

## COMMUNITY NEWS

# Korean Women's Association tackles heartbreak, elder abuse

By Mahlon Meyer  
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

The photo on the woman's iPhone shows a blackened and swollen face with a feeding tube coming into a mouth just below the mustache. Her husband had taken care of every aspect of her life after she was diagnosed with lung cancer 10 years ago, had a stroke, and became virtually paralyzed.

"He would make me breakfast, he would even put my shoes on for me," Mrs. Kim (not her real name) said, trying to suppress her wails of anguish.

So when he was attacked on the street outside their apartment, she could hear someone screaming, but she was not sure who, nor could she move.

Later, he died.

"Why is this happening?" she asked, practically screaming with fright and grief.

## THE CASEWORKER

The caseworker assigned to her by the Korean Women's Association (KWA), a nonprofit that provides support to people facing a variety of dire situations, could not answer her question.

But she could help her stay alive. The younger woman, 39, listened to her grieve, and then found her all the resources she would need to survive on her own.

Since Mrs. Kim, at 64, did not speak English, had medical issues, and now no longer had any source of income, the task was enormous. But the caseworker helped her apply for the whole spectrum of social benefits and eventually for low-income housing.

"She couldn't even speak," said the caseworker, who has long hollows under her eyes, perhaps from listening to such grief.

## THE ORGANIZATION

Like Mrs. Kim, KWA, which saved her, faces its own set of challenges.

Founded 50 years ago by a group of Korean women who had married American soldiers, it grew into an organization to help with domestic violence. As years passed, it expanded to over 1,300 employees today. It has its own in-home care service, a shelter for victims of domestic abuse, and six apartment buildings that provide affordable housing.

While providing compassionate care for thousands of women like Mrs. Kim, it is still seeking to reach a more diverse population with its many services and resources.

About 80% of the clientele it serves come from the Asian and Asian American community. Of the remainder, 10% are Ukrainian, Eastern European. Three percent are white. Roughly 1.5% are Latino, and the rest, other people of color.

Jay Kang, 57, a former pastor who is now the organization's communications and special projects officer, said, however, that the organization is defined by its commitment to diversity.

"The Korean Women's Association was created a half-century ago to give a voice and provide critical services to historically marginalized groups and build



In 1997, KWA board members celebrating the opening of the Pacific Villa Housing Project, affordable housing in Tacoma that opened with 43 tenants

capacity to serve Washington state's diverse populations," he said, in an email.

"Diversity is at the very heart of our mission, it is why we exist."

Still, the diverse communities KWA serves have apparently segregated. In its two affordable housing units in which Blacks live, not a single Asian resident resides. Meanwhile, the apartment spaces filled with Asians do not have a single Black resident.

However, this may be because of the demographics of the neighborhoods in which the apartment buildings were built. It does not originate from any policy decisions on the part of KWA, said Kang.

"KWA does not discriminate in providing housing...We provide housing that is regulated by the Fair Housing Act and the State of Washington and we follow all applicable laws and regulations."

From the perspective of the South Korean government, as well, the organization is already so diverse, it is ineligible for financial support.

"We asked the Korean government for a grant, but they rejected us because we are not focusing on only Koreans," said Kang. According to Kang, the organization has always reached out to multicultural groups. There were even some white women among its founders.

As proof, there are only two agencies receiving a state grant to treat elder abuse, namely, KWA and the City of Seattle's Aging and Disability Services, he said.

In a news release, KWA classified the case of Mrs. Kim as a form of elder abuse. In news reports, police described the assailant of her husband as a homeless man. The man had initially attacked a younger Korean man in the same parking lot of the apartment complex. Then, after the younger man had escaped, he had come back and attacked Mr. Kim, who was 61. It was not clear if the perpetrator was targeting Asian Americans.

Initially, it appeared that Mr. Kim, who was a cook at a Teriyaki restaurant, might survive. At Harborview, he underwent extensive facial reconstructive surgery. But five months later, he died from brain injuries.

