

JACL Network Update

A periodic report from the Japanese American Citizens League Anti-Hate Program

Issue 6, Fall 2006

JACL Chapter Liaisons

Alaska, Jonathan Lack
Arizona, Charles Tadano
APAN, Gary Mayeda
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Houston, Sandra Tanamachi
Japan, John Ito
Lake Washington, Corey Moriyama
Lodi, Linda Ogata
Marysville, Neelam Canto-Lugo
Monterey, Larry Oda
New Mexico, Sei Tokuda
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Olympia, Reiko Callner
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Ventura County, Joanne Nakano
Wasatch Front North, Curtis Oda
Washington DC, Shin Inouye
Watsonville-Santa Cruz, Paul Kaneko and Mas Hashimoto

JACL Campus Liaisons

Purdue Univ., Lisa Hanasono
Drake, Amy Munemoto
UC Berkeley, Christina Shigematsu
UC San Diego, Kim Shintaku
UC Irvine, Lisa Tanaka
Princeton Univ., Brigham Walker
Univ. of Cincinnati, Chad Yoshikawa

The Internet: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly

The Internet has revolutionized communication in society, but its uses can be as harmful and dangerous as much as it is helpful and educational. When the word “Internet” became a formalized term in 1995, only a handful of individuals and organizations had the capability to utilize any of its functions or even have access. Today, the Internet has over 1.5 billion users, and availability and access are commonplace. Information can be transferred from one person to another in a matter of seconds.

Hate groups such as the Klu Klux Klan, Neo-Nazi, Neo-Confederate and some religious identity organizations are among the major consumers of the Internet for the purpose of spreading their philosophy of hate. These hate groups have utilized the Internet as a tool to successfully influence and recruit new members. Rather than remaining underground and isolated, these hate groups have effectively used cyberspace to expand their reach, enabling them to connect with similar-thinking people anywhere in the world. Additionally, just as major corporations and organizations have increased speed, collaboration and communication with others, hate groups have increased in these areas as well.

While popular engines such as *Google* or *Yahoo!* try to filter out many of the hate Websites that are connected to the aforementioned groups, some hate Webpages manage to slip through the cracks and appear on lists of possible search. Recruiting strategies of these hate groups include

infiltration of the popular *Yahoo! Groups* and *Google Groups*. Many of the hate messages incorporated with these websites that target a younger computer-savvy demographic are able to penetrate the search engine functions that would normally restrict hate speech.

When browsing the Web or using the search engines of these E-groups, users must exercise caution to avoid linking to a Webpage that displays messages of hate against ethnic minorities, especially against Asian Americans.

Myspace.com, Xanga.com and Facebook.com are just some of the recent peer-to-peer blogging methods that have been used by hate groups for outreach purposes. The expansiveness of these Websites is influential and far-reaching and therefore, tremendously increases the spread of hate speech towards Asian Americans. Massive amounts of hate speech remain undetected by these mainstream networks. For example, one of these Website’s main features is an option to post an online journal or blog. At Xanga.com, a blogging or group exists and is titled, “i hate asians.” In addition to Asian-bashing, this blogging has effectively attracted other individuals with similar views to join, converse and channel their bigotry. Many similar blogs exist at other popular Website networks.

The JACL National staff has been working with Myspace.com and Xanga.com in seeking and banning individuals that use hate speech on personal blogs, but there still remains the difficulty of permanently blocking those set persons.

JACL Chapter and Staff Activities

JACL Midwest Office – August 2006: The JACL Midwest Office reacted to a Chicago Power 92 morning radio host's comments warning people not to go to Asia because cats and dogs are being killed and eaten. The radio host also said that the spread of AIDS in Asian countries is due to the large number of homosexuals. In a letter to the station, the JACL stated, "This distasteful display by the hosts illustrates their penchant for trying to invite controversy at the cost of smearing others."

