ten months to pass legislation. However, such restraint is intended to position themselves for taking the White House and a grander scheme of replacing the liberal State as we know it.

The Asian American Imperative

We Asian Americans can expect the present trend to continue. The NAFTA and GATT trading agreements, which eliminate or lower international tariffs, will continue to further globalize the

economy. Polarization of the labor force will also continue. Immigrants and people of color should prepare for more hostility.

Certainly there is no question that we must rally and build alliances. Our population is growing but is far short of our potential influence. We need to build outward and reach other parts of the population — other communities of color, women's groups, gay groups, those in education and human services — who realize that gross inequality and imposed cultural values admit the failure of a civilized society. We need to define our own values for a vision for the U.S., based upon a society that is already changed in its people, its conditions, and its influences.

As Paul Watanabe said at the Asian American Agenda Conference, "This is the worst of times and the best of times to be Asian American." The threat of the worst of times is going back to the society that produced the Japanese American Internment camps, the Chinese Exclusion Acts, and Dot Busters. We must be willing to overcome this period of fear and loathing to reach the promise of the best of times, a more open and equal society. A multicultural society, to many a white male's dismay, is simply inevitable, just, and more productive. ■

APAAC Asian Pacific American Agenda Coalition Conference Report

by David Moy

The Asian Pacific American Agenda Coalition (APAAC) recently held its third annual conference at UMASS/Boston, on November 18 and 19. The two day event drew 200 participants from diverse Asian Pacific American (APA) communities throughout the state. Titled the **Leadership**

Conference: Moving the Agenda Forward, the schedule of activities included a "business meeting," open plenary and dinner on Friday evening, followed by a full day of issues forums, skills workshops, and closing plenary on Saturday.

The APAAC Body

The conference kicked off with a "business meeting" to present APAAC's plan and by-laws for incorporating as a legal membership organization. The move towards incorporation is viewed as a necessary step in maintaining and expanding the work that has thus far been entirely supported by volunteer

work and resources of agencies and individuals. Incorporation will provide a number of benefits including a stable, ongoing structure for discussing, prioritizing, and advocating issues facing the APA communities; a network for APA organizations and individuals to meet and share ideas and resources and to facilitate collaborative efforts; and, a vehicle for securing the necessary resources to sustain the coalition's effort on issues of concern to the APA communities.

The opening plenary set an overarching tone of optimism and urgency for what was to be a "working" conference. Paul Watanabe, co-director of the UMASS Institute for Asian American Studies, spoke eloquently of the current "opportunities and challenges" for APA communities. Specifically, the dramatic growth of APAs provides increasing possibilities for impacting the social, political and economic policy debates that are important to our communities on local, state, and national levels. Therein lies the challenge as well. Corresponding with demographic changes is the increase in racist and anti-newcomer sentiments, no better illustrated than the recent passage of proposition 187 in California. APAs cannot prevail

against such backlashes unless they build effective coalitions around common issues within and among their communities and, ultimately, with those of other racial, ethnic and linguistic minority groups.

The Saturday activities specifically focused on the Asian Pacific American agenda. Formulated at the initial APAAC conference and refined in the subsequent mini-conference, the agenda encompasses an ambitious list of resolutions within five areas of common concern to the APA communities. These areas include education, economic development, human services, civil rights, community development and empowerment. Facilitated by community activists, forums in each of the five areas were conducted to gather participant's input on priorities and concrete strategies, as well as their commitment to follow through on the action steps. The feedback from each of the discussion groups was summarized and subsequently reported out in the closing plenary.

New to the APAAC conference this year was the inclusion of skills building workshops which followed the issues forums. The workshops, again, led by experienced presenters and community activists, were intended to provide participants the opportunity to share and develop the various skills that are needed within the APA communities and for the realization of the agenda. Workshop topics included accessing government services, inter-community relations, grassroots organizing, lobbying, media/public relations, and youth organizing.

