



The Newsletter of Asian/Pacific Islander Unitarian Universalists and their Allies

Volume 3 Number 3

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August 2007



Michael Vick – Under the Microscope

by Young Kim (UU Church West, Brookfield, WI)

Most of you have heard about Michael Vick, the star quarterback of the Atlanta Falcons professional football team, and the recent federal indictment that was brought against him for animal cruelty. I've read the full text of the indictment, and it is nauseating. The document alleges that Vick ran a dog fighting operation, and that his dogs that did not perform were shot, drowned, electrocuted, or simply slammed to the ground.

But we don't know if Vick is guilty. His trial has not even started. And at the rallies outside the Atlanta Falcons training camp, a clear racial divide is emerging. His supporters are overwhelmingly African American and his detractors are almost all European American. What bothers me is the rush to convict Vick, even before his day in court. African American men who stumble draw excessive scrutiny and harsh public judgment.

Asian- and Pacific Islander-Americans have experienced this phenomenon as well. Wen Ho Lee was a Taiwanese-born American scientist working at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. Singled out because of his Chinese ancestry, he was accused of stealing US atomic (see Vick, 4)

Dreams Across America

by Hiro Nishikawa (Mainline Unitarian Church, Devon, PA)



In May I was contacted by Floyd Mori, JACL national director, who was looking for Asian Americans on the East Coast to join a train ride to Washington, DC and demonstrate on behalf of immigration reform legislation pending before Congress. This nationwide project was being organized by the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) based in Los Angeles. In Philadelphia it was linked with the Pennsylvania Immigration & Citizenship Coalition (PICC).

Over a 100 people from around the US were converging on Washington, DC on June 19 riding trains originating in Los Angeles, Boston, Miami, FL, and Richmond, VA. (see Dreams, 5)

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Teachable Moments at GA

by KokHeoing McNaughton (Unitarian Church of Los Alamos, NM)

The UUA's General Assembly was June 19-24 in Portland, OR. I've been attending GA every year except one since 1995, which qualifies me to be a GA Junkie. Every year, I would come back energized (I call it my *UUism booster shot*), with ideas, experiences and things to reflect upon for months to come.



Here are some of the lessons that I have learned (and re-learned) this past GA. I call them my *Teachable Moments*, not only for myself, but also for others with whom I've shared them.

Lesson #1: Avoid using laundry lists

At one of the worship services I attended, the minister was comparing today's ministries with those 50 years ago. As an example of diversity, he gave a laundry list of the type of minority ministers who enrich our congregations today. On ethnic and racial diversity, his list included African American, Native American, Latino/Latina/Hispanic, but left out Asian and Pacific Islander. On sexual orientation, he mentioned gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and left out transgender.

Lists are great when shopping, but I would avoid using them in a speech to make a point since I am bound to leave out someone or something unintentionally, unless I resort to saying, "etcetera, etcetera, etcetera." But who wants to be relegated to an etcetera?

Lesson #2: Beware of tokenism

My friend James reported that, within 15 minutes of his arriving at the Convention Center to register, a well-meaning older woman (white, female) shook his hand warmly and said, "Welcome! I'm so glad you've chosen to join us [meaning the UU faith] to make our denomination more diverse." James is a birthright UU and has been an active leader in our denomination. Not only was that remark condescending, it was insensitive and smacked of tokenism.

Lesson #3: Don't assume everyone understands the value of caucusing

A YRUU member from my church told me that he walked out of an anti-racism workshop when they were split into small groups by race. He was angry and disgusted because this is exactly what he has learned never to tolerate growing up — segregation by race. I know many adults have a hard time accepting caucusing, especially by racial and ethnic identity groups. So it wasn't a surprise to me that this young friend of mine felt this way. I was sad that we've lost a potential white ally before we've had a chance to explain why it's sometimes necessary to work in small, racially-segregated groups.

