

MOMENTUM

Asian and Pacific Islander American

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U C San Diego

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"Asian Mug-File" Protestors' Home Raided by Police

NCCR condemns the politically motivated tactics of the Fountain Valley Police Department in their attempt to criminalize and discredit the effort under way to repeal the controversial practice of photographing Asian youth without arrest and maintaining those photos in an intelligence file.

On Thursday morning at 7:00 a.m., January 21, 1993, twelve policemen in SWAT gear entered the Kanshige residence in Fountain Valley and arrested Mark Kanshige as a suspect in a shooting incident which occurred on New Year's Day in Monterey Park.

The policemen entered without permission and immediately handcuffed the entire family at gunpoint, including Mr. and Mrs. Kanshige, their two daughters aged 17 and 24, and sons aged 15 and 18. The family was taken outside and made to stand in their sleepwear, handcuffed in front of the garage for an hour while their house was ransacked and their yard dug up. Police dogs were immediately brought in to enter the crawl-space and attic of the home.

After an hour of overturning furniture, appliances and personal items, a search warrant was produced and the search continued for another two

hours. The police arrested Mark Kanshige, aged 25, and a friend as possible suspects in the shooting incident, despite the fact that Mark Kanshige had been seen in and around the Kanshige's Fountain Valley home during New Year's. They confiscated hunting knives, a rifle, and ammunition from the home.

The police also circulated amongst themselves articles and newspaper clippings about the Fountain Valley Police Department's controversial practice of photographing Asian youth without arrest or permission and maintaining those photos in an intelligence file. The police took petitions which were being circulated by members of the family who happened to be leaders in the effort to ban the Asian mug-file practice.

Immediately following the arrest, the Fountain Valley Police Department issued a press release to local newspapers claiming that an arsenal was confiscated (a highly unusual practice for a police department, considering the magnitude

of the crime).

On Monday, January 25, 1993, Mark Kanshige was released on all counts due to insufficient evidence.

"The kind of tactics used by the FVPD is reminiscent of a totalitarian state or of the unjust internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. It was an obvious attempt to criminalize and discredit the entire effort by the Fountain Valley Asian Youth Alliance to repeal the practice of the Asian mug-file by the FVPD."

Consider the facts:

1. The police scrutinized newspaper articles about the Asian mug-file issue they found in the home and took petitions without listing them on the confiscated items receipt. These items had nothing to do with any possible shooting investigations.

2. It was unnecessary to handcuff the entire family and take them outside for all to see. No one offered any resistance at any time. This was done to discredit and criminalize the family to the neighbors.

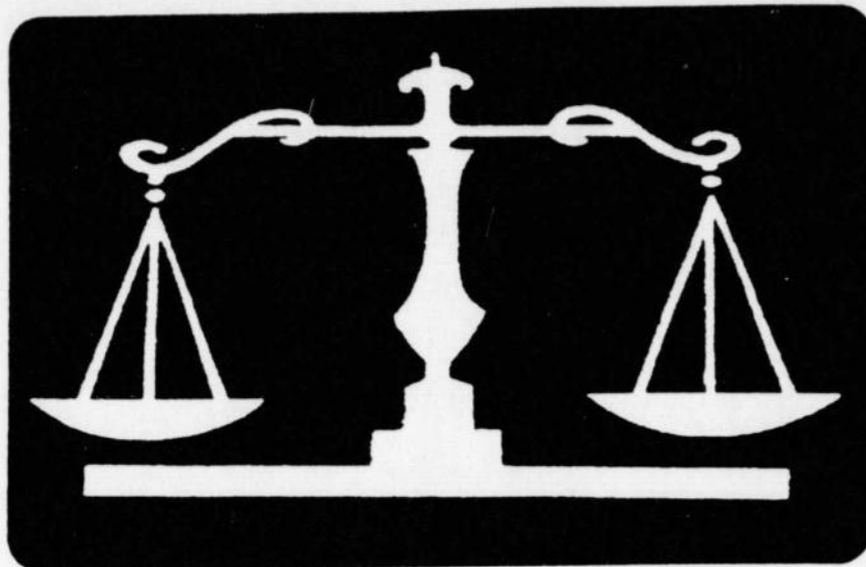
3. Unauthorized areas not listed on the Search Warrant were searched.

4. Press releases were sent out by the

FVPD immediately following the arrest of Mark Kanshige, stating that narcotics were found and that a bomb squad had been called in. We believe that the police suspected that there was insufficient evidence to hold Mark Kanshige for very long and therefore, the criminalization and smear had to be done as soon as possible by utilizing the media.

Despite the terrorism by the police, the petition drive will continue and formal charges will be filed against the police department by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of the Kanshige Family.

We urge all those concerned about the gross violation of an Asian American family's rights, and the dangerous abuse of democratic processes to write the Fountain Valley City Council and demand an end to the Asian mug-file practice and protest the attempt to discredit community efforts to repeal the practice. Contact NCCR at (213) 680-3484 for more information.



Law Professor and Leading Asian American Researcher To Speak at UCSD

Law professor and researcher of Asian American legal history, Neil Gotanda, will be speaking at UCSD on March 12 at 3:00 p.m. in the Literature Building, room 3155.

Gotanda is an Assistant Professor at Western State University, and will be a visiting professor at UCLA School of Law this spring. In addition to his work as law professor, Gotanda is a cutting edge researcher and lecturer on the stratification of our society, focusing on Asian Americans.

In his Minority Discourse III, Non U.C. Fellowship Research Proposal, Gotanda states, "My research uses a methodology which examines race as a historically, multi-faceted, social process."

Research of this type by a Japanese American is a welcome surprise. Gotanda's work provides an avenue for cultural, social, and political awareness of an under-represented and historically voiceless Asian American community.

At the heart of Gotanda's discourse is an analysis of "Judge Joyce A. Karlin's

sentencing statement in *People v. Soon Ja Du*, the trial of a Korean grocer convicted of killing a fourteen year old African American high school student."

Gotanda explains in his proposal, "Using the colloquy as text, I argue that while Karlin positions herself as impartial by omitting reference to Korean or African American, she is actually engaging in subordinating "race-ing" of both the victim, Harlins, and the defendant, Du. These "race-ings" occur by "demonizing" the victim Harlins as a criminal and portraying defendant Du as a good-Korean-woman-shopkeeper, all within a stratified structure of White-Korean-Black."