In evaluating the conference, the general opinions of attendees and conference organizers were very positive overall. As with most events of this size, there were a few glitches. The rain on Friday combined with an early conference start, dampened the number of people attending the opening activities, especially those traveling from faraway locales. Saturday, however, made up for it with bright sunny skies and a greater number of enthusiastic

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photo by Helen Lee



200 participants from diverse APA communities attended this year's APAAC conference on November 18-19, 1994 at UMASS Boston.

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(Conference report, cont. on p. 11)

Civil Rights

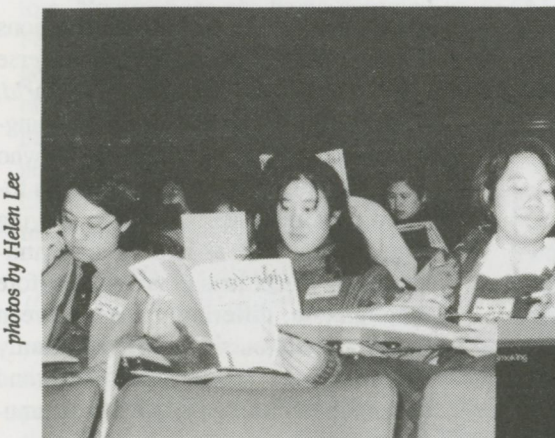
by Andrew Leong

The late morning discussion group prioritized the top three resolutions in descending order: (1) address the rise in hate crimes against APAs; (2) monitor and address rising anti-immigrant sentiments, legislation, and policies, and (3) build coalitions across ethnic/racial/gender lines to secure civil rights for everyone. The discussion focused on the inter-relations between the first and second resolution, i.e., the connections between anti-immigrant legislation and a person's personal interpretation of those legislation in the form of anti-Asian violence. A clear link has been established with this connection when we examine the history behind the various anti-immigrant legislation (local, state-wide, or federal) and anti-Asian violence during the 19th century.

Therefore, with the passage of proposition 187 in California, along with the proposed Republican welfare reform agenda as it exists in the "Contract with America," we all need to understand the link and be ready to deal with the consequences.

The group also discussed the wide range of hate crimes, that "hate speech" (although legal under First Amendment protections) often might turn into action in the form of a "hate

(Civil Rights, cont. on p. 11)



photos by Helen Lee

above: conference attendees review the APAAC agenda document. Right: Belser Louie leads a discussion on

Lobbying & Empowerment

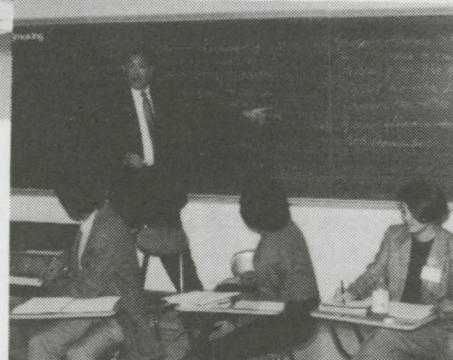
by Jeff Moy

The Lobbying and Empowerment Workshop, facilitated by Leverett Wong, Policy Analyst for the Massachusetts State Ways and Means Chairman, Thomas Birmingham, was attended by 13 conference registrants ranging from high school students to longtime community activists.

It is clear that lobbying is a critical element in the empowerment process for the Asian Pacific American community. Leverett Wong, facilitator of the Lobbying and Empowerment Workshop, focused his workshop on the eleven essential steps of political lobbying and emphasizing that effective lobbying can be achieved by the 'non-professional' lobbyist. In fact, grassroots lobbying efforts were often the most successful.

