



Asian American Republican Council of California



December 2003



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President's Message

This has been a year of change for both the State of California and the Asian American Republican Council of California (AARCC).

For California, the shenanigans and failed policies of Democrat politicians that ignored the interests of voters resulted in a multi-billion dollar state deficit of historic proportions, world wide attention and the recall of a sitting Governor for the first time in the state's, and only the second time in the nation's, history. Many of those who voted for the recall defied their party to do so, while many others left their party and re-registered as Republicans or Independents.

During the same time, AARCC held a special forum to focus on the dangerously negative business climate and worked to increase its membership, which culminated in AARCC being awarded a statewide charter by the California Republican Party and representation on the Party's State Central Committee.

We are proud of the work AARCC members put forth on behalf of the recall and the election of our new Governor, and congratulate Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger on his election. We are confident he will bring real leadership and a much needed change to Sacramento.

Ken Kobrin

Victory 2003

AARCC rallied for Arnold Schwarzenegger on 10/05/2003 and was honored by the campaign's request that we put a float together. The following are some pictures of the event:



AARCC Community Forum



Assembly Republican Leader Dave Cox and Assemblymen Alan Nakanishi and Dave Cogdill were featured panelists at a Community Forum hosted by AARCC to discuss California's negative business climate and its destructive effects on small businesses and jobs.

Former Chief Deputy Attorney General of California Dave Stirling, who is currently Vice President of the Pacific Legal Foundation, served as

moderator as the panel discussed and responded to audience questions on such issues as the spiraling costs of worker's compensation and unemployment insurance at Sacramento's Tu Do's Restaurant on 65th St. on Wednesday, August 13, 2003.

Opening Remarks by Moderator Dave Stirling

I wish to thank the Asian American Republican Council of California for sponsoring this timely community forum on the condition of and the reasons for the business climate in California – especially as it affects small and medium-sized businesses. I appreciate being asked to serve as moderator for this program, and we are indeed honored and appreciative to have three of our strong and hard-working Republican legislators here this evening to speak to us on legislation and related topics that affect the business climate of California, and therefore all of us.

It is an understatement to say that we are living in unusual times. Certainly that is true on the national and international scene. I believe we can all agree that our President, George W. Bush, is doing an outstanding job in balancing his duties to protect us from an avowed enemy that plans its hateful deeds in dark and hidden places, and carries them out against all Americans indiscriminately. At the same time the President has vowed to preserve the constitutional freedoms which are our rightful heritage as free men and women in this country, and for which many have, and are – as we speak – sacrificing and giving their all to preserve those freedoms for us and others to enjoy.

In California, these are indeed historic times, and we have an even longer road to travel before things get better – but better times we will reach. Let me briefly set

the stage for our speakers: When liberal Democrats took control of the California legislature following the 1998 general election, the state's treasury was flush with a surplus that approached \$12 billion. Today, just over four years later, not only has the \$12 billion surplus been exhausted, but the liberals' spending binge now has California facing an estimated \$38 billion deficit. Between 1999 and 2003, California's population plus inflation grew by a rate of 21 percent. During the same period, the state's revenues grew 28 percent. Had state spending over these four years grown the same 21 percent as population plus inflation, the excess seven percent in revenues could have been invested as a surplus, worth as much as \$20 billion today. But instead, the liberals who have controlled the legislature these past four years increased spending by a whopping 36 percent. At the same time the liberal legislators who control the legislature were spending the California fiscal into a technical state of bankruptcy, they, through legislation, and the Governor through ever more intrusive and costly regulatory burdens, have gone to great lengths to make the conducting of business in California more tedious, more expensive, and more difficult.

In the 13th annual Business Climate Survey sponsored by the California Chamber of Commerce (with 11,000 member ranging from very small businesses to very large, international companies) and the California Business Roundtable (made up primarily of medium to large businesses), 93 percent of companies doing business in the state – that is, *those private firms, large, medium, and small, that employ 82.2 % of all California's working people* (excluding farm workers) – believe that California is moving in the "wrong direction." 90 percent feel that business conditions are "worse" than two years ago; 46 percent believe the state's economy will "stay about the same," and 41% believe it will "worsen" during the next six months. The Business Roundtable's chairman described the current level of pessimism among the state's primary employer community (that – let me repeat – employs over 82% of working people in CA) as the worse in the survey's 12-year history. Indeed, monumental crises affecting the business community and each of us are piling up for the state while measures to address them in the legislature are either dying or making little headway. Take California's antiquated, abuse-ridden workers' compensation system, for example. Since 1995, when statewide private and public employer-paid workers' comp premiums amounted to \$5.7 billion, an escalation of fabricated employee injuries, medical service-provider overcharges, and ambulance-chasing attorney practices have driven statewide employer premiums to \$15 billion today.

