

A business owner's fight with the state



Photo provided by Kim Nguyen

Kim Nguyen (back row, second from left) with students as they cut a senior citizen's hair.

Kim Nguyen said she feels targeted

By Carolyn Bick
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Each day, Vietnamese immigrant Kim Nguyen opens the doors to her beauty school in Chinatown. Each day, she teaches students, many of them immigrants themselves, the practice of cosmetology, so they may start their own careers here. And each day, she worries that the Washington State Department of Licensing (DOL) is going to send yet another inspector to try to close down her school.

A little less than two years ago, in 2017, the DOL

told the 42-year-old beauty school owner and mother of three that she was being placed on probation, and had to remedy what it stated were repeated health and safety violations that scored her a 63 out of 100, and that she failed to remedy the violations in a follow-up inspection the following month.

In addition to working to correct the violations cited, Nguyen paid a \$1,000 fine and traveled on her own down to Olympia to sign a letter in English—not her first language—agreeing to more frequent

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"Always be My Maybe"



"Godzilla"



"Ms. Purple"



"Late Night"

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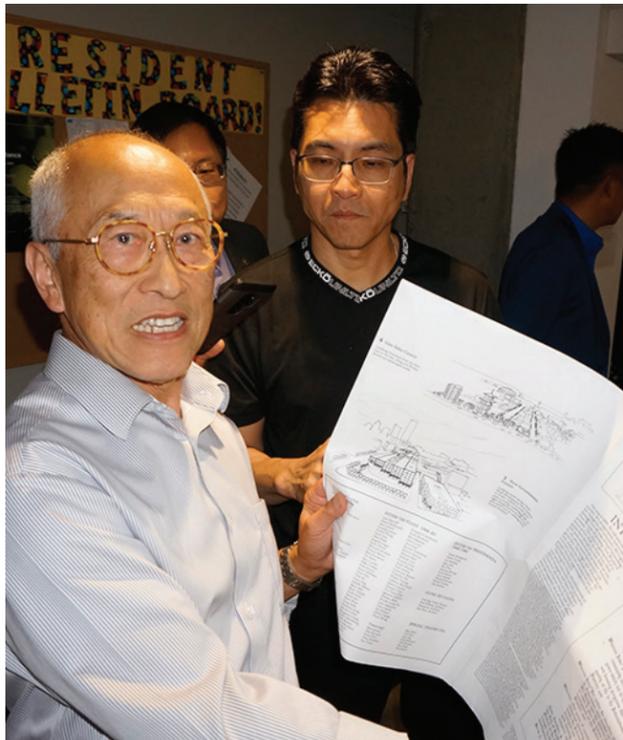


Photo by George Liu

Tony Au (right) with Dennis Su. Su, president of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, held up a document signed in 1983 by the late Bob Santos saying that housing in Chinatown should be developed for all income levels. Su and three other architects did the research on future development.

Community battles over future of Bush Garden building

By Assunta Ng
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Supporters and opponents of the new Bush Garden development, called Jasmine, packed Hirabayashi Place on May 28. Although no formal decision would be made at the International Special Review District (ISR) board meeting, both sides urged their respective supporters to show up.

Jasmine, a 17-story development consisting of micro retail, affordable housing units, and market-rate condos, would be the plan for the Bush Garden property (formerly Elgin Hotel) and nearby vacant warehouse at 614-

620 Maynard Avenue South. It is the brainchild of James Wong, founder of Vibrant Cities.

A Chinese immigrant, Wong was raised on Beacon Hill. He graduated from Cleveland High School and the University of Washington. Wong and his father had worked in Chinatown restaurants. Wong worked for China Gate and other Chinese restaurants.

While there are those that support Jasmine for its design of enhancing cultural preservation, opponents reject it, saying it is not in character with the district. Supporters said Jasmine will

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National Spelling Bee ends in 8-way tie

By BEN NUCKOLS

OXON HILL, Md. (AP) — There were warning signs throughout a marathon day of spelling that this Scripps National Spelling Bee would not conclude like any other in the event's 94-year history.

Rishik Gandhasri sensed it as he stepped to the microphone for the ninth round of the prime-time finals on the night of May 30, when he was one of eight spellers remaining onstage.

"Just out of curiosity," Rishik asked pronouncer Jacques Bailly, "do you happen to know what time it is?"

It was 11:18 p.m. Forty-five minutes later, Rishik



AP Photo/Susan Walsh

Co-champions of the 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee. From left: Shruthika Padhy, 13, of Cherry Hill, N.J., Erin Howard, 14, of Huntsville, Ala., Rishik Gandhasri, 13, of San Jose, Calif., Christopher Serrao, 13, of Whitehouse Station, N.J., Saketh Sundar, 13, of Clarksville, Md., Sohum Sukhatankar, 13, of Dallas, Texas, Rohan Raja, 13, of Irving, Texas, and Abhijay Kodali, 12, of Flower Mound, Texas.

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inspections for two years, and giving inspectors the power to shut down her business again for any health and safety violation they found. Since then, Nguyen has passed all her inspections. Her most recent one netted her a perfect score of 100.

But the DOL is now trying to force Nguyen to sign a similar probation letter—also in English. However, the 2018 violation cited has been disputed by multiple witnesses, and Nguyen says what the DOL is doing is harassment, rather than its actual job.

According to an inspection report from January 2018, a student told DOL inspector Carole Arias that neither a licensed instructor nor Nguyen was present in the beauty school at the time some of her students were practicing on customers, but that Nguyen was on her way. Though a senior cosmetologist, Phi Nhut Nguyen, was present, and had a license to practice cosmetology, the inspector wrote that he had not taken his exams to become a licensed instructor. The report stated that his 505 hours spent learning at the beauty school to become a licensed instructor had expired in 2015. However, it does not directly state that he was teaching the seven students in the room. The official statement of charges also claimed he was conducting a haircut at the time of her inspection.

However, according to Nguyen's rebuttal letter, the student actually told Arias that Nguyen was just outside in the parking lot gathering some supplies from her car, which was parked right in front of the school, when Arias walked into the school. Nguyen's students also wrote a rebuttal letter of their own, which supported this claim.