Later I explained to him by giving him the example that when we were teaching the AYS (About Your Sexuality) classes, we often split the group up by gender to discuss certain topics, then return to the larger group for sharing. And, since it was a mixed-age group, we often split them up into the high school group and the junior high group to explore other topics. He accepted these explanations readily but the experience of being racially segregated from his newly-made friends was still a gut-wrenching one for him.

Lesson #4: Choose not to exercise white (or other types of) privileges

While waiting for a plenary session to begin, I overheard an older man (white) telling his friends how he had been looking for coffee and was walking past a meeting room all set up with coffee and tea. He had simply walked in there and helped himself to a cup.

I wondered whether to spoil his day by telling him that if he had been a young black man, he would have been labeled a thief and possibly physically removed from the premises.

I didn't.

As an Asian woman married to a Caucasian male, I enjoy many of the white privileges accorded me through my marriage. When we are driving in town and forget to signal before changing lane and the police officer overlooks it, I remember reading that some Hispanic youth has been pulled over for a similar infraction just so that the police could check him over.

We all have privileges in different areas of our lives. We can choose not to exercise them.

The Plight of the Hmong People

by Alexandra Lee-Jobe (UU Church of Davis, CA)

America Says "Thank-You"

*Hmong people
put their lives on the line for democracy,
This seems fitting,
Hmong people have always wanted
that same freedom for themselves
They fought alongside US soldiers,
so many dying in the jungle~*

their blood stained the earth

*The end came
as a crushing defeat
though the "L" word wasn't spoken out loud
"The Fall of Saigon"
instead of "US Loses War"*

*Big silver birds took
many away from death
but there were SO many
Those left behind ran
barefoot through
a jungle full of
guerilla warriors*

*Mothers stuffed opium
into their babies' mouths
to prevent their crying
many died this way~*

their tears stained the earth

*What compensation could be given?
Let's welcome them to live
the "American Dream"!*

*So they came,
from dirt floor thatched huts
to this computerized commercialized land
where watching water swirl around the
toilet bowl frightened them
They thought part of their spirit
would be washed away~*

their pee stained the snow



*Hmong refugees interviewed
in Thailand*

My name is Alexandra Lee-Jobe and I am a Chinese American UU. I attend the Davis UU church and have been a member for the past 11 years. In my professional life, I work as an Elementary

school teacher in south Sacramento, and have done so for the last 17 years. 80% of the students I work with are Hmong students whose families came from Laos in Southeast Asia. This article is about them and their current plight.

During the Vietnam war, among all Southeast Asians, the Hmong people were the most supportive of the US. 30,000 of them fought alongside American soldiers. The much respected leader of the Hmong troops was General Vang Pao. By the end of the war, 17,000 Hmong soldiers had died. They paid a big price for their support, but it didn't end there. Since we lost the war, the thousands of Hmong men, women, and children left behind had to flee their country or be killed in retaliation. The US only sent four planes to transport them all. The many left behind traveled south through the jungle with communist soldiers on their heels. Thousands died, especially the elderly and the very young. They slept during the day, traveled at night, similar to the Underground railroad, with no safe houses along the way. They made it to the Me-kong River, where they built rafts and floated down to Thailand. Again, many of them died. Those who survived lived in the overcrowded, unhealthy squalor of refugee camps. By 1975, 300,000 Hmong had made it into Thailand. Of those, 15,000 settled in the US. At that time, our government promised to help Hmong people, to repay them for their support and sacrifices during the war.

I have an affinity for the Hmong people because they are Asian like me, and because they represent a unique group of people who deeply believe in freedom, a belief I admire. You may have heard of the 10 Hmong men who were arrested in an alleged attempt to purchase arms to overthrow the Laotian government. One of the men arrested was General Vang Pao. How ironic that the same man whom the CIA has trained to fight against the communists is now being charged with trying to oust them from power!