Again, the State's Unemployment Insurance Fund is bankrupted because the liberal Democrat-controlled Legislature two years ago ordered huge increases in the unemployment benefits, but again declined to enact the type of reforms to the system necessary for it to operate effectively or even survive. The State Employment Development Department stated the unemployment taxes must rise another 51% in January 1, 2004--this is on top of the 26% increase last January--and even with this increase, the fund is expected to run dry early next year and end in 2004 with a \$1.17B deficit.

Dan Leung-In His Own Words.

Hello Friends,

I would like you folks to read my thoughts regarding the financial crisis facing California and give me some feedback.

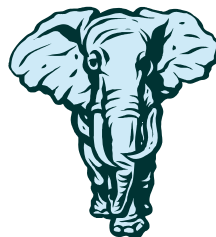
Most of us are fiscal conservatives even though we may differ somewhat in our social and moral values. This is how many of us get educated.

The problem we have in California today is not the result of lack of money from taxes (55% of adults in America feel we are being over-taxed - Wall Street Journal). The issue we have is the mismanagement of the tax money we collected (workers compensation fund continues to skyrocket to 7-8% of the payroll with extensive fraud) or the outright fraudulent use of the money to achieve political purpose (obtain millions of dollars for campaign fund from the unions to approve pension plans). Do you know that police and prison officers can retire at 50 with 90% of their salary paid for by Californians?

The solution to these problems is not to raise taxes or sell bonds to finance the deficit. The more taxes we raise or the more bonds we sell the more fraud and mismanagement we encourage. Our legislators are happy to pass the additional bucks along to get the votes. The solution is to cut waste, eliminate fraud, and uproot mismanagement.

I was appalled when Warren Buffett complained in the Wall Street Journal that California's property taxes are too low and strongly suggested that the property taxes should at least be tripled (300%) to solve California's financial problems. As the second richest man in the world he never realized that there are many poor elders who would be driven out of their homes if the property taxes are raised by 300%. He also did not realize since Prop 13 was enacted many years ago the legislators have found many other ways to raise taxes or fees to finance their appetite.

I support Arnold for his declared determination to fight for the peoples of California to eliminate fraud, cut wastes, and uproot mismanagement. Sometimes all of us do have self interest, but this time we should all work to patch the hole in the sinking boat.



John Quoc Duong Returns to California



Long time AARCC member John Quoc Duong, currently a member of AARCC's Board of Directors, has left his duties in Washington, D.C. to return to California as Executive Vice President of Bridgecreek Development Co, a real estate company in Huntington Beach he worked at prior to joining the Bush-Cheney Administration. John is also serving as State Chair of Asians for Bush - Cheney '04.

Until recently, John was Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). In this capacity, he was charged with coordinating all federal activities under an Executive Order, to increase opportunities for and improve the quality of life of over twelve million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). In addition, John worked with the White House and the President's Advisory Commission on AAPIs to advise President Bush on the needs and concerns of AAPIs.

Prior to joining the Bush-Cheney Administration, John also served in various capacities in California Governor Pete Wilson's Office of Community Relations, most recently as Deputy Director of that office. In his appointed capacity, John represented the Governor in all aspects of community affairs throughout the state and was the Governor's spokesperson to specialty media. He also represented the Governor in protocol matters, including meetings with foreign diplomats, trade delegations, and working with locally-based consulate generals' offices. In 1999, he founded Q-Strategies, a consulting firm for small businesses.

With a commitment to public service, John has served as a board member on the Contra Costa College Foundation, the Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board, the America Viet League, and the Vietnamese American Council. He was also a member of the Commonwealth Club of California, the Richmond-San Pablo Exchange Club, and the Vietnamese American Public Affairs Committee.

John came to the United States in 1982, at the age of nine, as a refugee from Vietnam. He formerly resided in the San Francisco Bay Area and is a graduate of the University of California, Davis.

Welcome home, John!

AARCC AWARDED CRP CHARTER

The Asian American Republican Council of California (AARCC) was awarded a statewide charter by the California Republican Party (CRP) at the CRP fall convention held in Los Angeles on September 12-14, 2003.