There was also a licensed instructor, Thuy Giannini, in a different room training another student in facials. In their rebuttal letter, Nguyen's students said they did not recall Arias ever asking if there was another instructor at the school, so they were surprised to see she claimed there was no licensed instructor present.

"We do not think that Carol [sic] even walked through the entire school since she did not have the correct head counts," the students' letter reads.

Giannini's letter contests Arias' statement, too. Giannini said she didn't see Arias, at the time, because she was in the facial room, teaching another student, which appears to back up the assertion that Arias didn't do a complete walkthrough of the school.

"Inspector Carol [sic] should have done her walkthrough more completely and thoroughly, and every other student who was at school that day can be a witness. Since I am a licensed instructor for the school, the accusation that the students did not have an instructor on the premise [sic] is not true," Giannini's letter reads.

Furthermore, while he operates independently out of the school, the students and Nguyen assert that Phi Nhut Nguyen was not cutting hair or working at the time of Arias' visit. In his own rebuttal letter, Phi Nhut Nguyen said he operates his own business, and



Kim Nguyen (third from left) posing with her students.

does not cut school customers' hair.

Arias wrote in her report that Nguyen was away from the school for five minutes, but Nguyen and her students said she was only away for a maximum of two or three minutes, reappearing "instantly with all the supplies in hand when the inspector was about to inspect."

"We saw they both say hi to each other," the students' letter reads.

While the law states that licensed instructors "must be physically present where students are training," Nguyen said she couldn't very well have taken all seven students outside into the parking lot with her, and then ferried them all back inside. That would have needlessly disrupted their training. Calling Giannini into the room, while Nguyen was outside, would have created the same problem for Giannini's student.

Nevertheless, DOL flagged Nguyen, and she has once again found herself facing another two years of operating on tenterhooks.

It wasn't the first time Arias had visited the school. She and her colleague Elizabeth Melia were the inspectors who did the follow-up inspection of the school in August 2017, a month after the July inspection that scored Nguyen a 63. According to a statement by customer Todd Hansen, who was getting his back waxed at the time, Melia "entered the Facial [sic] room without knocking on the door, and made everyone stop working, and then I had to leave the room and go downstairs without my shirt on until she was done with her inspection."

"This took quite a long time, and I felt very uncomfortable while all this was going on," Hansen's statement continues. "I really feel as though the way the inspectors handled their duties hampered the schools [sic] business, and that they could have done this inspection without putting a stop to everyone [sic] work."

Department spokesperson Christine Anthony said inspectors are not supposed to tell customers to leave, either before or after the inspection.

"That is not the role of the inspector," Anthony said in an email.

Over the last two years, Nguyen

estimated she has been subjected to six or seven inspections, all of which she has passed. Normally, Anthony said in a phone interview, beauty schools and salons are inspected once every two years. However, the agreement Nguyen signed consented to being inspected more frequently.

Some of the violations for which Nguyen was initially flagged in July 2017 seemed needlessly "nit-picky," Todd Myers of the Washington State Policy Center said. Myers has been working to try to help Nguyen with her case. For instance, the July 2017 DOL inspector Tom Fite flagged a brand-new, empty spray bottle, because it hadn't been labeled.

"I said, 'Sir, if you want, I have to label the container water or lotion, it's just empty – should I write, 'empty bottle?'" Nguyen recalled asking Fite.

Of the total 15 violations listed from July 2017, Melia and Arias listed seven uncorrected offenses, according to the DOL's statement of charges. Some of these violations include used nail files and buffers at students' stations; hair on a clipper; uncovered, clean tools; and storing a mobile phone with clean tools.

The newest probation order revokes Nguyen's license for a period of five years, but gives her a two-year stay on the revocation.

The order also fines her business \$1,000—though Nguyen said her lawyer has negotiated that fine down to \$500—and once again subjects her to more frequent inspections, the number of which is not listed. It states that she must pass all safety and sanitation inspections for the next two years, or the department

may immediately revoke her license, thereby shutting down her school. The minimum score a beauty school may receive to pass an inspection is 86. If the beauty school passes all these requirements over the two-year timespan, and does not incur any further violations, the probation order will be lifted.

As with the 2017 probation order, the newest one is in English. At the time she signed the 2017 letter, Nguyen said she didn't fully understand what she was signing, and that she wished she had had a lawyer present. She said department personnel did not offer her a copy of the letter in Vietnamese, nor did they offer to provide her with a translator. The letter itself asks the signatory if they want translation services provided, but it does so in English.

In her email, Anthony said the department will "provide translated documents upon request," but would not say if the translation services were verbally offered. She only said that the request is "part of the inspector checklist, and are always available."

Similarly, Nguyen said, the inspectors who have shown up periodically over the last two years have always conducted their inspections in English, and never offered to provide a translator – which, according to Anthony, they should have done and should be doing.

"Yes, inspectors offer translation services prior to inspections," Anthony said in an email.

When asked when the inspectors are supposed to offer a translator, Anthony repeated,

"Again, the translator request is part of the inspector checklist and is always available." She did not clarify if a person is verbally notified that they may request translation services.

The inspectors also presented Nguyen with findings in English. She said the department did not offer to provide her with a copy of the findings in Vietnamese. Anthony said a translated copy is available upon request.

Nguyen said she feels targeted for being an immigrant competing with more expensive American beauty schools, and also feels harassed by the DOL for on-paper violations that, in practice, were not actual problems. She is worried, she said, not only about the future of her business, but also about her students, a majority of whom do not speak English.

"If they go to American schools, they cannot pass the tests," Nguyen said.

On May 31, Nguyen received a letter stating that she would have to appear in court in Tacoma in August. The letter, written in English, came without any other explanation. She had to call her lawyer, Douglas Brown of Abelson Herron Halpern LLP, for clarification about what it meant. If she does not settle with the DOL, they will take her to court, she said, per her lawyer. The letter wasn't a certainty, just a possibility. But to Nguyen, because the letter was unclear on that point, it felt like intimidation—a threat.

Brown declined to comment on the record.