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JACL NCWNP Office – August 2006: Don Stott, a precious metals dealer, wrote a column in Gold Digest using derogatory phrases that included "Almond Eyes" and "Jap". JACL

NCWNP Regional Director, Patty Wada, immediately responded with a letter to Stott raising concerns about the content of the article. No official response from Stott has been received.

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JACL Midwest Office – June 2006: Amidst a flurry of reports of racial and defamatory on-air stunts by Toledo's Tower 98.3 FM radio hosts who telephoned and mocked Asian American business owners, the JACL Midwest Office issued a letter to the station calling the hosts' action an outrage. In addition to the letter, Bill Yoshino distributed an online petition throughout the JACL calling for, among other things, a formal apology.

Olympia JACL – The Olympia Chapter and PNW District remain active in the anti-hate activities of Thurston County's *Unity in the Community*, as reported in the Summer Edition of this newsletter. Unity volunteers have collected well over \$6,000 for five local groups chosen for their work in advancing the interests of people traditionally targeted by hate groups, including Stonewall Youth, the NAACP, and the social justice branch of the local Jewish temple. A celebratory event to disburse these funds and to thank those who were crucial in Unity's effort is being planned for this fall/early winter.

Thurston County's efforts have been exceptional in this regard, and the successful coalition of community groups,

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Hate Crimes and Hate Incidents

New York City – August 2006: New York DJ, Troi Torain, of Power 105 Radio Station is attempting to sue New York City councilman, John Liu, for having the DJ fired from his job in May of 2006. Torain was fired from his position after making anti-Asian remarks against a rival DJ from Hot 97 Radio in New York City. In addition, Torain threatened to sexually abuse the rival DJ's four-year-old daughter. As a result, Torain was arrested in May for harassment and endangering the welfare of a child.

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Queens, NY – August 2006: Four Asian males were racially assaulted while driving their car by two white men who pulled up next to them. The two assailants, 19-year-old Kevin Brown

and 20-year-old Paul Heavey, allegedly shouted racial slurs at the men. The Asian men tried to escape in their car, but they were pursued by Brown and Heavey. When 19-year-old John Lu got out of the car to inspect it for damage, Brown and Heavey attacked Lu by punching him several times in the head and body. Reynold Liang tried to assist Lu, but he was also attacked and suffered a fractured skull. The two assailants were arrested by police twenty minutes later. During the arrest, one of the assailants injured the police officers when he crashed his car into the police vehicle. Brown and Heavey were charged with assault, reckless endangerment and criminal mischief. Hate crime charges were also filed, and Brown was also charged with resisting arrest.

Edison, NJ – August 2006: Approximately 75 protesters gathered outside of the Edison township municipal complex, calling for the suspension of Edison police officer Michael Dotro following the July 4th arrest of Rajnikant Parikh, who was struck by the police officer during his arrest for an unauthorized fireworks display. The 75 Indo-American protesters were met with 30 counter-protesters in support of the Edison police. While Parikh supporters demanded action for the alleged police brutality, counter-protesters held signs reading "If you act like an animal, you get treated like an animal." Edison mayor, Jun H. Choi, called on residents to be respectful of diversity and for cooperation between community members and police.

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Targeting Those That Target You

The first, and now one of the largest, Internet gatherings of hate speech can be found at Stormfront.org. An organization that sets itself apart from other hate groups, Stormfront's unique network setup gives its users a chance to post their racist thoughts and rhetoric to a massive international association. Group members have submitted and discussed a wide range of topics, including the legitimacy of ethnic cleansing, re-institutionalization of anti-miscegenation laws, as well as a firm belief that the Christian God only saves the white race.