(see Hmong,6)

Why Go To General Assembly?

by Jennifer Strong (Melrose UU Church, MA)

Some might describe me as a GA junkie in the making. I have attended the past three General Assemblies, and I've been a delegate for my church each time. Why, might you ask? What reasons are there for going to GA? And for several consecutive years? Let me present a few of the reasons:



1. You get to see your APIC friends! Granted, you can come and meet us in February during our annual APIC conference, but in the summer school is out and you don't need to worry about getting snowed in at O'Hare.
2. An excuse to travel. Sure, I could travel to Portland, OR on my own. I could go to St. Louis by myself. I could have visited my friend in the Dallas/Ft. Worth on my own initiative. But, by nature, I am lazy. Going to all of these places means picking a date, finding a flight, and researching hotels. But, when you attend General Assembly somebody else has already picked the dates and researched the hotels. All you need do is book your flight. And, as an added bonus, if your church is active in denominational affairs and sends more than one delegate, you get to travel with others. I've gotten to know fellow church members much better than I would have otherwise because when we go to GA, we always make a point of getting together for dinner, attending workshops and plenary together, and occasionally sightseeing together.
3. Learn more about what is going on in the denomination, the UUA, and the world! Meet UUs from around the country and see what they're doing in their area. Attend workshops and learn what other UUs believe. Wander through the exhibit hall and learn about different UU organizations and groups such as Interweave Continental, UU Women's Heritage Society, and the Church of the Larger Fellowship. Get to know what the UUA is up to by attend-

ing plenary, where our statements of conscience are discussed and debated. Attend the Ware Lecture and hear what's going on in religious studies, Middle Eastern affairs, or listen to a UUesque poet read her work.

4. After catching up with your A/PIC friends, sightseeing, and learning what is going on the UU world and beyond, tell the UUA what you think about it all! As a delegate, you can address the plenary and give your opinion on a particular issue. Furthermore, with the new Open Space technology introduced for the first time at GA this year (for more information, please visit our UUA's GA website, <http://www.uua.org/ga07>, click on event coverage, Thursday, Event #2055), anyone can give input back to the UUA. In pondering the question, "*In today's complex world, what is our mission as a Faith Community?*", delegates and non-delegates organized workshops and explored many issues. Is there something we are doing right? Is there something we're doing wrong? Is there something we should consider that we're not? **You** can speak up at GA! See you next GA in Fort Lauderdale, Florida!

(Vick — from page 1)

secrets and giving them to the People's Republic of China. Lee's name was leaked to the New York Times, which printed articles that whipped the American public into an anti-Chinese frenzy.

The accusations were eventually dropped. The feds launched a new investigation and charged him with downloading sensitive data to an unsecured computer, a "crime" that was actually not an uncommon practice at many government facilities. He pleaded guilty as a part of a plea bargain. The whole experience ruined Lee's career.

The power of the government and the power of the media, when united, have the ability to destroy a person. Michael Vick has spent the better part of his life trying to become a professional athlete. This is how he makes his living. Give him his day in court.

(Dreams — from page 1)

On June 18, I joined the Boston train, which had stopped to pickup New Yorkers before coming down to Philadelphia. At the City of Brotherly Love, we hosted the Boston and New York “Dreamers” to our historical sites and vast Mural Arts vistas reflecting the cultural and ethnic diversity of Philadelphia. After a community supper at an historic church, the Dreamers reboarded the Acela train and went to DC.

Early on June 19 all the Dreamers from around the country joined for a breakfast and rally at the Union Station. Welcoming speeches from NAKASEC’s Sookyung Oh, ‘First Immigrant’ Pastor Mike Wilson and many others, emphasized that Dreamers were gathered to “tell their own stories” to Congressional delegations. But midday and afternoon of June 19 was devoted to a massive march on the White House sponsored by the Fair Immigration Reform Movement (FIRM). This included many families and children marching from the AME Metropolitan Church where we all started. So we marched, in sweltering 90-deg heat, waving placards, carrying street-wide banners, singing songs, chanting cheers. Office workers and other on-lookers on the sidewalks applauded the processions. Photographers and network TV cameras followed us along the march which terminated in a security area just north of the White House. Not surprisingly, no one came forth from the White House to greet us or acknowledge our presence and message.