Anthony said the department cannot discuss the case, because it's still an open case. However, she said that the inspections are designed to help Nguyen. Nguyen disagrees. She said she doesn't feel supported or helped, just needlessly scrutinized in a way that makes it difficult for her business and her students to thrive.

"[The DOL] are doing it totally wrong. This is harmful to my business. ... They say, 'This is helping the business.' No way," Nguyen said. "Every time they come to my business, it's always 'We're gonna help your business.' I don't think so. They cause us trouble, and we cannot focus on business."

Nguyen has not signed the newest letter, and is still in the process of negotiation. ■

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Students and customers at Vuu's Beauty School.

ACRS food bank funding confusion

By Carolyn Bick
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

The Asian Counselling and Resource Center (ACRS)'s food bank is adopting a "wait and see" policy, when it comes to the funding from the Sweetened Beverage Tax (SBT). In July, many of the Chinatown-International District's senior residents packed the Seattle City Council's chamber to protest the Council's decision to funnel the revenue from the city's sugary beverage tax to a special fund. Doing so was a move away from Mayor Jenny Durkan's plan outlined in her proposed budget to take \$6 million in SBT revenue and put it towards food banks and meals for seniors. The money previously came from the city's general fund, and allowed Durkan to put the \$6 million from the city's coffers towards her other priorities.

Though Durkan vetoed the law, the council voted again on Aug. 12 to override her veto. Durkan had warned that this would create a hole in the budget, but Seattle City Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda called this warning a

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Photo from ACRS

Hong Kong withdraws extradition bill



Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam has announced the government will formally withdraw an extradition bill that has sparked months of demonstrations in the city, bowing to one of the protesters' demands.

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Ne Zha: A gorgeous mythological movie for the whole family
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"What makes you happy?"
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Eric Lin "a danger to the community"



Eric Lin

SEATTLE — A Maryland man charged with making terrorism-related threats against Latinos was "ordered detained as both a flight risk and a danger to the community," U.S. Attorney's Office Public Affairs Officer Emily Langlie told the Northwest Asian Weekly on Sept. 3.

Eric Lin was arrested in Seattle for federal charges last month.

The FBI was first alerted to Lin's threats in July

by the Miami Police Department. Lin is accused of sending messages via Facebook between May and August to a Hispanic woman he knows, threatening her and her family, expressing support for Adolf Hitler, and calling for the extermination of Spanish-speaking people and other ethnic groups.

Lin was arrested on Aug. 16 in Seattle on the federal charges filed in Miami. ■

MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

The Mid-Autumn Festival is a celebration that begins on the 15th day of the 8th month on the Chinese lunar calendar. It's also known as the Moon Festival, as at that time of the year, the moon is at its roundest and brightest. This year, it will be observed from Sept. 13–15. The moon cake is the special food of this festival. The moon cakes are round, symbolizing the reunion of a family. People present moon cakes, which comes in various flavors, to relatives and friends to demonstrate that they wish them a long and happy life. ■

Moon cakes and other goodies at the Kiping Association on Sunday, Sept. 1 in Chinatown.

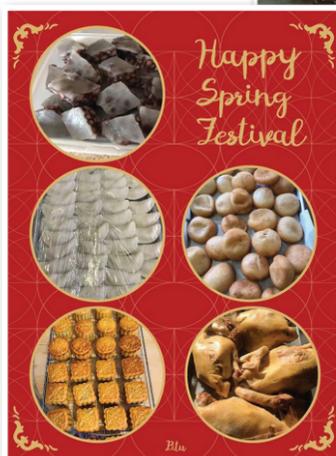


Photo by Assunta Ng

Moon cakes can be found at Uwajimaya and other Asian supermarkets in the International District.

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should be. This is our way of trying to bring these facets together,” Wang said. To drive this home, almost every art piece had the artist’s Instagram handle. Mao added, “We had someone in her 60s come in yesterday. She was excited about how we as artists express our political ideas and saw the topics we care about.”

“We wanted the art to reflect the experience of being a young person in today’s age and targeted our generation to try and make them see how it feels to be a young person with an outlet to represent their identity,” Wang said. “At our age, between 15 and 21, you’re in a state of life where you’re uncertain of where you’re going. You’re a kid, but also an adult,” Wang said standing before her self-portrait that seemed to mull the same uncertainties.

A few steps away, a bespectacled young Asian girl in pink cuts into a bleeding cake. The painting, “Love,” is by Angela Bi and delves into the meaning of love, especially in Asian families that often comes with high expectations. Given that most Asian parents prefer their children choose careers in medicine, law, or engineering, Mao and Wang seem to be coloring outside the lines.

“We’ve had many conversations like this,” they said.

“In the beginning, our parents said we have no clue what we’re doing with this gallery thing, but maybe we will support it. Now that they have seen it all put together, they think it’s amazing,” Wang said. Mao’s parents are supportive, too. She feels her father’s decision to quit Microsoft and risk his own startup fuels her to pursue a career in the arts.

“I’m thankful because I know a lot of my artist friends’ parents are not that supportive,” she said.

Wang plans to pursue a double major in art and business.

“I think business is very important because if we didn’t know anything about it, we wouldn’t be able to organize something this big and successful. This is something we plan to focus on in our next project.”

Many first-time artists had a chance to showcase their work in an exhibition, and Mao and Wang feel validated.

“We’re hearing things like, ‘I hope to see you at your next exhibition or at your own solo art show. It boosts our confidence,’” Mao said. “Our GPA may not be the best compared to other Asian kids in our community, where there is pressure from a very young age to have that 4.0. But how many of them would have been able to pull this off? This real-life experience is very important and it’s also important to do what you love,” Wang said. ■

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Ruthie V. gets an impromptu lesson in using social media from Alice Mao and Taylor Wang.



(Art on far left) Taylor Wang captures the feeling of isolation her generation feels in her self-portrait, “Introvert.”



Alice Mao’s piece “Spiral” was inspired by the colors of the sky when smoke from the forest fires settled over the Pacific Northwest.



Jessica Lin’s pieces titled Asian, Bairen challenge the representation of Asian women in mainstream media.



Angela Bi takes a look at the love and pressure of expectation in Asian families.