The first step to effective lobbying is to identify the goal and objective, "what is it that you want?" Too often groups come forward to complain without a solid understanding of the issues or a clear articulation of their request. Knowing your issue will impress those people in power, capable of implementing

(Lobbying, cont. on p. 11)



f o r u m s

Media & Public Relations

by Koshy Mathews

Helen Liu, the media consultant for AARW, led the workshop on Media and Public relations using the fight for Parcel C as a case study. Her analysis of the role media played in this community struggle was extremely instructive. We learned how a relatively small community could wrestle with entities like the powerful City Government and corporate giants like the New England Medical Center by employing media to its advantage.

We also learned what drives media and what kind of stories are attractive to reporters. The panel leaders, Sarah-Ann Shaw of WBZ-TV and Marie Gendron of the *Boston Herald*, noted the wisdom of the community leaders in making Parcel C issue a newsworthy item by exploiting the media's insatiable appetite for conflict and adversity.

We learned that no matter how worthy and noble the cause is, media will not be interested in a story unless it holds some drama. In the case of Parcel C, the story created public sympathy and outcry when the organizers strategically placed the family and community interests of Chinatown against the backdrop of the corporate interests of the Medical Center.

The discussion with the reporters was useful and informative as they talked about the practical steps in getting one's story in the print and visual media, doing press releases and establishing relationship with media. The exercise of selecting headlines for the front page of a newspaper was instructive and fun. Hand-out materials were excellent and will serve as good referencepoints in the future. All in all the workshop on Media and Public relations was an extremely productive experience for attendees.

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Threading thru History

One thousand seven inch needles dangle from the ceiling by silk thread referring to a custom observed by families of men going into battle. From below, one thousand tiny shells collected from Tule Lake emerge from a wooden platform that imitates the wooden barracks at the camps. Meanwhile, two monitors play videotaped images from Manzanar and Tule Lake. Sound recorded at these sites fills the room, creating an atmosphere that echoes life in the now deserted camps. Folded carefully into ornate paper origami statues for the audience to take home, are the personal stories of a handful of Boston's Japanese Americans.

THREADING HISTORY: *The Japanese American Experience*, created by artists Mona Higuchi and Richard Lerman, will be part of this year's

Day of Remembrance program, sponsored by AARW and Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center (CMAC).

In commemoration of the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, **THREADING HISTORY** uses powerful visual and audio ele-



Day of Remembrance Program, February 18, 1995, sponsored by AARW and CMAC
Dorothea Lange, WRA

ments, effectively resurrecting a part of American history that has profoundly affected a whole community of people. Based on several personal stories, the installation weaves together the experiences and complex psychological struggles of several generations of Japanese Americans. As Assistant Professor of Performance Studies at ASU, WEST Arthur Sabatini observes,

It addresses our present forms of experiencing and remembering our past and how we make and unmake cultures and ourselves. It offers us the sensuous and healing metaphor of threading through a part of our history.

THREADING HISTORY will run from February 3 to March 12 at CMAC. The Day of Remembrance program will take place on February 18, 2-5 PM at CMAC, 41 Second St., Cambridge. The opening reception will be followed by an open discussion that will explore how the internment reaches beyond the Sansei generation. In this discussion we hope to answer the broader question of how to keep these lessons and memories alive and to make historical experience relevant to younger generations. ■

by Helen Lee

Welcome to Asian America II:

Visualizing a New World

Even as calls are still coming into AARW about exhibiting the 1993 art installation community project *Welcome to Asian America: Challenging the Myths*, a new version is presently in the making. As the title suggests, *Welcome to Asian America II: Visualizing a New World* involves new artists and a new set of concepts. Scheduled to open at the end of May at the Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, the project, like the original will not be so much an "art exhibit" as a series of cultural inquiries.