AARCC President Ken Kobrin and Founding President Joan Kawada Chan attended CRP's Statewide Organizations Committee meeting on Saturday, September 13th, at which the committee unanimously voted to grant a statewide charter to AARCC. The committee's decision was subsequently ratified by the California Republican State Central Committee in full general session held on Sunday, September 14th.

As a chartered statewide volunteer organization, AARCC's President and one other member of AARCC appointed by the President will serve as Members of the Republican State Central Committee and have the ability to appoint Associate Members. In addition, AARCC's President will serve as a member of CRP's Executive Committee.

AARCC Members Meet With Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi

Assemblyman Alan Nakanishi held a fundraiser on June 17th at Wine and Roses in Lodi. AARCC had a strong representation with a great showing of 10 members in attendance. After Assemblyman Nakanishi discussed what was happening in the Legislature, namely the budget, the AARCC members were able to meet and speak with the assemblyman. They were also able to meet Rico Oller who was also attending the fundraiser.

AARCC Members Attend Schwarzenegger Town Hall Meeting

AARCC members Alice Chang, CC Yin and Joan Kawada Chan, with soon to be Governor Schwarzenegger, at his Sacramento Town Hall meeting.



San Francisco Outstanding Asian Youth Award

A Californian native, Joseph S Yeh, was recently nominated for the Outstanding Asian Youth Award in San Francisco.

Outstanding Asian Youths will be attending the San Francisco Youth Entrepreneur Program gala in August while the national Emerging Business Leadership Summit will occur in Washington D.C under the supervision of the United States Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency.

His professional experience includes being a freelance writer, copy editor, and photographer for both a national English newspaper and a business quarterly in Taiwan; a sales manager assistant at an exporting company; and a public relations coordinator for young professional networking events.

"As a freelance reporter in Taipei, Taiwan, I interviewed various key government dignitaries, corporate executives, and community leaders...the experience and skills I have gained will be invaluable. It is very important to gain a better understanding of my heritage and improve my lingual skills as a Taiwanese-American."

Joseph holds a BA in both philosophy and communication from the University of California, Davis. He was involved with various campus organizations including Psi Chi Omega, an academic, social, and community service Asian-American interest fraternity, Alpha Phi Omega, an international community service fraternity, Asian American Christian Fellowship, and the Asian American Association.

He was president of Psi Chi Omega for two years and held other cabinet positions as well. He co-founded the Greek Diversity Association and the Psi Chi Omega Little Sister's program and participated in the annual Asian Pacific Islander Leadership Summits and Asian Pacific Culture Week events. He also received a University of California, Davis Student Leadership Development Series Certificate last year.

Upon his return from Taiwan two months ago, Joseph has been rededicating or increasing his involvement with a diverse group of volunteer, professional, and community-oriented organizations. These include the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce of North America for Young Professionals, Taproot Foundation, Taiwanese American Citizens League Bay Area, San Francisco Chapter of Public Relations Society of America Young Professionals, Asian Pacific Islander American Political Association, and The National Association of Asian American Professionals San Francisco.

He will always be continually involved with the Asian-American community in some facet, just like his current endeavor of trying to gather the resources and form the necessary connections to create a viable Taiwanese-American young professional website. Joseph currently is actively searching for career opportunities in the public relations sector, with hopes of one day founding his own public relations agency. He can be reached online at Joseph_Yeh_17@yahoo.com.

Khe Sanh – 35 Years Later

By Hoang Nguyen (edited to fit available space)

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Khe Sanh is a tiny village in Central Vietnam. It is located 15 miles from the former border separating South and North Vietnam. It is not much different from hundreds of such tiny villages scattered throughout Vietnam. However, for many Vietnamese and Americans, Khe Sanh is a sacred place. It is where, 35 years ago, the longest siege and probably the most important battle of the Vietnam-American war took place.

Khe Sanh held a strategic position during the Vietnam War. It sat next to the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the North Vietnam's main supply line to the South, and Highway 9, a key access route to the northern big cities of South Vietnam. Despite its important location, Khe Sanh had been a relative quiet and remote post for years. However, in 1967 and early 1968, for various reasons Khe Sanh became site of the most important battle of the Vietnam War. North Vietnam moved supplies, artillery, tanks, and up to four divisions into the area. The Americans wanted to lure the North Vietnamese into Khe Sanh so that the Americans' superior firepower could be used to get rid of the North Vietnam once for all.