Photos provided by The Modern Youth Identity

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“manufactured crisis,” meant to create opposition to the way the SBT funds were always meant to be used.

“It was a false argument to say that the funding for these programs was in peril, or the City Council was cutting it, when that is absolutely not the case. In fact, if we are looking at 2020, the mayor has the opportunity to include those programs in General Funds, as was always the case,” Mosqueda said in a later phone interview.

The mixed messages from the city’s highest levels of government has created confusion amongst the city’s community partners, Mosqueda said, because the way the mayor’s office has worded the issue makes it sound as though there will be no funding, if the SBT revenue is channeled into a special fund. But this isn’t true: even if the mayor decides not to listen to the City Council’s veto, Mosqueda said the budget must pass through council for tweaks, before it becomes official.

“If the mayor doesn’t send out a budget that has those dollars included, we will advocate to amend the budget to keep these organizations whole,” Mosqueda said. “Organizations are already operating on very thin margins. ... We shouldn’t be creating unnecessary havoc when we still have the means in front of us to create a budget that keeps these

organizations whole with General Fund dollars.”

The confusion has played out within community organizations’ leadership. From what she understands, ACRS Communications Manager Liza Javier said the food bank’s funding is secure through 2020 and, as such, the ACRS does not have a plan in place, if the budget goes through as the mayor wants, and SBT funding should run out in 2021. However, because the SBT is so new, the ACRS doesn’t have any allocation history to go on.

“We definitely support having those funds support our organizations and the funds that go towards our nutrition programs. But to supplant the funds is a completely different ball game altogether,” Javier said. “That is not what we would call a stable source of funding for us.”

Frank Miranda is service organization Solid Ground’s Food System Support Program Manager, and has been an SBT organizer on behalf of the Seattle Food Committee, which includes 27 food banks and 15 city-funded food programs. He said that because the budget has not been finalized, there is no real assurance that the money will be replaced.

When asked if the food bank and senior meal funding is secure, the mayor’s office Deputy Communications Director

Kamaria Hightower said in an email to the Northwest Asian Weekly that “there is no update at this time on funding, final determinations will be outlined during the budget process.”

Hightower did not respond to further request for comment, when asked if that meant the funding’s future was up in the air.

At the July Seattle City Council meeting, the council said it would work with the mayor to find the money to fully fund existing programs, but there was still some friction between councilmembers and the mayor. During the meeting, Mosqueda condemned what she saw as the mayor’s office using threats of an austerity budget to pit vulnerable populations against each other.

The council’s legislation is meant to ensure that the communities who are most affected by the SBT receive the benefits from the revenues collected. Residents who are the most impacted by this kind of tax tend to be communities of color and low-income families, and the programs funded by the revenue aren’t meant to be solely funded this way, Mosqueda said. The SBT revenue is meant to enhance and expand these programs, but their core funding comes from the General Fund, which is stable, unlike the SBT revenue.

This instability is due to the fact that the SBT revenue isn’t meant to stay at a

consistent level, Mosqueda said. The tax itself is meant as a deterrent to people drinking high-calorie, nutrient-empty beverages. By funneling all the money gleaned from the tax back into the affected communities, residents within these communities can have more and better options via food assistance programs, like Fresh Bucks, and the Farm-to-Table initiative. Over time, the hope is that the SBT revenue will decrease, as fewer people drink sugar-sweetened beverages.

However, the council’s own staff had officially warned the council that creating this special fund would damage funding for any programs that had used the SBT revenue to supplant money from the General Fund, saying that these programs “could be reduced or eliminated as a result of this legislation, barring other budget cuts or creation of new revenue sources to backfill the removal of SBT funds.”

But this isn’t due to the creation of a special SBT fund, Mosqueda said. She said it’s the result of the mayor’s budget decision to replace the money from the General Fund with SBT revenue, without a plan to continue to use General Fund money, should the council override her veto.

Hightower did not respond to phone or email request for comment, when asked if this was the case. ■

Mariko Lockhart owning her identity



Photo from seattle.gov

Mariko Lockhart

By Carolyn Bick
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Mariko Lockhart's identity has always

informed her work. A mixed race daughter of a Black father and a Japanese mother, Lockhart said she grew up in New York City "very aware of being

biracial," because it was so unusual at the time.

"I had a lot of continual questioning of who I was, and where I was from ... so racism was a regular conversation that we had in my family," Lockhart recalled. "That background laid the foundation for me to become interested in how to support people who were ... on the receiving impact of racism and systemic oppression."

Now, several decades removed from her younger self, the 61-year-old Lockhart has settled into and owned her mixed heritage, and calls on her experience, as well as her upbringing that centered children of all races in a nurturing and supportive environment, to help guide her decisions as the Director for the City of Seattle's Office for Civil Rights. Mayor Jenny Durkan appointed Lockhart

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Disparities
in the
workplace
for women
of color

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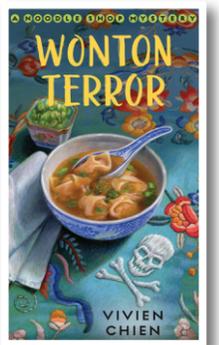


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Entrepreneurs
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Working
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World's largest women's university alumni and its president reunite in Seattle



Photo by George Liu

Madame President Heisook Kim

By Assunta Ng
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

In a bustling crowd, women in glittering gowns and tailored dresses, outnumbering men, were nibbling appetizers, chatting, and laughing as if they were sisters. But they were

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Asian entrepreneurs of the year



Gloria Touch (event sponsor) presenting the award to Dr. Xiao Ming

By Ruth Bayang
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Networking, sharing of ideas, solutions, and best practices.

That was the goal of the Northwest Asian Weekly's Inaugural Entrepreneurs Award and Roundtable on Oct. 25 at China Harbor Restaurant.

Approximately 170 people attended the event, emceed by Tanya Woo, to support the 14 local business owners who were honored.

The event was inspired by one of the honorees, Tien Ha, the president of HACT Construction. He approached the Asian Weekly's publisher Assunta Ng and asked, "How come Asian American entrepreneurs are so afraid to talk about failures?"