Learning from the successes and weakness of the 1993 installation, discussions with community groups are even more extensive and have generated the ideas that have shaped the content of the project. The creative dialogue between the artists and community should be even more collaborative. In *Challenging the Myths*, the conceptual basis was generated largely by a core of second-, third-, or more generation of Asian Americans, thus addressing more of the issues of being in the society—such as being stereo-



The glass ceiling, part of the series of installation works dealing with the Asian American experience in AARW's 1993 art exhibit, *Welcome to Asian America: Challenging the Myths*.
photo courtesy of Wen-ti Tsen

typed, being invisible, facing limitations of upward mobility, dealing with diverse ancestries, etc. *Visualizing a New World*, coincides appropriately with the coming-of-age of a generation of immigrants who arrived in the '60s and '70s. It leans toward exploring issues faced in moving into society, such as reasons for immigration, expectations of America before immigration, differing values between home and the outside, changing family structures, the gap between youth and parents, barriers of language and communication, etc.

This project started to move forward when grant support came forth from the LEF Foundation, Massachusetts Cultural Council, New England Foundation for the Arts, Boston Arts Lottery and the Polaroid Foundation. The project's core team includes artists from diverse backgrounds—**Young Kyu Kim**, computer fabric artist from Korea; **Dinh Le**, Vietnamese American

(*Welcome to Asian America, cont. on p. 13*)

(*Conference report, cont. from p. 8*)

conference attendees. The biggest glitch, however, was not foreseeing the high number of younger participants, many of whom were not present at the preceding conferences. While the forums were intended to go directly into prioritizing issues and strategizing action steps, many issues needed to be rehashed for the newer conference participants. This resulted in less than adequate time for prioritizing and strategizing and caused some conflict of expectations among conference attendees. To the credit and benefit of many, adjustments were made in each of the forums to satisfy the level of interest and needs of those participating.

Of the positive evaluations that were received, one by a younger participant stood out in noting that she/he had never before been exposed to so many Asian role models. Conversely, conference planners, presenters and community activists were uniformly pleased by the conference and optimistic about the future because of the participation of many of the upcoming activists and leaders of today and tomorrow.

While the conference has concluded, there are critical tasks for APAAC in the months ahead. The incorporation process continues with outreach and recruitment for individual and organizational members for the new organization. Concurrently, a nomination committee has been set up to recruit candidates interested in running for the Board of Directors. Nominations are being accepted up to February 23rd and elections are slated for a general meeting to be scheduled in March. One of the primary challenges facing the Board will be to begin formulating plans for facilitating and/or implementing the strategic recommendations made at this year's conference. For more information, call 426-5313. ■

(*Lobbying, cont. from p. 9*)

your request. The second necessary step is the creation of a small core committee of 3-5 people to organize the lobbying effort. The third step is to identify your support base. This support can be in the form of letters and phone calls to the decision makers and of course, money. The fourth step is to identify a point person, this can be a professional lobbyist or an expert "volunteer." This point person becomes the visible face to the media, government and constituents.

The next step is to do an internal assess-

ment of the lobbying effort. What is the cost of the effort? What is the duration? What is the focus? The sixth step is to determine who will influence the decision maker. Who has informal power? Who has access to the decision maker? Who can raise the issue to the decision maker? For example, family, friends, staff, or legislators have access. This leads to the Golden Rule of Lobbying: "get the right information to the right people at the right time."

The seventh step is to assess the opposition. Who will lose if you win? How strong is the opposition? How much influence do they have? The eighth step is to identify and develop allies. Which groups, legislators, etc. will support your issue? Can you make them a part of your base?

Finally, the ninth step --mobilizing your base and shifting to the implementation stage. As Leverett puts it, "It's time to shift into high gear and get butts moving!" In this step, information is disseminated. Fact sheets are distributed. Face to face discussions are held with legislative staff and other influencers. Letter writing and phone call campaigns are executed. A lobbying day can be held - a highly visible day at the State House with as much constituent support present as possible. Lawmakers

make different decisions when constituents speak up. The tenth step is to utilize the media. However, Leverett warned that "bigger is not always better" as visibility may speed up the process beyond your control and may bring opponents out of the woodwork. Leverett calls the

eleventh and final step the aftermath. Here the lobbyist must decide if a compromise is acceptable. If the lobbying effort is unsuccessful, the organizers must assess whether the process caused the negative outcome, or whether nothing else could be done. If successful, it's important to celebrate and thank the constituents, the influencers, and the lawmakers. And make sure the program "works!" ■