Gotanda will no doubt talk about this issue when he speaks to UCSD. The event will be sponsored by the Ethnic Studies and Literature departments, and is free to the public. It will be a worthwhile afternoon for all students, Asians and non-Asians, to learn about our legal system from the viewpoint of an expert and fellow person of color.

Expressing our thoughts and experiences as...

Asian Pacific American Women

A Call for Poetry, Prose, Personal Narratives, Art, Commentary, Photography...

Deadline for journal submissions: April 9th
(Fri. of Week 2)--

Drop off your submissions in the
"Asian Pacific American Women" envelope
in the Women's Resource Center (in the Old
Student Center next to Soft Reserves).

Call Carol (453-3515) or Leng (260-1882) for more information.

A Special Project of **SISTERHOOD ACROSS THE WAVES--**
A Feminist Asian American Political Collective.
Funded by **ALTERNATIVE VISIONS**, UCSD's women's journal.

To Learn and To Live

...Remembering the imprisonment of 20,000 Japanese Americans in American concentration camps...discovering the spiritual tradition of the Pilipino Fiesta...feeling pride in the many talented Asian and Pacific Islander playwrights, directors, actors, and actresses. These are images which remind us and teach us about our histories, struggles, traditions and community. These are images which influence the way we live and interact with society.

The theme of this issue is "learning and living." By examining the different experiences that shape and give meaning to our lives, we can come to an understanding that our identity is situated in a university criss-crossed by a variety of cultures, and voices. *Momentum* is a way in which to learn and live these cultures. The articles, letters, and artwork in this issue reflect current issues and events as well as personal expressions that are vital in shaping our community. We hope that this communication will generate an avenue of understanding and discussion that will lead us to appreciate the creativity of our lives and respect the lives of people different from us.

-Joanne Tashiro and Shoon Lio

A TRIBUTE

In Memory of Thurgood Marshall

By Shoon Lio

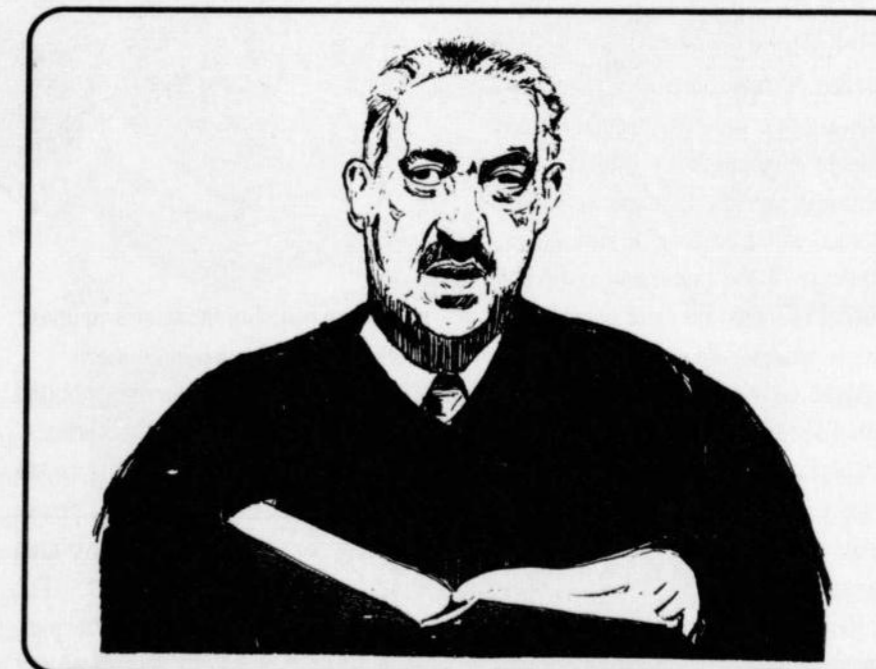
Contributing Writer

"The true miracle was not the birth of the Constitution, but its life; a life nurtured through two turbulent centuries of our own making, and a life embodying much good fortune that was not [of our own making]." -Thurgood Marshall (*Dream Makers, Dream Breakers*, by C. Rowan)

On Sunday, January 25, the world lost a great storyteller in the passing of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. His interpretation of the U.S. Constitution demonstrated his belief that it was an unfolding tale of the hopes and aspirations, tears and disappointments of a nation's people.

His life story demonstrated that we are all capable of and morally enjoined to bear witness to the neglected or suppressed perspectives of our society. As the head counsel of the NAACP, he argued countless civil rights cases that shaped and changed our history forever. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Topeka, Smith v. Allwright*, *Gaines v. S.W. Canada*, *Registrar, University of Montana*, he weaved his legal arguments with the stories of those whose lives were being destroyed by segregation, a deeply entrenched way of life in American history.

As a civil rights lawyer, and then later in his career as Solicitor General, and finally Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood



Marshall told the stories of the poor, elderly, physically disabled, members of religious minorities, students, immigrants, non-citizens, women, protestors, and members of racial minorities, and into the Constitution. His story of the Constitution was a better one because it humanized the legal system and voiced the needs of people unseen or unheard of in our society.

The greatest power lies in the narratives of everyday people. Who could forget the stories of the rank-and-file who marched behind Martin Luther King and Malcolm X? Who could forget the stories of ordinary people like Rosa Parks, Lonnie

Smith, Mitsue Endo, Minoru Yasui, Yick Wo, Fred Korematsu, and Reverend Brown? Who can forget the powerful and moving testimonials by elderly Japanese Americans who told the stories of their lives as shattered by their unjust internment? Who could forget the stories of those whose lives were forever changed by the L.A. Riots? These stories and many others need to be told and heard.

To properly honor Justice Marshall, we are called upon to make sure that the voices of the silent are heard and the stories of faceless America be weaved into our social and historical narratives. In a time where people are talking passed

each other and our histories seem desperate, we must find the social, moral, and political will to create a common tale that engages us in a common discourse that embraces the stories and voices of all.

"He imagined and evoked the lived experience of a range of human beings. He brought critical historical perspectives to the tasks of analyzing the facts and interpreting the Constitution in a process designed to enlarge legal guarantees of human dignity. He worked to redeem the promise of this nation whose greatness he celebrated by devotion to law and by dissent."

-Professor Martha Minow (*Harvard Law Review*)

"He was the mouth of a man who knew the anguish of the silenced and gave them a voice.

Although I was continually inspired by his achievements, I have perhaps been most affected by him as raconteur. His stories reflect a truly expansive personality, the perspective of a man who immerses himself in human suffering and then translates that suffering in a way that others can bear and understand. He is a man who sees the world exactly as it is and pushes on to make it what it can become. No one could avoid being touched by his soul."

