

The AACP Newsletter

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Asian American Curriculum Project, Inc.

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Life Expectancy, Health Issues, History and Civics Ignorance, and Fear

By Leonard D. Chan

Rather than present two long articles this month we have a wide gamut of topics that we will briefly touch upon. Enjoy!

Life Expectancy

A recent study entitled “*Eight Americas: Investigating Mortality Disparities Across Races, Counties, and Race-Counties in the United States*” highlighted the wide disparity in life expectancy in America. The study found that Asian Americans had the longest life expectancy among the different groups that were analyzed.

This detailed scientific study is published at the *Public Library of Science* website. To listen to a summary of the study, go to the *NPR Science Friday* website.

Like many scientific studies that you may hear briefly summarized on the evening news, this study merely tries to correlate and report the differences without answering all the issues of causation. A person listening to just the summary may get the wrong picture of what this study really shows. Anyone that actually has a chance to read the details of the study will be left with many more questions than answers. For example, why is the life expectancy of Asian women living in Bergen County, New Jersey, 91 years when Native American males living in some counties in South Dakota only 58 year? If you are an Asian woman thinking about moving to New Jersey, as a result of hearing about this study, you may not truly live to 91 because of the move.

Even the authors' methods of how and why they divided the United States into the eight groupings that they came up with, leaves you with many questions. For example, why did they essentially group Asian Americans across the continental United States in one group while splitting white and black Americans into multiple groups based on geography? The formula that the authors employed to determine the grouping is even more complex than what I just described. To say that Asian Americans have the longest life expectancy is a bit incorrect because some Asian Americans are actually counted in the other groupings. As a result this study seems to be making a comparison of apples and oranges.

The one thing that you can take away from this study is that America is not a monolithic country. It is comprised of a wide range of people that have a very large range of differences between their life expectancy. So the next time you hear that life expectancy is such and such in the United States, keep in mind that this is just an average across the wide variety of different socioeconomic and geographic groupings that make up America.

- **Eight Americas** - <http://medicine.plosjournals.org/perlserv/?request=get-document&doi=10.1371/journal.pmed.0030260>
- **NPR Science Friday on Eight Americas study** - http://www.sciencefriday.com/pages/2006/Sep/hour2_091506.html

Hepatitis B and Asian and Pacific Islander Americans

Asian Pacific Americans, especially immigrants, have a higher rate of Hepatitis B infection than the rate among all Americans.

Here are some notes to understanding this article and the articles that we link to.

- Chronic hepatitis B viral (HBV) infection is defined as someone that continues to be infected for more than six months.
- A large percentage of people that get infected as adults do not become chronic cases. People that get infected, but do not become chronic cases, have immunity to further infection. These people are described as having cleared HBV.
- Carriers are people that can pass on the disease. That includes all infected people that have not yet cleared the disease.

Some of the statistics found at various websites are in disagreement, but the following are the points of agreement.

- A large percentage (somewhere around 75 to 80%) of people with liver cancer (hepatocellular carcinoma or HCC) also have chronic hepatitis B infections. The links between the two diseases is not completely understood, but anyone having chronic HBV is advised to get routine checks for liver cancer.
- The spread of HBV from mother to baby usually happens at the time of birth.
- The spread of HBV from mother to baby accounts for most HBV infections in Asian Pacific Islander (API) Americans.
- The younger you are at the time of infection, the higher the chance of becoming chronically infected. As high as 90% of infants that become infected go on to be chronic cases.
- More than 2/3 of HBV cases have no symptoms or might be mistaken for other diseases like the flu. Therefore many people chronically infected with HBV may not know it.
- Anywhere from 100,000 to 130,000 Americans become HBV infected each year.
- Approximately .3% of all Americans have chronic HBV infections.
- 4-10% of API Americans may have chronic HBV infections.
- Approximately 5000 Americans die from HBV associated diseases (liver cancer and cirrhosis) each year.
- HBV is much more infectious than AIDS
- There are HBV screening tests and APIs in particular are advised to take them.
- If you do not have an HBV infection and do not have the HBV antibodies, you are advised to get the HBV vaccine shots.