(*Civil rights, cont. from p. 9*)

crime." A possible range of responses to hate crimes was also addressed. The bottom line was to encourage victims to report incidents—to school principals, to various community advocacy groups or directly to the police—so we may have accurate statistics in order to have adequate resources to address the problem. Particular attention should be paid to educating newcomers as to what constitutes a hate crime, its accompanying hate speech, and the remedies thereafter to address the incident. Lastly, the group addressed the need to take the message to mainstream groups that hate crimes does not just affect Jew, gays and African Americans. ■

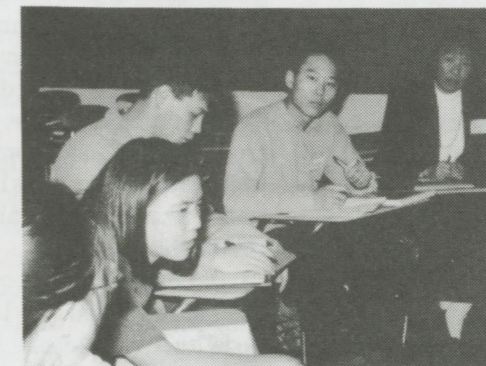
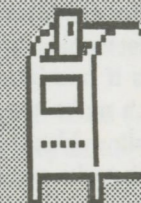


photo by Helen Lee

Participants at the APAAC Conference discuss hate crimes and anti-Asian violence.

have you sent in your membership renewal?

Check the date on your address label. If your membership has expired, it's time to renew!



(Parcel C, cont. from p. 1)

human rights and needs. Coupled with several other federal initiatives: increased number of border guards, upped efforts to identify illegal immigrants and deport them, and denial of deportation hearings to non-permanent resident aliens as outlined by the federal Crime Bill, Proposition 187 heralds a more vigorous, state sanctioned war on immigrants by requiring all government employees to examine the legal status of any one suspected of not having papers. Nowhere does Proposition 187 define what suspicious people look like; therefore, what once may have been considered harassment by police or city and state employees, now has become mandated by law. Proposition 187 targets Latinos, Africans and Caribbeans and Asians (the majority of the last decade's legal and illegal immigrants), permanent residents and U.S. citizens who do not look white or speak with an accent.

The racist agenda outlined by Proposition 187 and the federal Crime Bill is poorly masked. The increasing shift towards a police state where minorities and poor people are suspect indicates a nation where wealthy whites are struggling to devise "legal" methods to retain their power positions. The language of 187 preys on peoples' fears and advocates inhumane treatment for the "less deserving people of color" under the guise of providing relief for those who have suffered "personal damage" or "economic hardship." Politicians are exploiting people's fear of economic hardship, xenophobia, and voters' ignorance of the U.S.'s impact in other countries to generate support for themselves as political candidates. In California, Governor Peter Wilson, a staunch supporter of Proposition 187, has used the media, playing images of Mexican immigrants running across the border to disguise and sell his/her agenda as reforms for economic relief.

Immigrants generate jobs, spend dollars supporting businesses and pay taxes like U.S. citizens. At an anti-Proposition 187 meeting in Boston, organized by the American Friends and Service Committee one participant said, "What would happen to the economy of these cities if immigrants no longer did the jobs which make the wealth for the wealthy?" Despite evidence from multiple studies showing that cities with large numbers of immigrants are actually doing better than cities without many immigrants, the attack on im-

migrants continues relentlessly. "State of Siege" remarks the pro-Proposition 187 group, the "Save the State" ballot initiative (SOS) is using immigrants as scapegoats for the the poor condition of the economy in California (10/6/94). As Charles H. Wheeler said to Robert Pear at The New York Times, "Politicians are looking for ways to save money...they take the politically expedient and safe route of cutting off a group of people on the basis of citizenship, or lack of it. That sends a message to these legal aliens that they are less deserving." The long-term negative con-