After an organizational breakfast on June 20 at Union Station, the Dreamers fanned out in teams toward the Capitol and the various Senate and House Office Buildings to meet with designated state delegations. Regan Cooper (Exec. Dir. PICC) led the Pennsylvania Dreamers team first to the Senate Office Building to meet with Sen. Robert Casey. After introductions, several of us told our personal immigrations stories. We then had subsequent visits and story sharing with Cong. Charles Dent, Cong. Robert Brady, and Cong. Allyson Schwarz.

At midday a massive multi-media press conference was held outside the Longworth House Office Building, with selected speeches by Eun Sook Lee (Dir. of NAKASEC), Luiz Gutierrez (Cong. D-IL) and others. Message: the Dreamers are here in DC to tell real stories and to put a face on the immigration issues. That humane comprehensive reform is needed.

In the afternoon the Pennsylvania team visited

the offices of Sen. Arlen Specter and Cong. Joe Sestak (D-7th Dist. PA). I was happy to talk with Sestak’s immigration specialist but was disappointed that the Congressman (who I helped elect) was not available. I found agreement with President Bush who had told reporters: “the status quo is unacceptable” in reference to current immigration laws.

Here’s the personal story that I told the Pennsylvania delegations in Congress on June 20:

“My grandparents came to America over 100 yrs ago when it was not possible for them to become naturalized citizens owing to an act of Congress in 1790 which prevented people of color from citizenship.”

“In California and other western states, my grandparents were prevented by law after 1913 from owning land or other real estate. As frustrated agricultural workers, my grandparents returned to Japan taking my American-born parents as children back with them.”

“My parents met, married and returned to California to regain their American birthright in 1936.”

“In 1942 with the start of WWII, my family and I were incarcerated at Poston, AZ concentration camp—for no other reason than ‘looking like the enemy’. I was there from age 3 to 6.”

“My family started all over again back in California after the war—they ran a small family Chinese restaurant for 11 years. I was the first in my family to go to college and eventually to graduate school—I was part of the ‘Sputnik’ generation of scientists.”

“After a career in biotech pharmaceuticals, I got involved in racial justice issues in my church and with a civil rights organization. My hope is to see that future immigrants get fair treatment and a chance to live the American dream—like I, eventually, was able to do.”

“We are all immigrants to the U.S.—some of us have been here longer than others—that’s all.”

Our representatives in Congress need to do the right thing—change unenforceable laws, make laws which encourage undocumented individuals to register, develop a workable pathway to citizenship, devise more effective and humane means to regulate border crossings, unite families to prevent problems which burden the social safety net.

(Hmong — from page 3)

To understand why, let's take a look at what's going on today in the jungles of Laos where there are still Hmong people (many of them descended from the Hmong Vietnam veterans) who, for some reason, have not immigrated in the last 30 years. They are regularly attacked by the Lao military backed by a communist government intent upon their obliteration. It is a genocide no less horrible than Rwanda and Darfur. They are killed, raped, and mutilated. They live a life of fear and are constantly on the move.

There are several excerpts from a 75-minute documentary video on Youtube called *Hunted Like Animals* produced by Rebecca Sommer. (For more information, please go to <http://Youtube.com> and google "Hunted Like Animals".) The video is so horrendous that I was only able to watch 3 minutes of it. This has been going on for a number of years now. The Hmong people have appealed to the UN and in April of 2006, Ms. Sommer's report was accepted by the UN, but so far, not much has been done.

For those who have immigrated, life poses great difficulties of adjustment and assimilation. The Hmong people came from a non-literate agrarian culture to a mega-paced technological one. Unfortunately, many of the young men have turned to the gang lifestyle, unable to bridge this cultural gap and alienated by the huge generation gap between them and their elders. Some of my former students have been incarcerated. These bright young men were so full of promise. I also know that Chinese youth went, and still go, through the same devastating process. Many in the Hmong older generation still dream of returning to their homeland someday. Being a first generation Chinese, who has visited China, I can identify with that. It's hard to imagine being unable to ever visit one's ethnic homeland again.