- **Immunization Action Coalition - Hepatitis B Info. for API Americans** - <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/4190apia.htm>
- **Asian Liver Center at Stanford University** - http://liver.stanford.edu/Edu/Edu_hepbinasians.php
- **liverdisease.com - connections between liver cancer and HBV** - http://www.liverdisease.com/livercancer_hepatitis.html
- **Hepatitis B Foundation - statistics on HBV** - <http://www.hepb.org/hepb/statistics.htm>

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Give Us Your Feedback

Please feel free to send us your reviews, comments, and book suggestions. You can contact us at - aacpinc@asianamericanbooks.com

Up Coming Events

Here are some events that AACCP will soon be attending. Invite us to your events.

Date/Time	Event	Location
Sept. 30 Oct. 1 10am-5pm	8th Annual Silicon Valley Moon Festival	Memorial Park Cupertino, CA
Oct. 7 1 pm	Book Reading and Signing for Author and Biographer Anne Akabori - <i>Visa's For Life & The Gift</i>	AACP San Mateo, CA
Oct. 14 10-3pm	2nd Annual Artistry Faire	Palo Alto Buddhist Temple Palo Alto, CA
Oct. 21 1 pm	Book Reading and Signing for Author John Hamamura - <i>Color of the Sea</i>	AACP San Mateo, CA
Nov. 11	Japantown Winter Arts & Crafts Boutique	SJ Buddhist Church Gym 640 N. 5th St. San Jose, CA
Nov. 11 1pm	Cynthia Chin-Lee and Felicia Hoshino signing	Foster City Library Foster City, CA
Nov. 14 7pm	Judy Yung presentation and signing	SM Library San Mateo, CA
Other Event of Interest that AACCP May Not Attend		
Sept. 30 6-12mid.	Chinatown Rising - 2006 Gala Dinner and Dance Chinese Historical Soc. of America	SF Marriott Hotel 55 4th St. SF, CA
Oct. 12-15	2006 American Studies Assoc. Meeting	Oakland, CA
Oct. 28	San Mateo OCA's Asian American Achievement Awards	S. SF Conv. Center S. SF, CA
Nov. 8-12	Nat. Assoc. for Multicultural Ed. (NAME) 2006 Conference	Wyndham Hotel Phoenix, AZ
Nov. 11-13	CA Lib. Assoc. 108th Annual Conference	Sacramento Convention Center Sacramento, CA
Nov. 16-19	CA School Lib. Assoc. Conference 2006	Sacramento Convention Center Sacramento, CA
Nov. 18 8-3pm	(NPIEN) 5th Annual Education Conference National Pacific Islander Educator Network	Cabrillo High School 2001 Santa Fe Ave. Long Beach, CA

Editor's Message

Yes, this is the September newsletter. You're most likely reading it in Oct. unless you happen to be checking your email late on Sat. night and you are in the Pacific Time Zone or west of here.

Sorry about this. Things are pretty busy. I'd explain, but then this might end up getting to you even deeper into October :).

Okay, things to point out on our schedule –

AACP will be holding a booksigning at our store on Oct. 7th at 1pm. Anne Akabori will be on hand to discuss her work with recording the history and life of humanitarian and diplomat Chiune Sugihara and his family.

AACP will be holding a booksigning at our store on Oct. 24th at 1pm. John Hamamura will be reading from his novel *Color of the Sea*.

On Oct. 28th the San Mateo OCA will be honoring Kenneth Fong, Yuan Yuan Tan, and Ben Fong-Torres. Ben Fong-Torres' latest book will also be available for signing.

On Nov. 11th AACCP will be holding a signing with author Cynthia Chin-Lee and illustrator Felicia Hoshino at the Foster City library.