**"Nowhere does
Proposition 187
define what sus-
picious people
look like..."**

sequences of Proposition 187 are severe; as 187 denies schooling and non-emergency medical care to the state's 1.7 million undocumented immigrants, public health of the general population in California will likely take a dive as a result of these cut offs. Emergency care could end up costing the state more than basic care and preventive measures like prenatal care, immunizations, health education (*Newsweek*, 12/5/94).

As many anti-Proposition 187 advocates have pointed out, 187 is unconstitutional on several counts. Judge Byrne said to the New York Times on November 17: "There are serious questions as to due-process violations, liberty interests and also property interests." Federal Judge Matthew Byrne, Jr issued "a temporary restraining order on Wednesday [November 16] against instituting most of the new law." However, "a state judge had already barred enforcement of the provision to deny schooling to illegal immigrants, which in any case was not scheduled to go into effect until January 1995." 187 violates the 1982 Supreme Court decision, *Plyler v. Doe*, which said that illegal immigrants had

the right to free education, because its deprivation has a "lasting impact... on the life of a child." On December 14th, Judge Mariana Pfaelzer issued a preliminary injunction prohibiting the enforcement of the following provisions of Proposition 187: health, K-12 education, social services and law enforcement. The verdict on a permanent injunction could take months or even years.

While immigrant advocate groups have been trying to get information out to immigrant communities about the suspension of 187, hospitals and schools have reported a marked decrease of immigrants seeking medical care and attending school. Meanwhile, there have been reports of state and city employers taking their own initiative to enforce 187. Jan Adams, an anti-Proposition 187 organizer says that the immigrant advocate groups' hotlines have been receiving constant reports on abuses of immigrants even though the law is adjoined. A bus driver in California refused to allow people who he thought looked like immigrants to board the bus saying, "I don't have to serve wetbacks anymore." Likewise, *State of Siege* reports "two-three anti-immigrant attacks in San Diego County each month," an open-fire attack on a "street corner where day-laborers congregate" and "organizing against a grocery store with pro-immigrant sentiment on their bags."

Supporters of Proposition 187

Anne Marie Booth at the Asian American Resource Workshop said, "In a couple decades, people will look back at Pete Wilson the way we look at Nazi war criminals now." Pete Wilson, the governor of California and a staunch supporter of Proposition 187, claims that 187 is meant to stop illegal immigration by sending a message to the federal level. However, the actual provisions of 187 deny basic human rights.

"State of Siege" unmasks the supporters of Proposition 187. The strongest and most vocal supporters of 187 are concentrated in areas least affected by the recession and/or California's shifting multicultural composition. The majority of 187 supporters are political candidates and representatives looking for re-election riding on public sentiment, white supremacists, and English Only advocates. According to exit polls, 59% of white voters in Califor-

nia voted for Proposition 187 in contrast to 41% of Asians and African Americans. In the Chinese districts, 80% voted against Proposition 187. However, many of these pro-187 supporters have not really thought out the impact of 187 on their other agendas and on the state and nation. "State of Siege" points out that SOS co-author Harold Ezell runs a consulting firm which "arranges relocations to Southern California for Korean and Taiwanese garment manufacturers—an industry chronically dependent on undocumented labor." When asked about the children in school today, Ezell and other 187 advocates say those children will be grandfathered. Although the co-author of 187 acknowledges the necessity of this provision to protect kids in school today, this provision is written nowhere in the body of 187.