It's a topic that can be taboo among Asian Americans, for fear of "losing face."

Along with Ha, John Chen, Min Christ, Beth Johnson, Hao Lam, Yen Lam-Steward, the Le Brothers, Tim Lee, Synthia Melton, Dr. Xiao Ming, Ezhilarasan Natarajan, James Wong, Andy Yip, and Mei Young were also honored.



Synthia Melton (left) with Nicole Bascomb of U.S. Bank (event sponsor)

Yip was absent due to an injury.

Challenges and solutions

Google the word "entrepreneur" and you will find that it is defined as "a person who organizes and operates a business or businesses, taking on greater than normal financial risks in order to do so."

Leslie Lum, a Bellevue College business professor, moderated two panels. She asked the first round of panelists about the challenges they faced as entrepreneurs, and any solutions they came up with.

Lam-Steward, the former owner of Lam's Seafood, said one of her biggest challenges, going from a small to mid-sized business, was attracting talent.

"It's hard when you're competing against the 'big boys' like Microsoft and Amazon."

Lee, a real estate broker and owner of Real Homes Network, echoed Lam-Steward's comments on

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Photos by George Liu

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attracting talent, along with coming up with a good product, funding, and daily operations. All those, he said, are problems that can be overcome.

What he could not solve, he said, was government corruption in China.

“If you go with it (corruption), you lose. And if you don’t, you also lose by losing business and opportunities.”

Lee said his solution was to focus on what he could control—implementing his core values of honesty, integrity, and fairness.

Beth Johnson, the co-founder of Flynn Family Lending, called herself an accidental entrepreneur.

“Unlike most of my peers here, I didn’t plan on running my own business. I helped to facilitate the success of my now-husband and growing his business. I am learning as I go, building the plane while flying it, so to speak.”

She joined an Accelerator program for entrepreneurs that offered resources, tools, and mentorship. Johnson also spoke to her unique challenge as an Asian entrepreneur.

“My name is Beth Johnson,” she said, holding up the sign with her name on it. “There’s nothing Asian about it. I’m not white and I’m Asian, but I don’t speak Vietnamese. Our business name doesn’t indicate that it’s minority-owned.”

Adopted by a white family as an infant after her family fled Vietnam in 1975, Johnson said she is constantly working to bridge that gap.

Melton, the co-founder of Dimension Law Group, said it’s not always easy finding the balance between working *on* her business (marketing, employees, financing, etc.) versus working *in* her business—practicing law.

“I haven’t necessarily found the solution yet,” said Melton. But she said she is building teams to help her business succeed.

“Getting an accountant, a bookkeeper. We hired a business coach to help us put systems in place.”

Melton also pointed to the challenge unique to women entrepreneurs—being a wife and mother, something Lam-Steward also alluded to.

Chen, the CEO of Geoteaming, said he doesn’t see problems.

“We’re entrepreneurs. So there are no challenges, only

opportunities,” he said.

Growth and opportunities

“Opportunity is something that you create. Not something that someone has presented to you.”

Ha, the president of HACT Construction, was among the second round of panelists, addressing the topic of growth and opportunities.

He said that when most people think about a business, they think of it as a pyramid: with the boss on top and employees below. Ha said it’s important to invert that and make employees the top priority.

“They are the number one human resource,” Ha said, adding that consistency in a company culture is crucial. “Develop your core values and stick with it.”

Hao Lam agreed. When you start a business, he said it’s mostly the owner who’s wearing multiple hats and doing many jobs. Echoing Ha, Lam said, “To grow a company, you have to grow the team.”

He quoted author Jim Collins about getting the right people on the bus in the right seats.

Brandon Ting, founder of Kizuki Ramen and Izakaya, said that if he had to build his business all over again, he would let go of the need to be perfect.

“Strive for excellence, not perfection,” Ting said.

Missed opportunities

Young, the founder of MY International Real Estate, talked about “the very important phone call I never made.”

She recalled a conversation with a neighbor, who happened to be the number two guy at Starbucks, about Starbucks’ expansion to China. Young jokingly asked what she should do if she wanted to open a store in China.

Her neighbor said, “Get in touch with my staff that’s in charge of Asian markets. Here’s the number.”

That’s the phone call she never made and Young said she’s glad because her true love is real estate, not running a Starbucks store. She opened a brokerage and she said she fills a niche that traditional brokerages don’t—working with English speaking and non-English speaking buyers from China, who want to invest in the Seattle area.

Natarajan, the CEO of CoreStack, said his biggest

missed opportunity was the chance to partner with Amazon.

“In the early days of Amazon Web Services (AWS), Amazon visited our offices, begging us to become their partners,” Natarajan said. “We were looking at the trendsetters back then... Microsoft and Google. We didn’t expect them (AWS) to become a cloud leader.”

Wong, the CEO of Vibrant Cities, knows all about missed opportunities. He said he had multiple opportunities to buy property in South Lake Union.

“It was \$6 million back then and I thought, ‘I’ll wait for the price to go down.’ That never happened!” said Wong.

He said the biggest driver of real estate values are jobs. And with tens of thousands of jobs yet to be filled in the Seattle-area, he said, “Now is a good time to buy (real estate). Don’t wait for the price to drop. That already happened last year... the median price of a home in Seattle was \$800,000. Now it’s \$715,000. We’re at the beginning of the next cycle already. Don’t regret five years from now that you didn’t buy.”

Passion

“When you’re passionate, you want to share it, whether it impacts one person or a thousand people.”

Bayley Le owns the GoPoke Restaurant and his brother, Jason, owns Dochi, a bakery for Japanese donuts in Chinatown.

Bayley said people become entrepreneurs because of the passion that drives them—a passion to provide a good or service.

“Bring people who have like interests together and continue to serve people,” he said.

As Asian Weekly publisher Assunta Ng said, “Entrepreneurs are more than job creators. You are innovators, problem solvers, game changers, and visionaries. You are the real Crouching Tigers and Hidden Dragons of this community. Be proud of your contributions.”

Congratulations to all the honorees. ■

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LOCKHART from 1

in January 2018, as part of the mayor’s administration staff overhaul.