-Justice Sandra Day O'Connor (*Dream Makers, Dream Breakers*).

Fiesta: A Filipino Celebration of a Patron Saint

■ Today, despite their rush to imitate latest Western fads, Filipinos still find time to return to their hometown for the elaborate barrio fiestas.

By Grace D. Machado
Culture Editor

A fiesta is an important tradition that is celebrated in the Philippines in almost every town. It is important to know the art that developed and the way the Filipinos carry on the ritual. I hope that today's Filipinos will not lose sight of their shared cultural heritage reflected in the arts; a heritage which historically reflects the traditions that the natives celebrate in the gaiety of their patron saints.

Filipino fiestas often leave unforgettable impressions with visitors who en-

thusiastically describe the hospitality the natives show toward their guests. A fiesta is prepared for weeks in advance, and preparations culminate in the *novena* or nine days of prayer leading to the feast day proper. Principal sponsors of the fiesta, the *Hermano mayor* (male sponsor) and

hermana mayor (female sponsor), shoulder the expenses and arrange for bands and special events. Early each morning bands will play "Diana," a song which sets the town in a festive mood. In colonial times band instruments were ingeniously made of bamboo, which is why the ensembles are called "*musikong bambong*" (music in bamboo).

The high point of the fiesta is the procession. During the procession, the statue of the patron saint is carried on a platform which bears sacred relics such as flowers and scraps of cloth. These relics are faithfully kept and are believed to ward off evil spirits and ensure good luck and success.

From the very beginning, religious rituals - especially processions with all

their pageantry and equipment - are utilized by the missionaries to attract the natives to the faith. These are the first visual aids (the churches with their elaborate altars came later), and are intended to arouse piety and similar sentiments among the viewers. Indeed, the sheer sensual brilliance of it leaves very deep impressions on the Filipino, and this is still reflected in such expressions as the Tagalog proverb "*Paagkahaba-haba man ng prusisyon, sa simbahan din ang tuloy*"

(however long the procession may be, it will always end up in church).

The procession is headed by people bearing the *ciriales* (candle holders), consisting of an elaborately wrought silver *gudons* (*guiones*) - depicting the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) on one side and two angels incensing the

Holy Eucharist on the other side - are also paraded. Various religious organizations follow each in their own special uniform and are announced by their standard (*pendon*), usually of expensive cloth adorned with a painting or intricate embroidery. If the procession involves a number of saints, the more popular ones have separate bands accompanying them.

At the end of the line is a float of the patron saint (unless the Virgin Mary appeared, in which case her statue is carried in last), gleaming with the silver panels mounted on its carved wooden stand. The saint is almost always weighed down by the heavy ostentatious decoration on its garments, not to mention rings, crowns, staffs, miniature churches, martyrs' palms, crucifixes of precious metals which are



part of the parcel of the saint's equipage whenever it goes out in procession.

The statues are always strongly bolted on the float to withstand jolts, caresses, and stealing. A platform or float for the saint which rests on the shoulders of devotees by means of long wooden handles is known as the *andas*. The "*carosa*" is a larger, more elaborate platform set on four wheels; the lower part consists of a framework (akin to a hoop skirt) which is covered by cloth or crochet

work to conceal the wheels. Illumination is provided by carbides, which when lit produced flames which were conducted through thin metal tubes to artfully worked glass globes. It is the tradition in some towns along the rivers to hold colorful fluvial processions where these images are mounted on mammoth floating structures.

The Filipino Fiesta is a joyous celebration reflecting the diverse cultures and spiritual traditions of Filipinos.

WANTED

Momentum is looking for writers, editors, photographers, artists & submissions!

Upper division credit available.

Write to us or drop by our office at the Old Student Center Cubicle 9

Seminar

Law Professor & Asian American Researcher

NEIL GOTANDA

Date: March 12, 1993

Time: 3:00 pm

Place: UCSD Lit. bldg 3155

People v. Soon Ja Du, the trial of a Korean Grocer convicted of killing a fourteen year old African American high school student.

Chinese-American Struggles to Understand Identity

■ Painful childhood memories establish foundation for acceptance in American society

By Sandra Chong
Feature Editor

As a fourth generation Chinese-American, I live in and between two distinctly different worlds. While I feel truly enriched for experiencing two cultures, I also had to carry the burden of choosing a mutually exclusive membership. After years of struggling through confusion, I have learned to learn more about what it means to be a Chinese-American. Particularly because my family has lived in the United States for as long as four generations, I am proud to say that I have not lost touch with my ethnicity—I can still speak some Chinese; I cook and eat lots of Chinese food; I celebrate the customs and traditions of my culture; and I respect many of its values and attitudes. I realized that accepting my identity as both Chinese and American was my responsibility—not that of society.

I remember how I tried to deny my Chineseness during childhood. I first realized that I was different from the other kids at school when I learned how to write my name. My last name was a definite giveaway that I wasn't a "Smith" or a "Johnson" or a "Hernandez." Who ever invented the name "Chong?" I remember the stinging and the burning sensation of the tears that rolled down my eyes when the other kids called me "Ching-Chong-Ching-Chong!" I did not find any comfort in retorting, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me." How untrue. I will never forget the puzzled looks on the faces of other five and six-year olds who asked me, "But if you're Chinese, how come you're first name is 'Sandra?' That's an American name!" I wondered if my parents knew they were committing a social crime by not giving me a full Chinese name.

Until the fifth grade, I was usually the only Chinese or Asian student in the entire class and I painfully tried my hardest not to be. This of course, turned out to be a difficult task, as I, too, noticed my physical characteristics that were so obviously different from my American counterparts. My distinct Chinese features—the black hair, the pale yellowish skin, the almond-shaped eyes—did not contribute to my acceptance into American society. I despised the short "bowl-looking" haircut in which my bangs hung directly over my forehead. Why couldn't I have pretty blonde or brown hair and large blue eyes? I didn't understand why I looked like some cute little China doll, fragile and innocent. I was troubled by the fact that I was so much shorter and smaller than all the other "normal kids." I felt as if I were the only person in the whole world who had to suffer this fate.