On Nov. 14th at 7pm AACCP and the San Mateo OCA will be hosting a presentation and booksigning by author and historian Judy Yung at the new San Mateo library.

Keep reading the AACCP newsletter and website for further details.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) has selected Angel Island Immigration station as one of 25 Bay Area historical sites to potentially receive funding from the "Partners in Preservation" program. NTHP will automatically award the historic site with the most votes from the general public. AACCP believes Angel Island is worthy of your votes, since Angel Island hold major significance to the Asian American community. To vote go to <http://www.partnersinpreservation.com/>. Hurry, you must vote by Oct. 31, 2006.

Thank you very much Sophie for your help with this month's newsletter. Thanks everyone for the event announcements and feedback. Sorry if I didn't get it in this calendar. Hope to see you soon at some up coming event.

Leonard Chan
Executive Editor

The following books are discounted an additional 20% from the listed price for subscribers to our newsletter. The discounts on these books end October 17, 2006.

	<p>The Gift Of Life By Anne Akabori 2005, 137 pages, Paperback.</p> <p>This is the first definitive biographical account of the life and times of Chiune Sugihara and some of the survivors who received his visas. In less than one month in 1940, he issued 2,000 visas, ultimately resulting in his saving over 6,000 lives. Today, the descendants of these survivors number over 100,000. Another story as compelling as "Schindler's List" that should not be missed.</p> <p>Item #3425, Price \$18.00 - for newsletter subscribers \$14.40</p>
	<p>Color of the Sea By John Hamamura 2006, 306 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Highly recommended by the Library Journal, Color of the Sea tells an amazingly touching, compelling historical epic about Japanese-American experiences and the power of love. Come meet John Hamamura and hear all about it at 1pm on Saturday, 10/21/06, at AACP.</p> <p>Item #3426, Price \$15.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$12.76</p>
	<p>Singing Shijimi Clams By Naomi Kojima Illustrated by Naomi Kojima 2006, 32 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Halloween is just around the corner! Check out this new Japanese witch story, featuring a not-so-wicked witch, a slightly grumpy cat, and one large bucket of singing clams. The realization of the joy of giving and helping is inspirational for kids from age 4 to 8.</p> <p>Item #3426, Price \$15.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$12.76</p>
	<p>Digging to America By Anne Tyler Illustrated by 2006, 277 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>Two families meet by chance at the Baltimore airport as they both await the arrival of their adopted infant daughters from Korea. The Iranian American Yazdan family and the Donaldson family become intertwined from this chance encounter and through their shared experiences with their daughters. This is another gem from Anne Tyler, the author of <i>Breathing Lessons</i> and <i>The Accidental Tourist</i>.</p> <p>Item #3427, Price \$24.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$19.96</p>
	<p>Be Water, My Friend The Early Years of Bruce Lee By Ken Mochizuki Illustrated by Dom Lee 2006, 32 pages, Hardback.</p> <p>"Water, the softest substance on Earth, could never be hurt because it offered no resistance. But with enough force it could break through anything in the world." The title <i>Be Water, My Friend</i> is a direct quote from Bruce Lee, a legendary martial artist. This elegantly illustrated biographical picture book will definitely inspire the young and touch the hearts of all.</p> <p>Item #3428. Price \$16.95 - for newsletter subscribers \$13.56</p>

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The Coming Crisis in Citizenship

A Report by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute National Civics Literacy Board

The finding of this report looks really bad for college students. If you didn't hear about this report in the news the other day, a group called the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI) release a report summarizing the results of random tests they conducted with college students across the country.

The ISI conducted tests with college freshman and then with seniors to gauge the amount of history and civics knowledge being learned. The four areas covered by the test were American history; government; America and the world; and the market economy.