So, what can we, as UUs do? I have never tried to promote an issue like this before. First, publicity is important. That's why I've written this article. Second, I'll send a copy of this article to the UUSC. Beyond that, I'm asking you to send suggestions to me at alexandraleejobe@yahoo.com

I close with a quote from an article written by a Hmong woman from Fresno, Mai Der Vang, on the IMdiversity.com website.

"Because I believe in the right of every person to live in peace, I condemn and am saddened by the methods allegedly employed by Vang Pao and his men. But there is more to the story than an effort to

buy arms. If people better understood the history and circumstances leading up to this event, they would understand for what cause it was attempted. The word 'Hmong' means 'free,' and what these men stand accused of doing was a feeble attempt to recover that legacy, and a land we lost decades ago."

Manila UUs Expand Microfinance

Program by Guerrero Roberto Ma (UU Community of Manila, Philippines)



Microfinance client Ernecita Escalera selling cooked food outside her home

Inspired by the work of Nobel Peace Prize winner Mohammed Yunus, the UU Community of Bicutan in Metro Manila Philippines began a microfinance project last years. This year, it has reached out to more small entrepreneurs with the help of the UU Funding Program (UUFPP).

Rev. Rebecca Sienes from the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Philippines secured a US\$ 3,500 grant for the program from the UUFPP through the kindness of Sue Adams, Grant Administrator.

The program now serves 33 clients organized into seven groups, six of which are in Bicutan, and one in the UU Community in Valenzuela, another suburb of Metro Manila. Ten more clients are set to get loans soon.

Most of the clients are poor women who own small businesses in their neighborhoods. Some buy and sell clothes or sell cooked food. Still others are market vendors who sell barbecues or other items.

Repayment has been almost 100%. The majority of the clients are either members of the congregation or are starting to attend regularly. Members of each group are responsible should someone in the group default, which accounts for the high repayment rate. The penalty for defaulting would be denial of loan for the entire group in the next cycle. (see *Micro*, 8)

A Spiritual Journey in China

by David Yamashita (UU Congregation of Atlanta, GA)

China is known for the following: biggest consumer market in the world; largest consumer of energy in the world; largest communist government in the world. All references provided by CNN. For me, it was a recent adventure that I had the privilege to start in June. My company had unexpectedly sent me to Shanghai and Nanjing. How would the Chinese react with me being Japanese in Nanjing? Would I be hated because of my Japanese last name? I started my journey both excited and anxious. I had no idea that this trip would start a spiritual awakening.

My journey started with flying out of Los Angeles on Korean Airlines. This may sound strange, but this was the first time I had flown where most of the passengers were Asian. What did I love about that? For the meals, we ate Korean food (not rubber chicken dinner) and watched Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and American movies. For me, spending 14 hours on an airplane in this kind of atmosphere was more than exciting -- it was absolutely thrilling. The woman sitting next to me in the airplane was a medical doctor from Korea who was returning to her home village with her children and grandchildren. No one in her family had ever been to Korea before this trip. Wow! Talk about finding your roots! I look forward to having a similar trip with my children to my ancestral cities in Kyushu in Minamata and Toyotsu.

After arriving in Seoul, Korea, I left Incheon Airport and arrived in Shanghai. Great! Not too bad...even though it was 24 hours after leaving Los Angeles, I felt pretty good. Whoops! There was a note from my driver (yes, because of change of plans, I had a driver waiting for me at the airport.). Just like Tom Cruise in Mission Impossible, I read the note. Enclosed was a train ticket to Nanjing. The Mandarin-only speaking driver dropped me off in the train station. Everything at the station was written in Chinese characters with no English translations. Good thing numbers are universal because I matched the train number with the ticket number and the train number with the track number. Luckily, that worked and I arrived in Nanjing.