But if I couldn't look like everyone else, I could at least act like I was one of the crowd, right? After all, I played in the sandbox, swung across the monkey bars, and kicked the soccer ball just like everyone else did. We all ate the bean burritos, frozen hamburgers, and orange jello in the cafeteria together. We learned how to spell the same words, compute the same arithmetic, and diagram the same sentences. We shared the same desk, scissors, glue, and paper. We even shared some of the same schools and teachers. Much to my disappointment, I eventually found that all these things did not matter—so what if I played, ate, and studied like the other kids? Nothing I could do would ever change the reactions of other people to my Chinese ethnicity. How many more reruns of *The Brady Bunch* could I watch? How many more mouthfuls of white rice could I spit out, roll in a napkin, and secretly discard in the trash can? I was desperately running out of things to do that would allow me to fit in or make me feel as if I belonged. Not only did I actively pursue activities that I thought would

bring out my "Americanness", but I withdrew from those that made me more Chinese. I found excuses not to visit my relatives who would, of course, speak mostly Chinese. I stopped inviting friends over to my house because I was embarrassed by the sometimes pungent odor of Chinese cooking and the strange-looking Chinese antiques. I refused to use chopsticks, complaining of the difficulty and impracticality of two skinny plastic sticks, and stabbed my food with a fork—what I considered a real eating utensil. I wanted

to be an American, or at least more Americanized.

Even if I could escape my Chinese heritage, at least temporarily, others could not. The questions persisted: "Were you born in China?" or "When did you come to America?" and of course, my favorite, "How come you don't have a funny accent when you speak English?" I felt that these nosy questions were a way of ridiculing me, of singling me out.

But as I entered junior high and high school, I started to take hold of a new perspective. Perhaps those nosy questions weren't meant to be offensive, but were "innocent" and sincere efforts to get to know me and my culture. I'm not sure if it was my attitude, those of my peers, or both that allowed me to view myself as special and lucky to share two cultures. Fortunately, I met other Asians who seemed to experience similar, if not worse, problems. It was comforting to know that I wasn't the only individual who didn't feel accepted or a sense of belonging. Interestingly enough, the problems I experienced even as a fourth-generation Asian-American were not too different from those who belonged to the first generation. I began investigating my heritage since everyone else seemed to make a big deal out of it. I started learning more about Chinese culture and asking questions: What does my

name mean in Chinese? How do I write it? Why do we eat so much rice? Why do Chinese people give each other red envelopes filled with money? Why do we believe in spirits and good fortune? My questions continued and became more complicated and difficult to answer, but I didn't stop. A lot of my discoveries were intriguing and other people seemed almost envious that I had a different set of traditions, customs, and values in addition to my American ones. Of course, I still encountered similar problems from childhood. I remember when I was picked to play the role of the nurse in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in high school. "I tell you, he that can lay hold of her! Shall

have the chinks." Of course, everyone laughed while my face flushed red and painful memories of "Ching-Chong-Ching-Chong" flickered in my head. So nothing's perfect.

Now a college student, I definitely have matured in my outlook. While actively participating in American culture, I haven't forgotten about my other half. I have taken Chinese history classes, I have more Chinese and Asian friends than I can count, I have joined and participated in Chinese clubs, and I definitely can't live without rice! I've made a conscious effort to find out more about my culture which is inseparable from me. I'm not sure how much society's attitude has changed, but I know that my tolerance has. I have accepted myself as both Chinese and American—the balance of the two give me identity and make me who and what I am. But I still don't claim to know everything or even a whole lot about China, Chinese culture, Chinese-American history, or even what it fully means to be a Chinese-American. The difference now is that I care.



HOW MANY MORE MOUTHFULS OF RICE COULD I SPIT OUT, ROLL IN A NAPKIN, AND SECRETLY DISCARD IN THE TRASH CAN?

"Am I My Brother's Keeper? Yes,...er...Maybe"

By Shoon Lio
Contributing Writer

As I am writing this, I am listening to Eric Clapton's "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out." I normally don't subscribe to such a cynical view on life. If anything, I tend to be a romantic and an idealist. However, my recent brush with unemployment and possible homelessness severely challenged my idealism. Are people really there for you when you need them? Can anyone make a commitment in American society today? Can a social discourse be created that is premised on love and commitment? These are the questions I had to confront during my all-too-personal exploration of today's American society.

I have always provided food and shelter for my friends in need. There were those who were unemployed and needed a temporary place to stay. Others, who didn't get their financial aid or government assistance in time, were always welcomed at my table. I never really questioned why I did it—I just accepted it as something you do for friends. I guess my sense of commitment to my friends came from my late grandmother, who was the strong compassionate woman who raised me after my parents' divorce. Many times during my childhood, I saw her lend a helping hand to people in need. She taught me not to expect any payment for kindness.

This past year, my graduate school plans and a few job leads fell through and I was left with the painful prospect of being homeless. I had assumed that all my friends would come through in my hour of need. Instead I faced a barrage of recriminations: "You should have been prepared" "It's your own damn fault!" I never said it wasn't, but dwelling on what I should've done isn't productive. Other responses included: "Good luck on your life." "and you can stay with us if you show us that you are trying to get yourself out of the situation you are in." What would've happened if I couldn't demonstrate my effort in a satisfactory

manner?

When I expressed pain and disappointment at these responses, people said, "What did you expect?" "People are out for number one." "You are responsible for yourself." "People don't want to hear about other people's problems."

In order to understand these responses, I had to step out of my personal context and examine the problem sociologically. One possible explanation can be extracted from Tom Wolfe's **The Right Stuff**. The test pilots that Wolfe observed and wrote about faced death constantly. They saw their best friends burned beyond recognition in horrible accidents. Yet each time a fellow aviator died, they had to blame his death on some error on his part. If they blamed the death on the equipment or circumstances beyond their control, they could not go on functioning as test pilots because they would face

using the very same faulty equipment and circumstances every day of their lives. We always blame individuals for their misfortunes rather than blaming the system. To point out the injustices and imperfections of the system would mean facing the uncomfortable fact that we, too, could easily be "screwed" over. Thus, we exonerate society and blame the victims, so we don't have to say: "there but for the grace of God go I." I don't mean to compare my situation with that of the test pilots, but the same logic applies. We don't like to admit that maybe what seemingly is a problem at the individual level is indicative of larger social maladies. In this society, people are reduced to being commodities or instruments for achieving one's needs or wants. We see this in popular songs like Janet Jackson's "What Have You Done For Me Lately," Madonna's "Material Girl," or Naughty by Nature's "O.P.P." Since people are just instruments for one's pleasure, people are interchangeable and their worth is only measured by what

TO POINT OUT THE INJUSTICES AND IMPERFECTIONS OF THE SYSTEM WOULD MEAN FACING THE UNCOMFORTABLE FACT THAT WE, TOO, COULD BE EASILY SCREWED OVER.



immediate pleasure they can give us. This type of market logic according to philosopher Cornel West, "...promotes addictions to stimulations and obsessions with comfort and convenience. These addictions and obsessions constitute market mentalities of various sorts. The common denominator is a rugged and ragged individualism and rapacious hedonism in quest of perennial "high" in body and mind."