The opening paragraph of the report state,

“Today's college students, our nation's future leaders, must understand their nation's history and founding principles if they are to be informed and engaged citizens. They need to understand not only the fundamental institutions and ideals that defined the American founding, but also the more than two centuries of debate and struggle through which Americans have worked out their unique identity as a people. In addition, in this post-9/11 era, it is increasingly necessary that students understand America's relationship to the rest of the world.”

I couldn't agree more. However, the underlining point missed by most news media outlets was that all entering freshmen as a whole were deemed by the ISI to have failed the test. Which means that non-college bound citizens were most likely of equal or lesser levels of ignorance. Ideally, shouldn't all citizens “understand their nation's history and founding principles?”

What the study concludes is that college students are not learning any additional history and civics, and in many cases forgetting what they had learned prior to entering. This does not bode well for the general public - are we many times worse since leaving high school?

What is also overemphasized in such a study is the laundry list approach to education. Sure it would be great for all Americans to know a wealth of trivia. But real knowledge is more than just knowing a collection of facts. Perfect spelling for example is not as important as knowing how to use the words properly. All you need is a good dictionary. Likewise knowing all the words to the Declaration of Independence is not as important as knowing the reasons for the creation of the document and its world changing impact.

A life long willingness and skills to learn, along with the resources to help you are just as important. Having gone through a college science program, I can kind of understand how some students may have regressed in fields other than their majors. Since leaving college, I think I've learned and relearned a lot of history and civics knowledge. I realize this may not be the case for the majority of American citizens, but in order to prevent these

regressions from happening we need to imbue students with a life long love of learning and the ability to think logically. Uninvolved citizens are more likely apathetic because they don't believe their involvement will make a difference, or are basically too lazy or too busy to learn the issues. For those that do get involved, but choose to remain closed minded or ignorant, having passed a history and civic exam long ago would not significantly make them better citizens.

- **ISI Report - The Coming Crisis in Citizenship** - <http://www.americancivilliteracy.org/report/summary.html>

Be Not Afraid

Upon the anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, it may be a good time to remind ourselves that the real threats to our lives comes not from terrorist, but from every day activities.

In doing research for this article, I found two well-written pieces. One article by Michael Rothschild for the Washington Post was published back on November 25, 2001 shortly after 9/11. The other article was written more recently by Ronald Bailey (<http://www.reason.com/rb/rb081106.shtml>) on August 11, 2006 after the capture of some alleged terrorist in England that were accused of plotting to blow up ten commercial airliners.

Rothschild came up with some extreme scenarios of terrorist attacks and calculated the odds of getting killed by one of these acts. The first case is of a person that shops at one mall per week for two hours. With more than 40,000 malls that are open for about 75 hours per week, the odds of dying from a once a week terrorist mall bombing that destroys the entire mall is approximately 1.5 million to 1. Whereas your odds of dying in a car accident on your way to the mall is about 6500 to 1.

Bailey calculates that if terrorist were to carry off one 9/11 type attack per year your odds of dying in such an attack in one year would be about 100,000 to 1.

Your odds of dying from heart disease in 2003 were approximately (290,850,005 / 685,089) 425 to 1. For APIs in 2003 (12,007,985 / 10,163) the odds were 1182 to 1. The odds are probably much worse if you smoke and don't exercise.

As Rothschild states, “People tend to underestimate the probability of a common event's occurring but overestimate the probability of a rare event. These findings may be due in part to the frequency with which we are exposed to news stories about the remote versus the common event.”

So Ronald Bailey concludes, “We ultimately vanquish terrorism when we refuse to be terrorized.” So be not afraid, but please do get some exercise and quit smoking :).

- **How To Live A Rational Life** - <http://www.anxietyandstress.com/system/terrorismandyowhatarethedodds/>
- **Don't Be Terrorized** - <http://www.reason.com/rb/rb081106.shtml>
- **National Safety Council - What are the odds of dying?** - <http://www.nsc.org/lrs/statinfo/odds.htm>
- **CDC - Leading Causes of Death Reports, 1999 – 2003** - <http://webapp.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcaus10.html>