This organization patterns its effort after that of former leader of the Creativity Movement, Matthew Hale. As emphasized by the Anti-Defamation League, the Creativity Movement, also known as the World Church of the Creator, was one of the most notorious hate groups in the 1990s, gaining publicity for its rapid growth and the violent incidents with which it was associated.¹ Matthew Hale, a Southern Illinois University law school graduate, was considered by some to be the most PR-savvy, articulate and charismatic individual to arrive since Adolf Hitler.² His reign over these large hate movements ended with his arrest by federal agents for attempting to solicit the death of a federal judge. Hale is currently serving a forty-year sentence for conspiracy to murder. Hale's message is still influential among established hate groups. Sordid ideas which deem any race other than white as a "mud race" or any call by Hale for a racial holy war or "RaHoWa," parallels the stream of consciousness of Stormfront's members.

Stormfront has 91,000 registered users and continues to grow. With an additional 24,000 "active" members and the numbers previously mentioned, Stormfront has a sizable audience to which it can spread its message of hate. According to Wikipedia.org, even some politicians running for public office have postings on this hate Website. A previous candidate for city council in Charlotte, North Carolina, Republican Doug Hanks, has made as many as 4,000 comments on Stormfront's Webpage.³

At the peak of his power, Hale claimed approximately 80,000 white nationalist members, when in actuality, he had no more than 1,000.⁴ Hale's band of no more than 1,000 members within a small geographic region now appear ineffectual when compared with the 91,000 registered international users of Stormfront. With Stormfront's

large readership via the Internet, it is capable of disseminating information at lightning pace.

It is critical that users be aware of the bigotry that exists on the Internet. While the JACL, in partnership with organizations like the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center, is tracking the activities of Websites like Stormfront.org, the general public must be aware of the danger that these hate groups pose. Times have changed, and the methods these hate groups employ has evolved as well. Unlike the days when several members of a community would organize and attend hate rallies and openly and proudly identify themselves as members of hate groups, today the identity of members is shrouded and protected by the anonymity of the Internet. These same individuals can and do infect their own community and others through the World Wide Web. Just because you don't see them, doesn't mean they aren't out there. □

1 Anti-Defamation League. "Extremism in America: Creativity Movement." http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/WCOTC.asp?xpicked=3&item=17

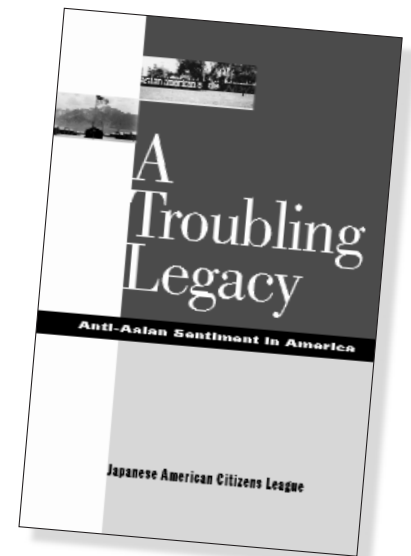
2 Anti-Defamation League. "Matthew Hale." http://www.adl.org/learn/ext_us/Hale.asp?xpicked=2&item=6.

3 Wikipedia.org. "Stormfront." [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stormfront_\(website\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stormfront_(website)).

4 Southern Poverty Law Center. "Matthew Hale." <http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?aid=476>.

A Troubling Legacy

This 16-page booklet summarizing anti-Asian sentiment in the United States beginning with the arrival of the Chinese in the mid-1800s. This booklet is intended to provide the reader with insight into the discrimination faced by Asian Americans through the decades.



Frequently Asked Questions

Taken from the Anti-Defamation League Handbook:
Responding to Extremist Speech Online

Why can't the government ban use of Internet to spread hateful and racist ideology in the United States?

The Internet is probably the greatest forum for the exchange of ideas that the world has ever seen. It operates across national borders, and efforts by the international community or any one government to regulate speech on the Internet would be virtually impossible, both technologically and legally.

In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees the right of freedom of speech to all Americans, even those whose opinions are reprehensible. In a number of recent decisions, the Supreme Court has reaffirmed that our government may not regulate the content of Internet speech to an extent greater than it may regulate speech in more traditional areas of expression such as the print media, the broadcast media, or the public square. While courts may take into account the Internet's vast reach and accessibility, they must still approach attempts to censor or regulate speech online from a traditional constitutional framework.