People don't want to be saddled with responsibilities that bring them "down." So when faced with the Cain question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" we are left with the answer, "What has he done for me lately?"

This constant quest for a "high" is linked to a growing demand for instant gratification in the American psyche. It's I want to be "high" NOW! This overwhelming orientation towards the eternal

present (and concomitant lack of memory of the second before) has obliterated relationships and social cohesion because the **Me-then** responsibilities are separated from the **Me-Now** demands: "Hey the me that made those promises to you ain't me anymore. I'm a different person now." This would partially account for the high divorce rate and the inability of people to make any form of commitment in American society today. (Benjamin Barber better stated this argument in his book, **Aristocracy for Everyone**.)

Ironically, this social dysfunction is even to be found in people who are committed to causes. I knew of tons of members of support groups for asians, self-professed christians, and so-called progressives who were conspicuously absent in my hour of need. I guess it is easier to commit oneself to

abstract causes without thinking or caring about the fact that racism, sexism, homophobia, classism and other social evils actually impinge upon the lives of real people. It's easier to relinquish one's commitments to abstractions than to real people when those commitments cease to be fun or rewarding.

But I didn't write this personal piece to solicit pity nor did I write it to inflict guilt on people. Rather, this is a challenge for people to construct a civic and civil discourse on social justice and responsibility—a discourse that spans across ethnic, gender, and class differences. The measure of a person's worth (and of the society she or he is in) should be based on the ability to deal with compassion, dignity and sensitivity with the least of our sisters and brothers.

My own faith in people has been redeemed by the compassion of a few: One friend, who I had barely known for six months, offered to lend me money so I can go to my best friend's wedding. I didn't accept her offer, but the offer was appreciated. Others have fed me and sheltered me to the best of their abilities and means. My good friend is housing me for an indefinite time even though

he doesn't have to. The actions of these few prevent me from becoming totally cynical—which is good because I cannot bear to live in a world that is cold and indifferent.

Things look bleak, but I'll survive. Hey, Eric Clapton's "Running on Faith" is playing on my friend's stereo right now. Maybe as I type up my latest job application, I'll turn the volume up a little higher. Afterwards, I'll kick back and read the poetry of Langston Hughes.

*Gather up in the arms of your pity
The sick, the deprived,
The desperate, the tired,
All the scum
Of our weary city
Gather up
In the arms of your pity.
Gather up
In the arms of your love—
Those who expect
No love from above.*

-Langston Hughes' "Prayer," cited from The Selected Poems of Langston Hughes

Ms.
by Janice Mirikitani

I got into a thing
with someone
because I called her
miss ann/Kennedy/rockerfeller/[sic]/hughs
instead of ms.

I said
it was a waste of time
to worry about it.

her cool blue eyes
iced me—a victim of sexism.

I wanted to accommodate her
and call her what
she deserved,
but knowing that would please her
instead
I said,

white lace & satin was never soiled

by sexism
sheltered as you were
by mansions
built on Indian land
your diamonds
shipped with slaves
from Africa
your underwear
washed by Chinese
laundries
your house cleaned by
my grandmother

so do not push me any further.

and when you quit
killing us for democracy
and stop calling ME gook

I will call you
whatever you like.

East/West Players Brings Innovation to Asian-American Theater

By Scott Okamoto
Staff Writer

In 1990, the East/West Players (EWP) celebrated its 25th Anniversary, though much of the Asian-American community was oblivious to this extraordinary landmark. Hailed as the oldest Asian-American theater, the EWP has been providing



work for Asian-American actors and actresses, producing critically acclaimed plays and musicals, and has been a service to its surrounding Southern California community since its inception in 1965. Every big name Asian-American playwright has seen his or her work or works come to life in the small 99-seat theater. Phillip Kan Gotanda, whose play "Fish Head Soup" just finished showing, David Henry Hwang, who wrote the Tony Award-Winning "M. Butterfly," Frank Chin, and dozens of other playwrights are common names around EWP. Actors and Actresses such as Sab Shimono, Tamlyn Tomita, Nobu McCarthy, Stan Egi, Emily

Kuroda, and Robert Ito have participated as well. As I walked into the theater to see "Fish Head Soup," it was like walking into Asian-American actor-land. There were familiar faces everywhere, harkening those few precious roles for Asian-Americans in movies like Gung Ho, or Karate Kid's I, II, and III, or Come See the Paradise.

It was 1965, when eight Asian-American men and women decided to build and develop a place for dramatic expression for and by Asian-Americans. Led by then Artistic Director, Mako, the group produced mostly Japanese-American works with mostly Japanese-American actors, though

some of the most notable works came from Chinese-Americans. There have even been works by whites produced and performed, such as "Chorus Line," and plays by Federico Garcia Lorca, Anton Chekhov, and Shakespeare. Such works, however, were few and far between. In 1989, Nobu McCarthy took over as Artistic

Director, bringing to EWP a new vision of diversity, in the players as well as in the plays.

"We're not just a theater that puts on plays and musicals," says Lissa Lee, Administrative Director of EWP. "My goal for EWP is to strengthen all areas of our programming—artistic, educational, and community service—so that we can continue pursuing our mission as a voice for Asian-American experiences, past present, and future." Lee says they are also looking for Filipino-American, and Vietnamese-American works to produce in the near future.

The next production will be "The Rising Tide of Color," by Vernon Takeshita. It is a comedy/drama about a white family in 1920's San Francisco that hires a Japanese gardener. In a beautiful twist of Hollywood's awful tradition of having minorities played by whites, all the white characters will be played by Asian-Americans. The play opens on March 17 and runs until April 25. More EWP news to come.

Next issue, Artistic Director, Nobu McCarthy talks about her vision for EWP.



World Premiere
By Vernon Takeshita
Directed by Dana Lee
March 17 - April 25, 1993

East West Players is located at:
4424 Santa Monica Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90029
For information, call Noel at
(213) 666-1929

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Day of Remembrance: Learning to Make the Best of a Bad Situation

■ There comes a time when you have to let criticism go and begin to accept the fact that mistakes can teach you valuable lessons.