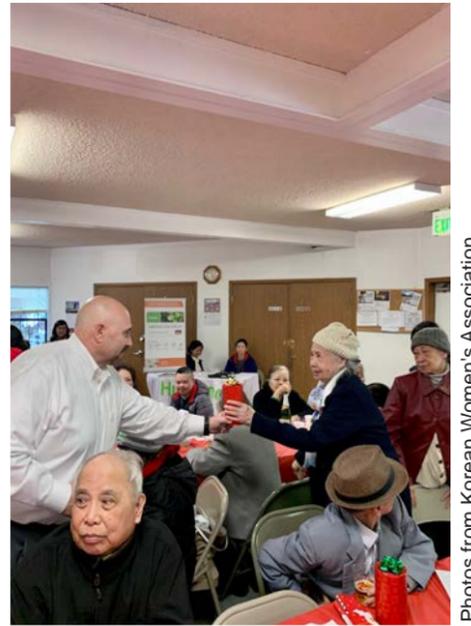
## SPREADING THE WORD DURING A PERIOD OF GROWTH

Despite the extent and breadth of their services, another potential challenge

facing KWA is their ability to spread the word about their resources, even within the Korean community.

Mrs. Kim, who was now left alone and destitute, would not have known about KWA, if the South Korean embassy had not reached out to her. After the loss of her husband, diplomats from the embassy came to her door and told her about KWA, she said, speaking through an interpreter.

She contacted the organization and that was when her caseworker showed up, who swiftly helped her obtain immediate assistance from the government.



CEO Pete Ansara presenting a Lunar New Year gift during a KWA event in 2020

"She didn't even know her bank account number or how to access email," she said. The caseworker also had to help Kim find her social security number.

"We had to start from scratch." Last year, the caseworker had around 80 clients. This year so far, she has around 50.

SEE KWA ON 11

## Seattle Parks and Recreation

### LIFELONG RECREATION

#### Virtual Programs and Social Opportunities for People Ages 50+

Registration begins September 15th at noon, either online or by phone. No in person registration.

All classes are virtual using the Webex platform. You must have a computer or other device to participate. Connection information will be available after you register.

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- **Gentle Yoga**  
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40763 10/8-11/12 Thu 1:30-2:30 p.m. L Gardener \$42
- **Virtual Program Practice Sessions (Free)**  
40832 9/23 Wed 1 p.m.  
40833 9/29 Tue 10 a.m.  
40834 10/1 Thu 10 a.m.
- **Medication Management: Tips to Avoid Errors & Accidents (Free)**  
40791 10/8 Tue 1-2 p.m.

Additional programs are being offered. Visit our website at [www.seattle.gov/parks](http://www.seattle.gov/parks) or contact Anne at 206-310-8163 for more info.



Seattle  
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## ASTROLOGY

# Predictions and advice for the week of Sept. 26–Oct. 2, 2020

By Sun Lee Chang



**Rat**—Do you want something different, but continue to get more of the same? Some targeted changes could be in order.



**Dragon**—Going from one thing to the next in rapid succession? Don't pile on more than you can realistically handle.



**Monkey**—While you tend to be open rather than guarded, there is cause to be cautious when your suspicions are aroused.



**Ox**—Your patience in the early stages should pave the way for a much smoother progress later on.



**Snake**—Tuning out what you don't want to hear? Though not always pleasant, the information could prove useful.



**Rooster**—Finding it hard to concentrate? A little exercise could help you to clear your thoughts and regain your focus.



**Tiger**—Are you receiving support from an unexpected source? Think of it as a temporary rather than permanent solution.



**Horse**—You have a solid network to draw upon, but be selective about when you turn to this resource.



**Dog**—Are you worried about what you have planned? With a little flexibility, you should be able to prevail.



**Rabbit**—If you want to move beyond the current stumbling blocks, you have to acknowledge what parts aren't working.



**Goat**—A lot of background noise can be very distracting. Isolate what you need to pay attention to.



**Pig**—Don't be swayed by instant gratification. If you are willing to work for it, a much more satisfying reward awaits.

### WHAT'S YOUR ANIMAL SIGN?

**RAT** 1912, 1924, 1936, 1948, 1960, 1972, 1984, 1996, 2008, 2020 **OX** 1913, 1925, 1937, 1949, 1961, 1973, 1985, 1997, 2009 **TIGER** 1914, 1926, 1938, 1950, 1962, 1974, 1986, 1998, 2010 **RABBIT** 1915, 1927, 1939, 1951, 1963, 1975, 1987, 1999, 2011 **DRAGON** 1916, 1928, 1940, 1952, 1964, 1976, 1988, 2000, 2012 **SNAKE** 1917, 1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013 **HORSE** 1918, 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014 **GOAT** 1919, 1931, 1943, 1955, 1967, 1979, 1991, 2003, 2015 **MONKEY** 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016 **ROOSTER** 1921, 1933, 1945, 1957, 1969, 1981, 1993, 2005, 2017 **DOG** 1922, 1934, 1946, 1958, 1970, 1982, 1994, 2006, 2018 **PIG** 1923, 1935, 1947, 1959, 1971, 1983, 1995, 2007, 2019

\*The year ends on the first new moon of the following year. For those born in January and February, please take care when determining your sign.