Though she runs an entire office, Lockhart’s career didn’t start out with anything remotely directive in nature. She originally attended Yale University and majored in art. While there, she became involved in political activism through working in her school’s dining hall. When the dining hall workers union went on strike for better working conditions, she said, the students also went on strike to support them.

From there, she ventured down to Nicaragua, originally seeking to bring her skills as a muralist to aid the Sandinistas in rebuilding their country, following the revolution against the repressive, dictatorial government. Lockhart used murals to help spread art outside traditional institutions, such as museums that were often inaccessible to everyday people.

Lockhart acknowledges that things didn’t quite work out the way most Nicaraguans involved in the revolution had hoped, but these early, post-dictatorship years helped to shape her own career path, and she only moved back to the United States in 1987, because she was involved in a plane crash for which she couldn’t receive proper treatment in Nicaragua.

Once home, Lockhart reunited with her college boyfriend, and the pair married, living and working in New Jersey for two decades. Lockhart worked in the field of youth development, and found a landing place as Seattle’s Director of its Youth Violence Prevention

Initiative in 2009, after moving to Seattle in 2007, when her husband was offered a job as the Executive Director of the Northwest Justice Project, a position he still holds today. Lockhart left that job in 2016 to serve as the National Coordinator for the Aspen Institute’s Forum for Community Solutions 100,000 Opportunities Initiative—Demonstration Cities.

Lockhart said it was during her time as a coordinator for the Aspen Institute that she reached out to then-candidate Jenny Durkan, in order to connect Durkan with communities in South Seattle.

“I thought that was an important set of community connections for her, as she was developing her policies and platforms around youth and opportunity,” Lockhart said. “Once she was elected, she offered me this position.”

Though her range and depth of experience is vast, Lockhart said that “every day is different” in the office. In addition to enforcing local and federal civil rights laws, her office is also responsible for the city’s Race and Social Justice Initiative. The Initiative spans more than 30 citywide departments, providing race and social justice training to city employees. The office also has a policy team that provides expertise on various issues as city officials develop policies and legislation. The office also supports four different commissions, the Women’s Commission, the Human Rights Commission, the LGBTQ Commission, and the Seattle Commission for People with Disabilities.

“On any given day, there is work happening in all of those areas and all of those teams,” Lockhart said. “Race and social justice work is incredibly challenging,

and incredibly important.”

Lockhart said the most challenging part of her job is that her office is at the forefront of a fairly new and ever-evolving landscape, trying to carve out a model of anti-racist leadership in a world where there isn’t really a model for it.

“It means examining, really, every decision that I make, and that we make as a department with a racial equity lens, and thinking about, ‘Is this an anti-racist way to approach this decision?’” Lockhart said. “That can be really anything from how we allocate our resources to what our internal policies are to support our staff.”

But Lockhart’s life isn’t entirely consumed with work. Because both of her children are grown and live in New York, she isn’t responsible for childcare anymore, which allows her and her husband time to enjoy various cultural events. The couple is a season ticket holder to the Seattle Repertory Theatre, and attend dance performances at the Meany Center. Lockhart also recently finished watching the newest season of Netflix’s “Orange Is the New Black,” and confessed to enjoying “trashy novels,” the \$1- or \$2-kind one can find in the Amazon Kindle store.

“I find it really is something so completely different from work,” Lockhart said. ■

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SHELF from 9

surprise, Natalie learns she has inherited her grandmother’s restaurant.

Before she gets the restaurant up and running, the neighborhood seer tells Natalie she must cook three recipes from her grandmother’s cookbook to help her struggling neighbors. Only then will the restaurant succeed. Natalie is initially hesitant to help as she resents her neighbors for leaving her alone to take care of her agoraphobic mother

when she was a child. But soon, she realizes that maybe they were there for her the whole time.

“Natalie Tan” is a story about going home and finding where you belong—with a touch of magical realism. While her homecoming is difficult at first and not everyone is happy to see Natalie—blaming her for her mother’s death and thinking she should have stayed home to take care of her—attitudes begin to shift as her neighbors realize she is home to stay.

Natalie is a strong and flawed character who works

to come to terms with the fact that the last time she saw her mother was on less-than-good terms. She works to make up for this by pouring everything she has into the restaurant.

In addition, Lim gives readers a plethora of characters from the neighborhood, filled with their own quirks and idiosyncrasies—from the ever-bickering Mr. and Mrs. Chiu, to angry Old Wu, to Mr. Kuk Wah and his trusty erhu. Readers will get to know them and root for their success and the neighborhood they inhabit. ■

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Monument created by Seattle artist will honor Asian Americans



Braid weave cultures together



Welding the interior structure



Model for View from Gold Mountain

Photos by Cheryll Leo-Gwinn

By Carolyn Bick
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

As a fourth generation Chinese American who grew up in a then-white Beacon Hill, Cheryll Leo-Gwinn said she “really didn’t know what it meant to be Chinese.” In Leo-Gwinn’s family, this isn’t unique. Her grandmother, who was born in San Rafael, Calif., in the 1850s, didn’t know much Chinese, either. All she wanted to do back then was fit in—and survive.

“It was legal to shoot the Chinese. It was legal to hang them, to kidnap them, to torch them out of their homes,” the full-time artist and Seattle resident said. “And a lot of my ancestors didn’t want to speak Chinese, because they wanted to fit in, so they didn’t know, and didn’t hand down the Chinese culture to their descendants.”

But Leo-Gwinn didn’t even come to discover this, until the early aughts, when she learned about the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, a federal law created under President Chester A. Arthur that prohibited the immigration of Chinese laborers. It built on the 1875 Page Act, which banned Chinese women from immigrating to the United States. Though the latter was meant to prevent forced labor and forced sex work, the Chinese Exclusion Act was in response to U.S. citizens’ resistance to Chinese immigrants taking part in the gold rush, as gold supplies began to dwindle, as well as Chinese immigrants taking low-paying jobs, which certain labor factions claimed depressed wages for everyone.