By Stuart Kimura

Once again February 19th has come and gone, and, (like every other year), its passing has motivated me to reflect back on the implications of that historic day 51 years ago. February 19th, 1942, was the day President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law Executive Order 9066, which authorized the Secretary of War and American military commanders to exclude all Japanese immigrants and Americans of Japanese descent from living, working, or traveling on the West Coast of the United States. Such an order was to provide security against sabotage and espionage by people of Japanese descent sympathetic to the Japanese cause in World War II, even though not a single documented fact of sabotage or espionage was committed by an American citizen of Japanese ancestry or by a resident Japa-



...NOT A SINGLE DOCUMENTED ACT OF ESPIONAGE OR SABOTAGE WAS COMMITTED BY AN AMERICAN CITIZEN OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY OR BY A RESIDENT JAPANESE ALIEN...

of such extreme paranoia and acute suspicion of all people of Japanese descent. Wasn't there already an undercurrent of anti-Japanese sentiment pervading society at the time that used the bombing of Pearl Harbor as an excuse to persecute Japanese Americans and immigrants?

The internment was a blatant violation of the individual rights of American citizens, and cannot be dismissed in American history books as having been an inevitable circumstance of war. Given the fact that the event presents one of the most intriguing case studies for critically analyzing the American system of Constitutional government, Executive Order 9066 and the implications of the internment should be more thoroughly studied in American classrooms. I think the fact that the internment experience depicts this particular episode in American history in an unfavorable light prevents us from emphasizing it as much as we normally would or should.

Although still not widely acknowledged for its historical significance, the U.S. government has taken a crucial step in righting the situation by formally admitting that the internment was a mistake. This admittance came in the form of redress payments (financial compensation) provided by the American govern-

ment to those who experienced incarceration. This responsibility would not have been faced up to without active solicitation by the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) and other interest groups, but credit should nonetheless be given to the American government for accepting responsibility for a mistake as ghastly as the internment was.

This is not to say money makes up for the material losses incurred by internees or the fact that nearly 3 years of their lives were wasted behind barbed wire fences before they were allowed to return to their homes and occupations on the West Coast in late 1944. Those things can never be reclaimed. But under the circumstances, at least the internment experience offered a valuable lesson to the American government and its people.

Because I don't wish to be accused of dwelling in the past, I don't believe in continuing to berate the American government for an event that happened over half a century ago. Though the Day of Remembrance evokes strong (sometimes even hostile) feelings in me, I believe those people who allow themselves to be entirely taken up purely by emotional anger toward the incarceration of Japanese Americans are closing themselves off from a more far-reaching message.

Regardless of how fervently we criticize the reason the internment happened, we cannot change the past. For many Americans, memories of the internment will remain a painful memory for the rest of their lives. Yet they have learned to move forward. Analysis of Executive Order 9066 and recognition of the Day of Remembrance should not be considered an annual excuse merely to complain about the past. It is an occasion in which we can learn how to face our future.

I regard the Day of Remembrance as an occasion to pay tribute to those 120,000 Japanese Americans who endured incarceration, and also to remind the American public how the American Constitutional system once failed (in this particular instance) Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants. But only a small part of

...THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS TAKEN THE CRUCIAL FIRST STEP IN RIGHTING THE SITUATION BY FORMALLY ADMITTING THAT THE INTERNMENT WAS A MISTAKE.

this commemoration should involve looking back and criticizing the decision to pass Executive Order 9066 and why people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast were incarcerated.

The internment was a mistake in judgment that the American government made. The mistake has already been condemned. But it is a mistake we Americans can all learn from. Mistakes are something we all seek to avoid, but they will always exist. In hindsight, naturally criticism of Executive Order 9066 will continue. But there is a limit to the amount of condemnation and criticism that can be heaped upon it before its effectiveness wanes. There comes a time when you have to let criticisms go and begin to accept the fact that mistakes can teach you many important lessons. When it comes right down to it, you become a stronger and wiser person by making mistakes, as long as you learn from them.

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Letters To The Editor

Calendar/"Model Minority" Articles Fail to See Big Picture

Editor:

In the January-February (Vol.2 No.3) issue of *Momentum*, Stuart Kimura wrote two articles: one on the 1993 calendar on Asian American women and another on the issue of positive racial stereotyping. Though I was glad to see these issues being addressed at all, I found that Kimura neglected to consider some very important matters.

In the article "Calendar an Insult to Our Intelligence," Kimura criticizes the calendar for its lack of sincerity, saying that it doesn't live up

to its claim of creating an image of "depth, sensuality and intrigue." I think Kimura could have taken his analysis of the calendar much further. He wrote, "There is absolutely nothing wrong with the A-Images 1993 Calendar in terms of its content so long as its sole purpose is to adorn some teeny bopper's wall." There is definitely something wrong with portraying Asian American women so superficially, regardless of intent. As Asian Americans, we all need to be aware of the ways in which we perpetuate negative and inaccurate stereotypes of ourselves. Asian/Asian American women are often stereotyped with images of exoticism and vulnerability, and people need to realize

that this image is wholly inaccurate and destructive. Of all places, *Momentum* does not need to have any sort of endorsements of these images.

Then in the article "Benefits of Positive Stereotyping Dubious at Best," Kimura's analysis of positive stereotyping was again minimal. His article seemed

minority groups as people ask, "Why haven't other groups made it? It's their own fault for failing. Asian Americans have succeeded." Furthermore, we need to look at the historical context surrounding successful entrepreneurship and professionalism. How have immigration laws chosen who has been allowed to participate in the U.S. system? We

also need to consider the large population of Asian Americans who are living under the poverty line. Asian Americans do not make up one enormous, monolithic group of people who have achieved suc-

cess. For instance, where do refugees fit into this picture of positive stereotyping? The model minority myth ignores many of the real problems of Asian Americans, problems which sometimes make Asian Americans invisible even within the people of Color community, problems which our "fair and democratic" system has helped to create.

In sum, I think that, although Stuart Kimura's articles addressed important issues and they made some valid points, overall his articles were narrow in their scope. Enough said.