### SAWANT FROM 1

commit an unlawful act," Rogers wrote in his order.

A group of Seattle residents is pushing for the Sawant recall, alleging violations including when she allowed demonstrators into City Hall during a nighttime protest in June and spoke at a protest in front of Mayor Jenny Durkan's house. They also say she encouraged protesters to occupy Seattle Police's East Precinct, "helped create the Capitol Hill Occupation Protest Zone," used city resources to promote a ballot initiative, and delegated employment decisions in her office to her political party.

Rogers dismissed the charges related to the East Precinct and the CHOP.

Rogers' role is to assume the charges against Sawant are true and to determine whether they are specific and serious enough to merit a recall.

Dmitri Iglitzin, Sawant's attorney, said in arguments that Sawant has been elected

three times, most recently less than a year ago, and said the recall petitioners were trying to redo those elections because they disagree with her politics.

John McKay, an attorney representing recall petitioner Ernest Lou, said Sawant needed to be held accountable for her actions.

If Rogers' decision survives a possible appeal, petitioners would need to collect more than 10,000 signatures from residents of Sawant's Capitol Hill-based district in order to send the recall to voters.

The Seattle City Council voted on Sept. 15, at Sawant's request, to fund Sawant's legal defense in the matter.

A King County judge earlier this summer allowed a recall effort against the mayor to move forward. The recall alleges that Durkan failed to institute policies after police used tear gas on protesters. Durkan is appealing the judge's decision to the state Supreme Court, which is scheduled to consider the case in October. ■

### HAWAII FROM 7

to return to Hawaii in a way that keeps residents safe. Tourism traffic to the state has plunged more than 90% since the pandemic began, forcing hundreds of hotels to close and pushing many people out of work.

"I want to emphasize that this pre-travel testing will allow us to add a greater element of safety for travel into our state," Ige said at a news conference.

Lt. Gov. Josh Green, who joined the news conference via Zoom because he tested positive for the disease and

is isolating at home, said the program will provide economic opportunity at a time when so many people are suffering. Upheaval from the pandemic pushed nearly one-quarter of Hawaii's workforce into joblessness. In April, Hawaii had the third-worst unemployment rate in the nation after Nevada and Michigan.

"I worry about the long term impacts of economic distress and that impact this has on our people, when they can't afford their homes as easily or groceries or health care," Green said. ■

### KWA FROM 5

"Once the major issues are done, they still don't want us to close the case, so it's mostly just monthly calls," she said.

KWA's growth spurt is showing up in other ways. It has opened several new facilities to serve its growing base of clients. Last year, it purchased a new 16,000-square-foot property in Lakewood.

"This move will allow for further expansion as the organization now serves all of Western Washington and has plans for continued expansion," it said.

KWA has ensured that each branch office is staffed with workers that mostly reflect the demographics of the community in which it is located, said Kang.

The office that Kim visited, in Federal Way, for instance, is comprised of 80% staff with a Korean background.

Federal Way, with its proximity to a large military base, has the highest concentration of Korean Americans in the United States, according to Kang. But its other branches reflect the diversity of other areas it serves, such as Ukrainians.

### MISUNDERSTANDINGS OR CULTURAL DIVERSIONS?

A recent contretemps involved the hiring and firing of a CEO, who claimed he was terminated because he was gay. Neither KWA nor former CEO Troy Christensen would comment because a lawsuit is ongoing.

Meanwhile Kang, who was hired by Christensen, said KWA, despite its roots in Korean churches, is still sometimes misunderstood by even the Korean American community.

Korean American churches, seeing the millions that the organization as a nonprofit shows on its balance sheets, are reluctant to provide financial support, he said. But they are willing to accept its services, which helps further its mission.

In the end, all that matters to Kim is that she can go on living. Asked what her husband was like, she promptly asks to end the interview, then starts to sob more deeply than before.

"He pursued me for eight years, but it wasn't until he agreed to go with me to church and become a Catholic, that I would agree to marry him," she said. "He did everything for me." ■

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