Organizing Against Proposition 187

Prior to November 8, anti-187 advocates formed a coalition called Californians United Against Proposition 187 with a Latino, a religious, and an Asian co-chair. Ignatius Bao, from Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, has been working to rally the Asian American community against 187. Renee Saucedo (La Raza Central Legal), Frank Martindo Campo (SEIU & Labor Council for Latin American Advancement), and others have been organizing in the Latino community. And Anita Wadhvani (Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Services) and other immigrant advocates have been representing the immigrant service organizations. Subsequent to the election, the organizations in the coalition, civil rights attorneys, immigrant advocates, Latino civil rights network, interfaith coalition, Asian American groups like Chinese Progressive Association (SF), have been working in the area they are good at and reporting to a coordinating meeting once every two weeks. The theme of their organizing has been: "Human Rights for Everyone." Jan Adams stated that Northern California overwhelmingly defeated Proposition 187 and that a "huge group of people feel very alienated from what the state of California has done. People are running around asking to be organized." On December 10, International Human Rights Day, a broad coalition of groups state-wide sponsored successful rallies against Proposition 187. An Immigrants Rights Action Pledge has been signed by 1200 social service providers in Northern California. In a tabling mobilization in San Francisco and the East Bay, another 1000 signatures were obtained. In Northern California, SEIU, United Educators, and most county health department city administrators have gone on record saying they will not implement 187.

The need to organize against Proposition 187 and similar state and federal bills is especially needed in light of the September 23, 1994 "Contract with America," Title IV—Restricting Welfare for Aliens draft bill which the Republican Party has been assembling to introduce on the federal level with the newly elected Republican majority. This bill denies all aliens public welfare assistance except for refugees under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act for six years and aliens a) lawfully admitted for permanent residence, b) over 75 years of age, and c) having resided in the U.S. for at least 5 years. This draft bill calls for ineligibility of legal and illegal aliens for non-emergency services, prenatal care, child welfare, school lunch programs, needy family programs, public housing assistance, job training programs for dis-

advantaged adults and youth, low-energy assistance, emergency food and shelter, over 60 programs. Apparently, a similar Democratic bill is also in the works.

In Massachusetts, Mario Davila with American Friends Service Committee organized a meeting of 30 organizations which formed a pro-immigration coalition. This broad-based coalition is working to form a coherent message and campaign against initiatives like Proposition 187 in Massachusetts and nationally. The coalition is also doing outreach to other communities and community organizations to create an even more broad-based coalition. The Asian American Resource Workshop is one of the organizations in the coalition. ■

(Interns, cont. from p. 5)

by immersing us in the of the projects mentioned above. This hands-on training in grassroots organizing is far removed from the theories one learns in a classroom.

There are a few things that could be improved for next year's leadership program. First, the other interns and I would have like to have had bigger decision making roles. Since most of the projects that we worked on this past summer had already been developed long before our program began, we suggest that there be an independent project solely for the interns. Second, because of the nature of community work, it was sometimes hard to draw the line between friendship and work. If those lines are drawn early in the program and each intern is held accountable for his/her responsibilities, the working environment would be even more productive and efficient.

Personally, I have come a long way since the beginning of the program. Since it ended, I have gotten involved with other programs and organizations such as CAPAY and the Chinatown Coalition. I have built ties to many people who work in the community and find myself in a supportive network of co-workers and friends. For me this internship has been great. I have been able to get out of it all that I wanted and hopefully, all that AARW wanted me to learn. Thanx Guys. ■

(Welcome to Asian America, cont. from p. 10)

photographer/computer artist; **Genara Banzon** and **Riti Sachdeva**, Filipina and Indian American installation artists; **Joanna Kao**, Chinese American printmaker; **Helen Liu**, AARW's veteran videographer; AARW staff person **Helen Lee**, filmmaker emergentia as the project coordinator; and **Wen-ti Tsen**, who will continue as the artistic director. This is of course just a start. Over fifty people have already participated in the dialogue and offered ideas, but like the last time, many many more are needed to make the project truly come alive—artists to make images, people to write stories, hands to sew and build, histories and pictures to bring forward, friends to work together...

