

CHUCK GREEN Observance far from racist



What happened at Pearl Harbor is ancient history to many. But to the survivors of the attack and the relatives of those who died, it is a memory that will never go away.

Saturday marks the 50th anniversary of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, which thrust the United States headfirst into World War II.

The incident angered Americans, shocked the world and eventually changed life on this planet as we know it.

It was an unprovoked attack that claimed the lives of 2,403 innocent American servicemen and civilians, sank or severely damaged 21 ships of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and destroyed 188 American aircraft.

But with the fast-approaching anniversary of the "date which will live in infamy," as President Franklin Roosevelt called it at the time, Japanese-Americans, particularly in Hawaii, are concerned about the possibility of what they perceive as "Japan-bashing."

According to a story from The Associated Press, Japanese-Americans make up almost 23 percent of Hawaii's population of 1.2 million. For them, the story goes, December will be the cruelest month, in which strong emotional currents will tug at them from both directions.

From one side, they will feel the new wave of national pride in their ancestral country's economic and technological accomplishments of the last half-century.

From the other, they cannot escape the memories of what happened on that misty Sunday morning in 1941.

Japanese tourists and citizens alike visit the Arizona Memorial in the middle of the harbor, where almost half of the American dead are entombed in the wreckage. Japanese-Americans remember with pride their contribution to the American war effort, such as the all-Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which became the most decorated U.S. unit in the European campaign — and suffered the highest casualty rate — while their fathers and uncles were interned in camps throughout the United States, along with their families and friends, for the extent of the war.

According to the AP story, Japanese tourists and business travelers, who numbered 1.4 million last year, contributed \$4 billion to Hawaii's economy. But there remains widespread resentment, in Hawaii and elsewhere throughout the United States, of Japan's \$35 billion investment in

the islands, which many locals blame for skyrocketing land prices.

Resentment for the attack on Pearl Harbor is emerging in other forms, too. President Bush, yielding to pressure from veterans groups, decided not to share the deck of the USS Missouri — the battleship on which the Japanese surrender of World War II was signed in Tokyo Harbor — with Japanese dignitaries during Saturday's memorial observance, which will be attended by thousands of survivors of the air attack on Hawaii.

Sadly, Japanese homes, businesses and property in Hawaii might be the targets of vandalism in the coming days or weeks, and some Japanese citizens or visitors will undoubtedly be the recipients of harsh words and stern looks from anyone who remembers what happened 50 years ago.

That's uncalled for. But according to AP, many Japanese-American groups are calling for toned-down observances and are calling the emphasis on the attack, which was carried out 50 years ago by a dictatorship that has since gone the way of the dodo bird, racist.

Racist? That's where the concern for Japan-bashing ends and over-sensitivity steps in.

What happened at Pearl Harbor 50 years ago was an unprovoked strike

on U.S. military bases that crippled the U.S. fleet and Army Air Corps, killed sailors and airmen — many while they slept — and affected millions of lives while costing the U.S. government billions of dollars.

The fact cannot be changed. And the remembrance of the event, which led to America's involvement in World War II and changed the makeup of the world forever, should be carried out any way veterans and government officials see fit, not the way the Japanese want it.

They lost that right the moment the first warplane took off from its aircraft carrier.

To be sure, there is widespread U.S. resentment of Japan and its economic stability. But calling the observance of one of the biggest catastrophes in American history "racist" is absurd.

American resentment of Japan is not without substance or reason. Japan has maintained unfair business practices for decades, implementing harsh trade laws that allow America to buy Japanese goods while placing tight restrictions on U.S. goods imported by Japan.

Moreover, since 1945, Japan has spent less than 1 percent of its gross national product on the self-defense of its territory, keeping within the rules set by its U.S.-written, post-war constitution, which limits its weapons manufacturing.

Instead, Japan has taken a free-rider approach by letting the United States defend Japanese soil and therefore freeing Japanese yen for industrialization and production.

During last spring's war in the Persian Gulf, Japan promised \$9 billion for the allied war effort — a drop in the bucket of what actual expenses were, despite the fact that Japan is one of the most oil-dependent nations in the world.

What happened at Pearl Harbor is ancient history to many. But to the survivors of the attack and the relatives of those who died, it is a memory that will never go away.

The observance of the 50th anniversary of the Day of Infamy should remain one American item the Japanese shouldn't be allowed to buy.

Green is a senior news-editorial major, the Daily Nebraskan's assistant sports editor and a columnist.

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UNL must fight against sexual harassment

The collective at the Women's Resource Center commends the women on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln swim team who came forward in order to address and challenge sexual harassment that they felt was aimed at them ("Coach accused of harassment," DN, Nov. 7). Through their actions they have raised an awareness that sexual harassment can happen anywhere, to anyone, at any time.

We find these women especially courageous considering the hostile environment that has been evident both by the outrageous scrutiny of Professor Anita Hill's character during the Clarence Thomas confirmation hearings and by the insensitive remarks made by Bob Devaney in the Daily Nebraskan. Devaney acknowledges that the touching did happen. He did not acknowledge that team members, or anyone for that matter, has a right to ask not to be touched.

The Daily Nebraskan article paraphrased Devaney as saying, "team members upset about the coach are free to leave the team." That's wrong. The coach has an obligation, not recognized in Devaney's comment, to modify his behavior toward any team member who makes him aware of her discomfort. "He was a little more friendly than he should be," Devaney said. This implies that women are not intelligent enough, nor aware of their

own bodies, to determine when they are being sexually harassed. This is an uneducated view coming from a top-level administrator and director of athletic programming.

The UNL administration, via the regents, made a promise to women faculty, staff and students in April 1991. This promise deals with the creation of a more equitable environment on this campus. This includes recruitment and retention of women and minority faculty and addressing issues of sex issues of sex discrimination, which includes sexual harassment.

This is their call to action. What policies are in place to ensure confidentiality within the grievance process? How did the university handle this particular case? How are these women, who have risked coming forward, being protected by UNL? It is time for the university to come forth and deal with this issue in a strong and vocal manner. To do less would put them in the same camp as Devaney. Chancellor Graham Spanier stated several of his goals concerning the handling of sexual harassment grievances in the "Daily Nebraskan" ("Spanier says victims of harassment need options," DN, Nov. 19). We depend upon Spanier to follow through on these goals.

We affirm the decision that these women made to come forward and

encourage others to do the same. That means the atmosphere and the manner in which sex discrimination is handled must drastically improve. The stigma surrounding women who do come forward must be abolished.

If you are the victim of sexual harassment, you do not have to tolerate it. Take yourself seriously, tell the harasser not to touch or speak to you in that manner, document what happens, when, where and by whom. Inform your chairperson, supervisor or other trusted individual. Network with other women students, faculty or staff members.

The university often takes a low-key, reactive approach to issues that may harm its public image. We encourage women to seek outside counsel if the results obtained by the grievance process are not acceptable. This often forces the university to respond in a timely manner to issues of gender inequity.

We must continue, as students, faculty and staff members, to take a vocal stance against sexism, racism and homophobia on our campus. This is crucial in creating an environment where learning is unimpeded by overt bias based on personal characteristics.

Tamika Simmons
volunteer coordinator
Women's Resource Center

LETTER POLICY

The Daily Nebraskan welcomes brief letters to the editor from all readers and interested others.

Letters will be selected for publication on the basis of clarity, originality, timeliness and space available.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered for publication. Letters should include the author's name, year in school, major and group affiliation, if any. Requests to withhold names will not be granted.

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