Has anyone ever been successfully prosecuted in the United States for sending racist threats via E-mail?

There is legal precedent for such a prosecution. In 1998, a former student was sentenced to one year in prison for sending E-mail death threats to sixty (60) Asian American students at the University of California, Irvine. His E-mail was signed "Asian hater" and threatened that he would "make it my life career [sic] to find and kill everyone one [sic] of you personally." That same year, another California man pled guilty to Federal civil rights charges after he sent racist E-mail threats to dozens of Latinos throughout the country.

Can hate crimes laws be used against hate on the Internet?

If a bigot's use of the Internet rises to the level of criminal conduct, it may subject the perpetrator to an enhanced sentence under a state's hate crime law. Currently, forty (40) states and the District of Columbia have such laws

in place. The criminal's sentence may be more severe if the prosecution can prove that he or she intentionally selected the victim based on the victim's race, nationality, religion, gender or sexual orientation. However, these laws do not apply to conduct or speech protected by the First Amendment.

What are Internet "filters" and when is their use appropriate?

Filters are software that can be installed along with a Web browser to block access to certain Websites that contain inappropriate or offensive material. Parents may choose to install filters on their children's computers in order to prevent them from viewing sites that contain pornography or other problematic material. ADL has developed a filter (HateFilter™) that blocks access to Websites that advocate hatred, bigotry or violence towards any group on the basis of their religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or other immutable characteristics. HateFilter™, which can be downloaded from ADL's Website (www.adl.org), contains a "redirect" feature which offers users who try to access a blocked site the chance to link directly to related ADL educational material. The voluntary use of filtering such software in private institutions or by parents in the home does not violate the First Amendment because such use involves no government action.

There are also some commercially marketed filters that focus on offensive words and phrases. Such filters which are not site-based, are designed primarily to screen out obscene and pornographic material.

May commercial Internet Service Providers (ISPs) prevent the use of their services by extremists?

Yes, Commercial ISPs, such as America Online (AOL), may voluntarily agree to prohibit users from sending racist or bigoted messages over their services. Such prohibitions do not implicate First Amendment rights because they are entered into through private contracts and do not involve government action in any way.

Once an ISP promulgates such regulations, it must monitor the use of its service to ensure that the regulations are followed. If a violation does occur, the ISP should, as a contractual matter, take action to prevent

faith communities, law enforcement, government authorities, and more has been recognized by The Working Group, makers of the documentary film, “Not in Our Town,” aired and available through PBS. The Working Group is convening community representatives from across the country in Bloomington, Illinois on the weekend of October 6, so that strategies for community organizing in the face of hate groups can be shared and our mutual efforts strength-

ened. Olympia will be represented by Reiko Callner.



JACL Midwest Office – In September, Brandon Mita, Program Fellow for the JACL Midwest Office, responded to the use of a racial slur by a member of congressional campaign in Minnesota. A campaign director from Rep. John Kline’s campaign repeatedly yelled at people driving foreign-made cars, who were entering a parking lot for an event of Kline’s opponent, Coleen Rowley.

The director screamed “another Jap car.” He later issued a statement saying, “I apologize if my words offended any Americans of Japanese descent, including my sister-in-law. I allowed my emotions to get the better of me and used a phrase commonly used in my youth, but which is now inappropriate and offensive.” Mita’s letter to the campaign indicated that “we are deeply disappointed by the behavior of the campaign director... be assured that his use of the racial slur did offend.” □

Santa Clara County, CA – July 2006: 40-year-old Iqbal Singh, a resident of Santa Clara’s Sikh community, was stabbed in the neck on Sunday, July 30, 2006 while leaving his home to attend religious services around 10:30am. In an apparent hate crime, the 20-year-old perpetrator claimed that Singh was a member of the Taliban, an Afghani Islamic Fundamentalist group. This is the second hate incident to occur in the same weekend in Santa Clara. City

officials intend to begin the first of several meetings in Santa Clara to combat these hate incidents.