-Carol Song

AS ASIAN AMERICANS, WE ALL NEED TO BE AWARE OF THE WAYS IN WHICH WE PERPETUATE NEGATIVE AND INACCURATE STEREOTYPES OF OURSELVES.

mainly focused on how the "Model Minority" myth raises the level of expectations put on Asians and how societal pressures result from such high expectations. He also pointed to anti-Asian sentiments as a consequence of positive stereotyping. Though the consequences of expectations, pressure, and anti-Asian sentiments are wholly valid, Kimura again could have taken his analysis much further. What about the consequence of the model minority myth on other ethnic/racial groups? When Asian Americans are portrayed as the minority group that has "made it," the ideology that America has an open mobility system is reinforced. This ideology is used against other mi-

Key to Asian Empowerment Not Through Zero-Sum Competition

Editor:

Last week, I picked up and read *Momentum* for the first time (Jan/Feb 1993). When I read Cheryl Soriano's article, "Clinton Era: It is Our Time Now," I was both scared and saddened.

It scares me that there are people who feel the only way to avoid feeling inferior in their cultural identity is to oppress other groups. Ms. Soriano states that "After years of cultural oppression and being made to feel inferior, "...it is time for our oppressors to 'fade into the background.'" Yet that does nothing but change the identity of the oppressors. There is nothing to be gained from this reversal except a photo-negative of our current politics of privilege, which can only produce immediate gratification for a few, and a long term struggle to yet again invert the power structure. The ramifications of these ideas give us no

IT SCARES ME THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO FEEL THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID FEELING INFERIOR ... IS TO OPPRESS OTHER GROUPS.

hope for ever escaping from the societal nightmare, characterized by a struggle between oppressors and oppressed.

The same ideology of this cultural inversion saddens me. There has to be a way for the majority culture and the many

minority cultures to work together to change the system we live in, without simply switching the identity of the people in power.

Ms. Soriano calls all people of color to "be proud of the many ways we add to this country," and all I can say to that is: Please, do be proud of your contributions to our country and society. But don't ask me to forgo exploring my own cultural identity, and any feeling of pride in it. It has always been the time to feel pride in one's identity and in the achievements of one's respective culture, even if the powers that be didn't recognize them. Just because I am Irish American, rather than Filipino American or Japanese American, doesn't mean that I don't have a rightful place in the new political agenda set by a new president.

-Beth O'Rourke

Asian & Pacific Islander American Men

By Cheryl Soriano
Staff Columnist

The Negative Stereotypes that Plague Asian American Men Cause Many of Us to See the Caucasian Man as "ideal."

"It's not the men in my life that count, it's the life in my men."

—Mae West

Men—my favorite subject. Lately, men have been crucified at the hands of many feminists. Granted, it is and has been men who victimize us, through physical, sexual and emotional abuse, rape, harassment, and stalking (obsessive "love"). These are atrocious crimes waged against women, and we have every right to be angry—furious! However, men are a very important part of our lives. From the minute we are born to the minute we die, we are constantly interacting with them. We play with them, we work with them, we date them, we marry them—we love them.

Given our constant interplay, we should focus on the qualities we love about men—what makes us love them. Asian American men also possess these good qualities, despite the fact that some Asian American women overlook and are quick to judge them.

One of the qualities I love in men is their strength. It is not the super-macho, overbearing strength. It is that quiet strength—that inner reserve that sustains him. It is not a strength that is used to make me feel powerless or victimized, and it is not physical. It is a strength that is secure enough in itself to recognize and to value my strength as a woman and my independence. In its essence, it is a spiritual strength. My father, "itay," a Filipino man, possesses this strength. I

remember when I was younger, my mother's union went on strike. My itay took a second job as a security guard to supplement the household income. Despite his physical exhaustion, I never heard a single complaint in that long and hard six months. He, as he puts it, "did what he had to do," and supported my mother 100%. He has that admirable strength that is both unselfish and is shared with others.

Another quality I love in men is sensitivity. I know you are probably thinking, "Please...like I haven't heard that before!" True, sensitivity is the one quality that comes up often when women describe their "ideal" man. However, have you stopped to think about why we rank it so highly? It is important to women to feel connected with others and for others to understand our feelings. It is an ability and willingness to empathize with our situation.

Many may argue that we have this emotional intimacy and sensitivity in our bond with women. This is true, but an attainable goal would be achieving this intimacy with men—our friends and lovers. When he possesses sensitivity, it

allows for a heightened loving relationship—where there is consideration and kindness.

The other quality I love in men is intelligence. This is not an arrogant, know-it-all intelligence, nor is it a "nerdy," devoid-of-social skills kind of intelligence. It is a passion for something, an insatiable thirst for knowledge, and an open mind. The sexiest men are the ones who are not afraid to use their intelligence and share their knowledge with me. They make fascinating conversationalists and they are unafraid of expressing their opinions and knowledge. I love it when

men share their excitement about a certain subject with me. Just seeing their enthusiasm makes me feel enthusiastic as well. The subject may be far from exciting (I've had men go on about Computer Science Engineering), but because they are so passionate about it, I share their excitement. If they can be so passionate about intellectual matters, just think how they would be concerning matters of the heart. As the saying goes, "Intelligent people make better lovers."

These are qualities that I love and find

in men. Asian American men also possess these qualities. Many Asian American women who choose to exclusively date and marry Caucasian men sometimes claim they do not find these qualities in their Asian American counterparts. This is not to denigrate interracial love relationships, but when these qualities are not recognized in Asian American men, I have to ask, "Why?"

The stereotypes that suffocate Asian American men are well-known. They include: inconfident, passive, "nerdy," too smart, quiet, and almost feminine in character. When we interact with Asian American men, these stereotypes are already drilled into our minds. Whether we like it or not, we begin to consider the validity of these generalizations—we focus on this negativity. Sadly, we do not see the qualities like strength and sensitivity in them.

The negative stereotypes that plague Asian American men cause many of us to see the Caucasian man as "ideal," possessing the good qualities. Consequently, some of us do not consider Asian American men to be our partners. As women of color, especially, we should look for and recognize these qualities in all men of color. They need to feel important and supported, just as we need this support and reaffirmation of our self-worth. We can be and have been in the hands of the men, regardless of color, who victimize and hurt us. The trick is finding the men who respect and love us—they are out there. My Asian American sisters, do not overlook the Asian American man!

Culturalism: Who is 'American?'

By Matt Baldwin
Opinion Editor

This Most Covert, Pervasive Form of Racism is What I Refer to as Culturalism.

It comes to my attention more and more everyday that America's mainstream society is extremely self centered and closed minded. This American mainstream is made up mostly of middle class whites, with some others also being a part. The mainstream has a hard time dealing with peoples or lifestyles that are different than its own. The daily manifestations of this are more numerous than one might imagine. From mass media to personal conversations, the mainstream seeks to impose itself on the world. This most covert, pervasive form of racism is what I refer to as culturalism, or discrimination based on culture.