The act has since served as a point of departure for much of Leo-Gwinn’s artistic work, and serves as the foundation

of the monument she and fellow Chinese American artist Stewart Wong created to stand in front of the courthouse in Albuquerque, N.M. The monument, called “View from Gold Mountain,” will be unveiled in January 2020. Both artists hope the monument can be used to raise awareness of what Chinese immigrants and their ancestors went through, because most people, even those of Chinese descent, don’t even know about the act, Leo-Gwinn said.

For Wong, this project is a “positive entity” that informs and documents in physical form the struggles of Chinese immigrants and Chinese Americans, and has helped him become a more informed individual, when it comes to his own understanding of his heritage.

Wong himself has also faced discrimination and racism, since relocating from Honolulu, Hawai’i, to Seattle in the 1980s. He has been called “Buddha Head,” and was told to go back to his country. He has also been kicked from behind, during a Fourth of July fireworks display at Gasworks Park.

“I recall a situation as a Seattle college student with no traffic citations on record. At my court hearing in Cowlitz County, the judge slapped me with the full fine amount and recommended I get cruise control on the car, although it was a borrowed car,” Wong said in an email. “When I am out shopping with my partner, who is Caucasian, [he] is often acknowledged by the store staff, and he notices I am not acknowledged with equal treatment.”

Though he hasn’t been able to talk with his family about the issue, given that they are scattered throughout the United States and on the Hawaiian islands, Wong said he hopes some of his family members will attend the unveiling in January. He also hopes the background information he sent to them about the monument and the act will prompt them to start asking questions, and dig into their own history.

Because of her artistic use of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Leo-Gwinn has had the opportunity to talk about the act, as well as discrimination and racism with her family. But prior to her work as an artist, Leo-Gwinn said her family just didn’t talk about such things. She remembers being turned down at age 18 for a typist job, because the potential employer “didn’t hire Chinese.”

“And so, just because I was used to it, I said, ‘Okay, thank you very much,’ and

I left,” Leo-Gwinn said. “And I never mentioned anything to anybody, because that’s just the way we lived. There was no questioning it. That’s just the way it was. And when we got turned away for housing, that’s just the way it was. So, we didn’t talk about it to each other.”

Over the last several years, though, Leo-Gwinn’s family has started to open up about the issue. Though her parents have passed, she said she has spoken about discrimination with her sister, and

persecution with her aunt, who lived in Wyoming in the 1920s.

“She said she remembered the wagons would come into town, pick up all the Chinese men, put them in a wagon, take them out of town, they would hear gunshots, and the wagons would come back empty, and they would be looking for more Chinese men,” Leo-Gwinn said. ■

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Gourds become 3 branches of government

Photo provided by Cheryll Leo-Gwinn



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Krista Suh inventor of the pussyhat, is all about pink



Photo by Rachel Lee Stroud

Krista Suh, the inventor of the pink hat.

By Kai Curry
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

The day after President Trump's inauguration, on Jan. 21, 2017, the largest single-day protest in U.S. history took place in Washington, D.C. It was the first Women's March. On that day, over 450,000 people marched, while an estimated 3 to 5 million men and women participated in other cities across the United States. Many of us are familiar with

see **PINK LADY** on 15

APA voices in feminism

NEW EXHIBIT AT THE WING LUKE



Photo courtesy of Maria Batayola

Asian Pacific Womens Caucus at CID Festival 1979

By Carolyn Bick
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

As a Filipino woman of mixed heritage who immigrated to the United States with her family when she was 14 years old, Maria Batayola knows what it's like to simultaneously feel the need for feminism and be shut out and alienated by it.

Batayola was a student at the University of Washington, during the Vietnam War era, and remembers that veterans and enlisted men would hit on her, first in Vietnamese, expecting her to understand it, and then in Tagalog, the native language of the Philippines, once they learned she was Filipina. She learned to navigate these interactions, but she always did it in a way that would preserve what she calls her "likeability

see **APA VOICES** on 16

Gov. Inslee issues emergency proclamation limiting large events



Photo from the governor's office

Gov. Jay Inslee (center) at a COVID-19 press conference on March 11 with County Executive Dow Constantine (left) an ASL interpreter, and Mayor Jenny Durkan (right)

Gov. Jay Inslee announced on March 11 new community strategies and social distancing plans to minimize COVID-19 exposure, particularly in counties hit hardest by the virus.

Events that take place in King, Snohomish, and Pierce counties with more than 250 people are now prohibited by the state. This applies to gatherings for social, spiritual, and recreational activities. These include but are not limited to: community, civic, public, leisure, faith-based, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers and similar activities.

"We recognize this new limitation will impact thousands of people, their plans, and their investments in these events," Inslee said. "However, this is one of the most prudent

see **INSLEE** on 13

WA researcher helps discover protein that could stop COVID-19

Researchers at University of Texas Southwestern (UTSW) Medical Center, including a Washington native, have discovered a genetic protein in the human immune system that impairs the coronavirus' ability to initiate infection, which could lead to treatments for COVID-19.

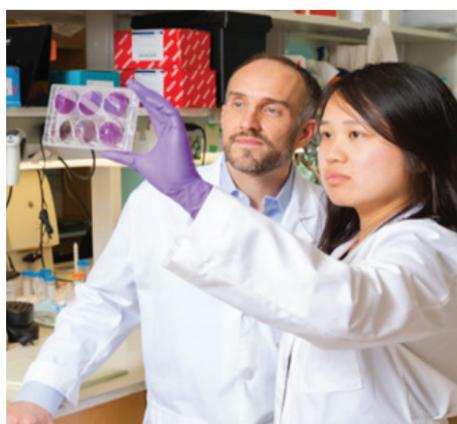
Dr. Katrina Mar of Olympia and graduate of Western Washington University, is a postdoctoral researcher in the Schoggins lab at UTSW and co-lead author of the study. She, along with Dr. John Schoggins, associate professor of microbiology at UTSW, partnered with scientists in Switzerland and New York.

The research team looked at the

impact of the LY6E protein on severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), Middle East respiratory (MERS) coronavirus, and COVID-19. In all three cases, the LY6E genetic protein inhibited the viruses' ability to initiate infection.