Toledo, OH – June 2006: As a prank, a DJ at Tower 98 radio in Toledo repeatedly called a Japanese restaurant with remarks such as “me love you long time,” “ching, chong chung,” and “Me speakee no English.” The DJ and the station program director refused to acknowledge that there was any thing wrong with this stunt. A local Asian

American group, Asian Communities United (ACU) protested the incident, which included an online petition with over 1,500 signatures that was presented to the station owners. Following negotiations, the station suspended the DJ without pay and the station’s program director was fired. ACU is continuing its negotiation with the station owners to institute diversity training among the station’s personnel. □

In many instances, those who have had their blogs removed do not list their real name or email address with the site’s database. Consequently, these individuals can easily acquire a new email address and gain entry to an entirely fresh blog and continue to broadcast their messages of hate towards Asian Americans. So, there is a continuous, ongoing battle to systematically control the content of peer-to-peer networks.

To find out more on hate sites, Tolerance.org, a web project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, has reconstructed specific hate sites in order to dissect, analyze, and educate internet users. Visit http://www.tolerance.org/hate_internet/index.jsp □

it from happening again. For example, if a participant in a chat room engages in racist speech in violation of the “terms of service” of the ISP, his account could be cancelled, or he could be forbidden from using the chat room in the future. ISP should encourage users to report suspected violations to company representatives.

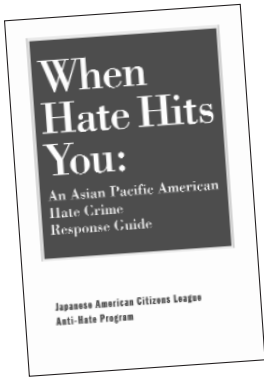
The effectiveness of this remedy is limited, however. Any subscriber to an ISP who loses his or her account for violating that ISP’s regulations may resume propagating hate by subsequently signing up with any of the dozens of more permissive ISPs in the marketplace. □

JACL Anti-Hate Materials Available to Chapters

Words Can Kill the Spirit – a brochure to combat the use of racial slurs directed against Asian Americans. This brochure is intended to inform the public that the use of slurs and other forms of defamation must not be tolerated.



Anti-Asian Sentiment on Campus – a brochure that highlights the increase in anti-Asian sentiment on our college and university campuses. The brochure provides examples of actual incidents and steps to take if similar incidents occur.



When Hate Hits You – a comprehensive handbook that provides a historical look at anti-Asian sentiment in our country, along with recent examples of anti-Asian violence and a section on how you and your community can respond to hate incidents.

These materials can be ordered free of charge to JACL chapters. Contact the nearest JACL office and please give at least two weeks notice. □

JACL Offices

National Headquarters
1765 Sutter Street
San Francisco, CA 94115
415.921.5225
jacl@jacl.org

Pacific Northwest Office
671 S. Jackson Street, Suite 206
Seattle, WA 98104
206.623.5088
pnw@jacl.org

Midwest Office
5415 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL 60640
773.728.7170
midwest@jacl.org

Pacific Southwest Office
244 South San Pedro Street,
Room 406
Los Angeles, CA 90012
213.626.4471
psw@jacl.org

Northern California –
Western Nevada – Pacific Office
1255 Post Street,
Suite 805
San Francisco, CA 94109
415.345.1075
ncwnp@jacl.org

Washington, D.C. Office
1001 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.,
Suite 730
Washington, D.C. 20036
202.223.1240
dc@jacl.org

JACL Anti-Hate Program
Staff:
William Yoshino
Patty Wada
Brandon Mita

The JACL Anti-Hate Program is made possible through a grant from



Ford Motor Company Fund

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San Francisco, CA 94115