This Culturalism is the greatest injustice in that it goes on all day every day, and the perpetrators cannot see or even conceive of how unfair they are being. Culturalists, which are for the most part anyone from mainstream society, are completely blind to their deeds which lets

them continue their daily operation with zero guilt and zero regret. The first fallacious culturalist assumption is that their mainstream culture is 'normal' and that all others are 'sub' cultures, or inferior to

HOW IS IT THAT THE MAINSTREAM CAN FORCEFEED ME ITS OWN CULTURE, ACCUSE ME OF RACISM WHEN I AM SIMPLY TRYING TO PRESERVE MINE (NOT IMPOSE IT), AND STILL CONSIDER ITSELF TO BE FAIR AND JUST?

the mainstream. This is an assumption that is completely underlying in that most aren't even aware they make it, but it allows them to justify their actions. Because their culture is 'normal,' anyone

from another culture or non-mainstream group that tries to retain their culture, and preserve it by staying with that culture and its people is seen as a segregationist for wanting to separate themselves from what is normal. Yet by considering themselves 'normal' and others as 'sub-' the members of the mainstream are the ones doing the real segregating.

Taken in the racial context, the mainstream sees its culture as being normal. The mainstream also believes in integration, and often uses Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as its example. The odd thing though is that by placing its own culture on a pedestal, integration is only possible if one sheds his or her 'sub' culture and becomes a part of the mainstream. I am certain that Martin Luther King would never support having his people throwing their culture away. When people of color do not discard their culture, the mainstream chastises them for segregating

themselves, when in fact the Mainstream has done all it could to separate itself from other cultures by its perception of what is 'normal' and what is not. The mainstream imposes itself on others everyday through its constant barrage of culturalist media and also through personal and group interactions. If I come from a subculture group, the only way I'm going to be able to stand up to that attack against my culture and to keep that culture and heritage is by staying with my culture and people.

However, when I do so, I am called accused of segregation and discrimination. How is it that the mainstream can forcefeed me its own culture, accuse me of racism when I am simply trying to preserve mine (not impose it), and still consider itself to be fair and just? The thing that I cannot believe is that all the while, the mainstream is utterly and

continued on page 12, Culturalism

Culturalism, continued from page 11

completely blind to this. If the mainstream would open its eyes and truly let all people and cultures be treated with equal judgement, there would be a true American society that would include everyone.

Another hypocritical culturalist argument is that they believe in the individual and the rights and responsibilities of the individual. The mainstream is willing to go to great lengths to prove how sacred and beneficial the individual is. But when it comes down to it, mainstream members all act as a group. I don't have any problem with placing importance on the individual, in fact I do so myself. What I have a problem with is that mainstream members don't see themselves as a group, but as individuals. But they act together as a group to restrict and violate my individual rights as a Person of Color. If I stand up as an individual to protect my right to freely be a part of the culture I belong to, the mainstream ignores me. When I stand up with my brothers and sisters to protect my rights, I am accused once again of something that the mainstream gets away with. They say that 'special interest' groups try to impose their ideologies on American society, a society of individuals, and that they cannot be allowed to do so. The mainstream imposes itself on others all the time, and these groups are simply trying to protect their rights to live their lives without the mainstream imposing itself upon them. Both ways, people who aren't in the mainstream are abused without any hope for justice. The Mainstream acts as almost a single unit, not really the society of individuals as is thought, but when other groups act as one, they are stifled without question or regret.

In fights for curriculum reform, the mainstream's culturalist view of groups other than itself is seen in this individual vs. group think rhetoric. When non-mainstream racial, or ethnic groups fight to have their heritage, history and literature included in the educational system,

there is always a great outcry from the mainstream to stop such curriculum reforms. The conservative leadership in the mainstream then raises distrust of curriculum reform by saying that 'special interest' (mainstream code for People of Color, i.e. - niggers, gooks, spics, etc.) groups want to change the way your children think (turn them into nigger lovers) and that they want to devalue the American (mainstream) history and lifestyle. It is true that such reforms would change the way people think, but

most such calls for reform look simply to have a more open minded approach to education. These traditionalists say that such changes impose a group ideology on our society of individuals. The problem is that their society of individuals, which is actually the mainstream, acts as a group when it hypocritically imposes its ideologies on the individuals of other groups.

People in the mainstream often say to others, "Why don't you just be normal?" or say, "We're in America now so why don't you just be plain American?"

I don't go up to Whites and say, "Hey, why don't you just be an Asian?" 'American' doesn't mean being or acting White in America. It means making America your home. The culturalist mainstream's definition of 'normal' is like tunnel vision in our ever-shrinking world. If America is to truly be a leader in this 'New World Order,' then we must start acting like leaders and judge people by their humanity or their value as people, not on whether or not they act like so-called 'Americans.'

SHOONY'S CHICKEN BURRITO

PLAY CHEF AND SERVE THIS TASTY DISH TO YOUR ROOMMATES IN JUST 20 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS :

4 boneless chicken breasts or thighs
1 cup orange juice
3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
2 tsp. garlic powder and cumin
1 lime
margarine or vegetable oil
Toppings (optional): Chopped lettuce, guacamole, tomatoes, green onions, refried beans, cilantro, jack or cheddar cheese, salsa, sour cream.

DIRECTIONS:

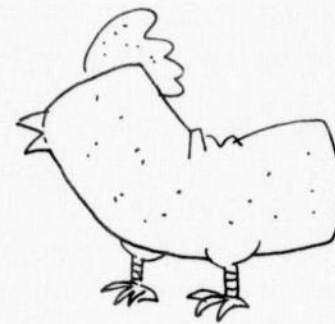
1. Melt the margarine in a skillet and brown the garlic.
2. Add the chicken, sprinkling both sides with garlic and cumin. Grill and brown on medium to high heat.
3. Pour in the orange juice and squeeze in the lime juice. Salt and pepper to taste while it cooks in the liquid.
4. Cook until juice is reduced, then remove.
5. Slice the chicken and serve on heated tortillas, add toppings.

GOURMET REVIEWS:

"Ten thousand times better than eating Casa Juan at Oceanview" -Cindy Lin

"Mmmm...The tangy zip of the O.J. is a treat to my taste buds" -Sandra Chong

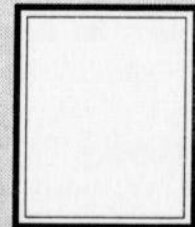
"Geez... Now I have to make this every night for my girlfriend since she likes it so much" -Stuart Kimura



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Momentum

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