After a series of meetings, I visit the Confucius temple. Note to self: next time, study the country a little before the trip. I thought all "religious" artifacts



in China were off limits after the Cultural Revolution. Stupid me. Luckily, I don't embarrass myself by saying anything. This was the first temple I visited in China and it wasn't the last.

I left Nanjing hoping that I can return some day. The city was beautiful and the people were wonderful and full of life. After many years of hearing about Chinese

atrocities and human rights violations, this was certainly a different perspective. Makes you think twice about what you hear from the government. As I walked around Nanjing, I realized that it was a modern urban city with a vibrant lifestyle. I wasn't even close to mistreated because of my Japanese descent. Many Americans have a lot to learn. I still get the "Pearl Harbor" references in America to this day out of ignorant people who consider this funny.

Shanghai -- "The Queen of the Orient" and "Paris of the East." I knew Shanghai was a large financial city in China, but what would I think of it? Boy! It looks like Manhattan! There was even an area called Times Square with all the lights and neon that would make 42nd Street proud! I made a conscious effort to avoid the urban trappings and tour the older Shanghai sections. I saw the Yu Gardens and the Temple of the Jade Buddha. What an amazing area full of beautiful works of art! I won't go into great details about this so that I can avoid sounding like Fodor's Travel Guide, but the beauty in both areas were breathtaking. The more amazing thing was the level of spiritual energy in both places. Many people go to the Gardens for meditation and peacefulness. The Temple of the Jade Buddha was a place for prayer and thoughtful experiences.

So, you are probably thinking: Sounds like you had a nice little trip? What kind of experience did you get out of this and why did you write this article?

The whole trip provided me with some points of view I had never experienced and revealed places to go as part of my spiritual journey. How many of you wished you were white and not Asian? How many of you lived in places where you wished you were the "majority?" Being from the Deep South, I used to think like this for much of my life. For a few days, I lived being "Chinese." Many of the Chinese thought I was Chinese because of my appearance, so basically, I was left alone while walking down the street, going into a store, or dining in a restaurant. I have to say, I really enjoyed the anonymous

(see *China*, 8)

(Micro — from page 6)

Most clients start with a P1,500 (~US\$33) loan payable over 24 weeks. In the next cycle, they are usually allowed to re-borrow for an additional P500 over the original amount each.

Interest rate is 2% a month, far lower than the 20% a month usually charged to them by local loan sharks.

While not eradicating their poverty, the loans have given many of the clients easy credit to help grow their small businesses and help alleviate the daily grind of making ends meet.

(China — from page 7)

experience just being one of the many. It made me appreciate being an Asian/Pacific Islander even more and made me want to study my heritage much more than I have in my last 44 years.

Also, by visiting the temples, I had never felt closer to believing in something spiritual. Starting now, I intend to start studying Buddhism and the Confucius teachings. I now feel like I have started on a religious journey. One of the greatest groups in UU is this A/PI Caucus. They have helped me spiritually. They helped me acknowledge my heritage. They helped me being Unitarian Universalist. My recent visit to China helped me see this clearly.

Hopefully, you will have similar experiences in your journeys.

Become an A/PIC Member!

A/PIC membership is open to all individuals who self-identify as partly or wholly Asian or Pacific Island in heritage or origin.

To become a member, simply state your intention by sending an email to steering@apiuu.org with the following information:

- ◆ Your full name
- ◆ The name of your congregation or UU organization with which you claim affiliation
- ◆ Your ethnic identity
- ◆ Contact information: mailing address and phone number
- ◆ A statement of intent (eg. I, _____, intend to be counted as a voting member of A/PIC.)

Membership privileges include:

- ◆ Voting
- ◆ Holding elected offices
- ◆ Accessibility to the members' only section of our website
- ◆ Scholarships to conferences and meetings
- ◆ Subscription to the members' only email list
- ◆ Receiving minutes of all Steering Committee phone conferences
- ◆ Receiving bi-annual updates on our Membership Directory
- ◆ Receiving copies of Hot Rice three times a year

And..... There are no membership dues!

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