In the early days of 1968, the siege of Khe Sanh began. The North Vietnamese fired heavy artillery at the base almost continuously. The Americans in turn, called in wave after wave of artillery and air strikes. The U.S. marines endured the siege and waited for the massive North Vietnam attack to come. Thus, for more than two months Khe Sanh was hell on earth. After 75 days, the marines were ordered to abandon Khe Sanh. The siege took the lives of about 10,000 North Vietnamese, 6,000 Bru, 500 U.S. soldiers, and about four times as many were injured. 99 of about 100 small villages around Khe Sanh were leveled.

35 year after the siege, I come to the Khe Sanh. Highway 9 leading to Khe Sanh is now a small but smooth asphalt-covered two-lane road. The road curves around beautiful streams and desolated landscape. The pockmarked hills of Khe Sanh, created by carpet-bombing and defoliant 35 years ago, are now covered with green carpets of tropical trees.



Along the road, a few Bru farmers, the local tribe men, walk slowly, carrying firewood or farm produces. A roadside stand appears out of nowhere offering jackfruits, pineapples, and old clothes. I drove slowly through the village of Khe Sanh. In the old days this village was consisted of a few dozens of thatched huts. Today, the village seems to be doing well by the Vietnamese standard. More than 200 houses

line up along the two sides of Highway 9. Many are brick houses with red tiles. Antennas rise on top of many houses – a sure sign of prosperity. The village even offers two guesthouses to tourists. I stop near one guesthouse to ask for direction to the old US base. The small road leading to the old US base is well paved, and construction is under way to widen it. The old US base is now a small fenced in tourist attraction. Admission fee is 10,000 VN Dong, about \$0.75. The signs of the old U.S. base and the fierce Khe Sanh battle 35 years ago are now completely erased. After the siege, the U.S. bulldozed the landing strips and blew up the bunkers. The locals stripped the burned tanks, trucks, and helicopters for scrap metal. Time took care of the rest - fields of eucalyptus, coffee, pines, and other trees now stand in the place of the old U.S. base. A museum was built in the middle of the enclosed tourist area to commemorate the battle of Khe Sanh. A few U.S. helicopters were brought in, and a bunker was recreated for special effect.



I stood there in the middle of the old Khe Sanh base, bewildered. During the siege, an American general described the U.S. marine base, "It was a distressing sight, completely unpoliced, strewn with rubble duds and damaged equipment, and with the troops living a life more similar to rats than human beings." Deep inside my mind, I half expected to see the barbwire, unexploded bombs, mines, and burned C130 and helicopters.

Instead, there is only silence except for the gentle western wind blowing through the trees. The red soil, blue sky, and the green hills paint a surreal beautiful picture of Khe Sanh. An old Vietnamese tourist walks aimlessly around the place, probably an old North or South Vietnamese soldier trying to relive with his ordeal here 35 years ago. I do not want to disturb his trance. Many Vietnamese believe that the souls of dead soldiers often wander around the place of their last battle. I thought I heard the whispers of the wandering souls of thousands of dead Vietnamese, Bru, and Americans soldiers among the gentle west wind. They should not feel lonely though, for the souls of thousands of Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, French, Champa, and Mongolian soldiers from previous wars had been wondering there for years before them. Khe Sanh is now just a small footnote in the long and war-ridden history of Vietnam.

Schwarzenegger Swearing-In Ceremony

Many members of AARCC assisted with and attended the swearing-in ceremony for California's Thirty Eighth Governor.



AARCC members and others then joined together for an after the ceremony luncheon at Sacramento's Fuji Restaurant.



Upcoming Events

- Dec. 10 -- Joint Holiday Party hosted by AARCC, the California Black Republican Council/Sacramento, the Chinese-American Republicans of Sacramento, the Elk Grove-Laguna Area Republicans, the Filipino-American Republican Council of CA/Sacramento, and the Republican National Hispanic Assembly/Sacramento. Call 916-391-0227 for information and reservations.
- Dec. 11 -- Sacramento County Republican Party, Monthly Meeting, 7pm, Call 916-925-185 for information.
- Dec. 16 -- Joint Holiday Party hosted by Sacramento County Central Committee and Republicans of River City. Call 916-925-1850 for information and reservations.
- Jan. 16 -- California Congress of Republicans Convention, Sacramento. Call 916-332-6180 for information.
- Jan. 21 -- AARCC Governing Board Monthly Meeting. Call 916-391-0227 for information.
- Feb. 16 -- Sacramento County Republican Party Annual Lincoln Day Dinner, Carmichael Elks Lodge. Call 916-925-1850 for information.
- Feb. 20 -- California Republican Party Convention, Burlingame. Call 818-841-5210 for information.