"Because LY6E is a naturally occurring protein in humans, we hope this knowledge may help in the development of therapies that might one day be used to treat coronavirus infections," Schoggins said. Like many scientific discoveries, this one was a by-product of another study.

The study is still awaiting peer review. Researchers concluded that therapies mimicking the LY6E pro-



Courtesy UT Southwestern

UT Southwestern's Dr. Katrina Mar and Dr. John Schoggins used a mouse model for the coronavirus research.

tein could provide a key defense against coronavirus. Similar antiviral fusion inhibitors have been successfully used for HIV-1. ■

Sanders, Biden virtually tied in Washington

By Staff
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Washington's presidential primary is too close to call, and because all votes there are cast by mail or by dropping them off in a ballot box, many ballots were marked for candidates who have since dropped out of the race.

Initial returns from Washington state show Sen. Bernie Sanders and former Vice President Joe Biden are both polling at just over 32% in Washington state. Sanders has a slight 0.25% lead over Biden.

Because voters' ballots only had to be postmarked by March 10 or dropped at an election box by 8 p.m. on March 10, final results could take days or weeks to calculate. ■

APA VOICES from 1

factor,” because of the implied expectation in said interactions that East Asian and Pacific Islander women be meek and submissive.

But she didn't find the support she needed from the feminist movements on campus, dominated as they were by white women who did not understand her position, leaving Batayola unsure of where her voice could be broadcast. This unsteady feeling was underscored by her upbringing.

“As an immigrant, I was born and raised to be a Filipino woman. I am socialized and inculcated to it. ... When I came here, there is no articulation, no regular articulation of what it is to be American, and what it is to be an American woman, other than the articulation of marketing and media,” Batayola said. “So, I think, for many of us who are immigrants, and I think still for the second, third, maybe even fourth generation, the [Asian Pacific American (APA)] values are still brought through—and, again, there is no universal APA value. It goes back to the specific nationality, which, in itself can be very diverse.”

This is why Batayola is so excited about the exhibit at the Wing Luke Museum, called, “Hear Us Rise: APA Voices in Feminism,” which opened on March 6. The exhibit features the works of different women in the APA community, such as the visual and textual work of Tessa Hulls and that of Krista Suh, who created the Pussyhat Project. The exhibit's main goal is to showcase APA women who are fighting gender discrimination, with the added backdrop of racism, colonialism, and imperialism, said Wing Luke senior exhibit developer Mikala Woodward.

“These things are intersectional, and the way race and gender intersect for Asian women and Pacific Islander women is different than for other women of color,” Woodward said.

Though she has since amplified her voice—starting in her time at the university, when she co-founded what became the Northwest Asian American Theatre, and now as part of the Asian Pacific Women's Caucus, as well as the founding board member of what is now known as API Chaya—Batayola sees that the struggle for equal footing in the feminist movement is far from over, because of the nuances of what it means within her community.

“When you're dealing with both sexism and racism, sometimes the most predominant issue is the racism that not just affects our women, but our men and our



API Chaya Vigil 2019

Photo by Auriza Ugalino

families, also,” Batayola explained. “So, to that regard, the feminism isn't just separating from the men, starting our own businesses, that kind of thing, although, that happens, too. But a perfect example of how we approached this is organizing for anti-domestic violence. ... We knew it had to be a healing of the family—that women couldn't always just leave.”

Batayola serves as a member of the Wing Luke's community advisory committee, which helped the museum create the exhibit. The committee teamed up with the Asian American Feminist Collective in New York City, hiring the group's co-founder, Tiffany Tso, to write the informational texts, timelines, and backgrounds for the exhibit.

As a Chinese Taiwanese woman, Tso holds a similar view of feminism as Batayola. From her own personal experience, Tso has often found feminism boiled down to a literal Black-and-white issue.

“We are becoming a larger population, first of all, and second of all, I think we are becoming more politically engaged as a community of people who, historically, have been more disengaged, when it comes to politics,” Tso said. “So, I think the same would definitely apply to feminism, because feminism is a political identity that, I think, can be seen as controversial, for whatever reason. ... I think that the identification of being an Asian American and a feminist, or a Pacific Islander and a feminist, is a complex identity that less people can really identify with.”

Tso said that, for her, this identity is so complex, because of the way it mixes with traditional Chinese values.

“People think that, you know, in East Asian countries like China, women are not equal, that we can't identify

as something as radical as feminism, because you look back at traditional Chinese values, and that's antithetical to the two things going together,” Tso said. “But I think that that is clearly not true. In every single community, in every single country, there has been a feminist movement of some sort. And maybe they don't use those exact words, but that there are people who are practicing radical feminist ideology in every single culture, and there has always been a fight for whatever people might consider feminist fights.”

And like Batayola, Tso, too, has experienced fetishization and being hypersexualized by Western society.

“There is definitely this aspect of being sexualized, but without any agency. ... There are several stereotypes, of course. We're both nerdy and studious, as well as being, for some reason, like, a dragon lady that is super hypersexual and a dominatrix. How can we be both of these things all at once?” Tso said.

But, Tso admitted, some of this also comes from her own upbringing.

“I've personally felt myself coming into this realization and reckoning with my own sexuality, where I realize that so much of it was projected onto me because of either racialized stereotypes, or even, sometimes, your family, where chasteness is valued, and being pure—you know, like just saying, ‘Don't even talk about sex.’ ... I internalized a lot of things around heteronormativity and cisnormativity ... and then also the way I should be viewed or how I should move through the world.”

Tso said she also understands that the way she practices feminism wouldn't necessarily work for her older female relatives, because she is part of the younger generation.

“There are differences, and no one way is correct—it just is what it is, and we all adapt the way that we can,” Tso said. “I never look at the way that my mom or my aunt practiced their femininity or the way they identify themselves politically—I would never judge them or project American values onto them. This is the whole practice of Asian American feminism ... we do have to have this initial lens that we do things through, that we understand the straddling of two different cultures, and that one person's liberation doesn't look like someone else's liberation.” ■

Hear Us Rise: APA Voices in Feminism is at the Wing Luke Museum, 719 South King Street, Seattle, WA 98104. Tickets may be purchased online or at the museum.

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