If you can make a commitment large or small and are interested in participating in this community art project, call Helen at 426-5313. Questions or ideas? call Wen-ti at 547-2965. ■

by Wen-ti Tsen

(Culture War, cont. from p. 3)

Community Development

Workshop

by Zenobia Lao

The community development workshop led by Suzanne Lee drew not only community activists, but also many college students, people who had not been quite so active in community activities, people from other parts of New England and high school students—quite a nice range for a discussion on community development. It was exciting to see so many newcomers and young people. It seems like we are really moving the agenda forward. The question for the workshop was who is the community?

In trying to answer the question “who is the community?”, everyone seemed to agree that there was a global and a local definition of the term “community.” Participants who picked the global definition of “community”—all Asian American communities in the United States—seemed to be intellectual types, affiliated with academic institutions and less active in grassroots organizing. Conversely, participants who were more active in grassroots organizing tended to define “community” in less abstract terms (e.g. Boston Chinatown rather than the Chinese community in Massachusetts.) This, of course, does not necessarily mean that one definition is right and the other wrong.

To me, the discussion was rather frustrating because it was cluttered with jargons and intellectual definition which I don't believe befit a discussion on community development. I agreed with Suzanne that first, one had to first understand the community, be a part of it before talking about community development. One cannot just walk into a community, proclaim that he or she is there to help and expect to be embraced immediately by the community. I believe in building a wall from the ground up, brick by brick, and that should be the gist of community development. ■

survival; these groups were positioned to take advantage of eighties political life. The unprecedented emphasis on multiculturalism and the increased hunger for images of “underrepresented” communities... created a space for new work and new practitioners.”

Many suspect that the NEA cuts, though an internal decision, was a politically motivated one. (After hearing Newt Gingrich criticize independent media arts as “obscene” or “left-wing” work and blackballing public television, which he wants to privatize into just another money hungry machine, calling it a “small group of elitists who want to tax all the American people so they get to spend money.” (Globe, 1/19/95). “can you blame us?”) P.O.V., a PBS series that show-cases independently produced documentaries, has won several emmys and was nominated last year for the National Television Critic's Association Award for Best Public Affairs Program. Mark Weiss, a long-time advocate of media arts and co-producer of P.O.V. explicitly points out that right-wingers have a stake in making sure that independent media works are not produced or else not shown. Weiss cites the unleashed fury over Marlon Riggs' 1991 documentary *Tongues Untied* as evidence that “all is not well in the land of freedom of expression. Right-wing groups attacked stations in their own communities all over the country when *Tongues Untied* was broadcast. The idea that a black homosexual has anything to say is impossible to these people They want to keep the discussion narrow, to homogenize it.” The film was subsequently excised from a number of American markets.

NAMAC and AIVF are two organizations with a long history of advocacy work, challenging the powers that be to either leave them alone or to let them speak. “It flies in the face of stated priorities of the Endowment. Re-ganting programs have been exceptionally effective at delivering support to worthy artists in every state of the nation, something the Endowment was unable to do directly,” said NAMAC co-president Tom Burrup. Burrup's co-colleague Margaret Caples adds, “the abolition of the Media Arts Fund guarantees the demise of smaller media organizations, especially organizations of color.” Executive director Ruby Lerner at AIVF points out what has been jeopardized by the funding cuts, “Perhaps, most important, these regrant programs have been case studies of cultural democracy in action. Not the rhetoric of cultural democracy, but the reality.” Yet despite the understanding and personal empowerment that this reality might mean, senators and congressman have determined to undermine the very thing NEA and public television had set out to accomplish. I suspect it is cultural democracy that those men on the hill are afraid of. The irony astounds me. ■

Threading History and

Welcome to Asian America

P a r t I I

We need Volunteers

If you're interested in becoming involved with construction, event planning or lend some of your opinions to our community art projects call Helen, 426-5313.

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The AARW warmly thanks these new donors for their support and generosity. Welcome to the club!

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- Janet Gee

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