



Japanese American Citizens League

UCLA Asian American
Studies Center

MEMORANDUM

From: Jeffrey Y. Matsui

To: Ray Okamura

Date: March 6, 1970

Copies: Jerry Enomoto
Harry Kawahara
Dr. Bob Suzuki
Edison Uno

Subject: Your memo of February 25

I am, of course, very enthusiastic about new chapter development throughout the United States. And as far as I know, the large majority of chapters in the Pacific Southwest District share this feeling. In my opinion, chapter board members realize their inadequacy in meeting the needs of the community, especially the needs of the younger adults and students. Even if the specific needs were defined to chapter boards, they wouldn't be able to administer the new types of programs, because they wouldn't know how. Unfortunately, they are also too stubborn and proud to admit their inability to administer relevant programs. But my feeling is that the present chapters would be happy to be relieved of the responsibility of initiating programs to meet the present and future needs of the community if such new chapters were formed through normal channels.

The procedure taken in the past to establish a new chapter was to get a small group together for discussion to share their common interest and purpose. And then other interested persons are recruited. A spokesman is elected, committee chairmen appointed, the JACL district governor contacted and a sponsoring chapter assigned as resource. A chapter constitution is drawn and submitted to National headquarters along with a petition for a charter signed by at least 25 American citizens 18 years or older. Officers are elected including a president who is at least 21. Also mail check of \$6.50 for each signature and \$10 initiation fee and \$10 for annual National dues. In the PSW district the sponsoring chapter usually picks up the \$20 tab for the initiation fee and National dues. Also in the PSW since a staff person is available, he is invited during the formative stage to answer questions and provide information and not to interfere or influence the decision as to whether the group should join the JACL organization.

There is a six-month probation period in both our district and National constitutions although the PSW council has acted in the past to allow a new chapter full voting privileges at the district level before the expiration of the probationary period.

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My personal feeling is that the formation of a new chapter should be done in the open to avoid unnecessary conflict.

For example, the new Greater Pasadena Area Chapter was bitterly opposed by a few members of the other Pasadena chapter board. Some very negative things were said about the new chapter especially about one of the leaders. However, those individuals could not find support anywhere; in fact, the chapters and district rallied in support of the new chapter.

At the 4th quarterly district meeting, Bob Suzuki was elected district vice-governor and Ken Yoshikawa another Greater Pasadena member, came in first over 15 other candidates competing for the six board positions. Also, the ten members from the new chapter contributed heavily in giving new direction to the discussion at the council meeting.

I believe the success of the new chapter in overcoming the opposition from the other Pasadena Chapter was due, aside from the talented people they have, to the good P. R. they had by speaking openly about the purpose of the new chapter. Surprises and confrontations don't seem to work with the Nisei, except for getting them all uptight and negative. And if these tactics were used to start new chapters, I'm pretty sure there will be a lot of problems. And I can't understand why these methods would have to be used when the normal channels are wide open.

Our Wilshire chapter had been inactive for a number of years until in 1970 a new board was elected. The new board members are J.U.S.T. Committee members. But as far as I'm concerned it's just another chapter and that's how it's been accepted by the district. No problem.

There's talk about starting new younger adult chapters in East L. A. and Westwood. My suggestion has been that those interested forget about labeling themselves and go through normal channels and get chartered.

The point is that if the purpose for the new chapter is straight, there's no reason for going through the cloak and dagger bit. Sooner or later people are going to know what's happening and the first bit of news will be out through third parties without the best intentions. And we'll be on the defensive.

One last point to close this overly lengthy letter. I cannot agree, from my experiences, that the JACL is to be looked at with distrust. The JACL office here works with practically all the student, self-help and other younger adult organizations in Southern Cal. and we've all profited through this relationship. It appears to me it may be more profitable for all concerned if the groups in New York

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started off with trust rather than suspicion in their relationship with JACL.

Actually there is a change occurring in the JACL as can be seen by the hiring of staff in this office:

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| Warren Furutani | age 22 | Field Director of Special Projects |
| Victor Shibata | age 25 | Jr. JACL Administrator |
| Ron Wakabayashi | age 26 | Youth Administrator |
| Willy Fujinami | age 23 | Office Manager |

I'm the old man at age 33. And the staff was hired with the approval of the National Director and the National Board. Also, the fact that Warren, Victor, Ron and Willy have all been affiliated with activist groups before their hiring.

- NOTE:
- 1) Warren will be writing to you directly regarding the "Caravan."
 - 2) National constitution has been mailed to both Glenn and Lynne. Will mail dummy chapter constitution as soon as I find the copies.
 - 3) Warren will be traveling to New York to meet with members of Asian Americans for Action in the first week of April.

JYM/aa