

A tale of two rallies

Kids protest over Asian killings in Georgia, in Seattle's Chinatown

By Assunta Ng
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

For two consecutive Saturdays, rallies against Asian attacks in Georgia were held in Seattle's Chinatown, but the contrast was as dramatic as day and night.

The March 13 rally was a "Who's Who" in the crowd with former Gov. Gary Locke and King County Executive Dow Constantine. Some of



A protest led by children at Hing Hay Park on March 20.

Photo by Assunta Ng

the organizers are elected officials, community leaders, who have deep records of activism and organizing protests. The

audience was mostly Asian Americans.

But the one held a week later, March 20, was organized by

Seneca Nguyen, a fifth grader.

see **KIDS PROTEST** on 3

Inslee, community leaders address hate against Asians



Gov. Jay Inslee

Photo by Assunta Ng

By Jason Cruz
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

"I feel as if I was abused twice, first by the attacker, and second by the legal system," said Noriko Nasu, a teacher at

see **PRESS CONFERENCE** on 6

Third vaccine adds more tools in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic



Former ICHS Foundation Executive Director Ron Chew said of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine: "Having had the vaccine is reassuring. I feel safer. I'm in the older age group, so I want to stick around and see what my kids end up doing with their careers and see what the next generation will be doing."

By Travis Quezon
ICHS

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Washington has expanded with the Federal Drug Administration approval of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine in February.

Health care providers are letting the community know that by taking the first vaccine you can get, you are helping to stop the virus from circulating. You'll also avoid the risk of finding yourself without protection if infection rates surge.

As of March 9, over two million vaccine doses have been delivered in Washington state, exceeding the Department of Health (DOH)'s goal of 45,000 vaccinations a day.

see **ICHS** on 13

Families rejoice at end of nursing home lockdowns

By Mahlon Meyer
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

During the past year, Angela Wong, 51, often drove 30 miles each way to drop off chao shao bao, shumai, face cream, candied ginger, and other things for her mother. Occasionally, she would see her through a window in the lobby of the nursing home, where she is locked down. But now that Kin On is opening up for family members, Wong knows this: she will have a chance to see her mother, Lee Shee Lo, 96, in person before she dies.

"During the pandemic, I was so worried about my mother, any time I got a call from Kin On staff, given her age, I would worry and feel dread that it could happen any time and we've gone so far without seeing each other," she said.



Angela Wong, 51, and her mother, Lee Shee Lo, 96.

Photo provided by Angela Wong.

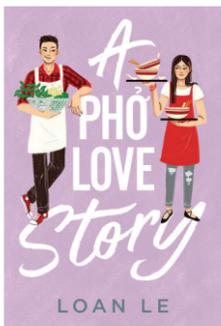
Wong is not the only one to feel a sense

see **LOCK DOWN ENDS** on 12

THE INSIDE STORY



NAMES IN THE NEWS
ICHS employee appreciation
◀ 2



ON THE SHELF
Family, it's complicated
◀ 5



HEALTH
Homegrown spine surgeon returns to care for local AAPI population
◀ 7



PICTORIAL
Rallies against anti-Asian violence
◀ 9



PUBLISHER'S BLOG
The secret to losing weight during a pandemic
◀ 8

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MAR

25-31

BLOOD DONATION

Schedule a blood donation appointment on Red Cross Blood Donor app or visit RedCrossBlood.org, or call 1-800-733-2767 Find a location near you at RedCrossBlood.org

26-28

ALL THINGS JAPANESE SALE

JCCCW, 1414 S. Weller St., Seattle 10 a.m.-3 p.m. by appointment only Register at jcccw.org/all-things-japanese-sale

27

STAND WITH THE AAPI COMMUNITY IN UNITY

Seattle Center Fountain 11 a.m. Bring your signs!

APR

2

HUGO LITERARY SERIES: DEATH WITH REBECCA MAKKAI, LAYLI LONG SOLDIER, AND LUCY TAN

6 p.m. hugohouse.org

6

THROUGH MAY 11

6 SESSIONS CLASS: OUT OF THE BLUE, A METEORITE: WRITING WITH SOUTH ASIAN BHAKTI POETRY WITH SHANKAR NARAYAN

Register at http://bit.ly/3cFU0YA

PRESS CONFERENCE from 1

Inglemoor High School, after being a victim of a hate crime. Nasu bravely told her story of being assaulted last month at a press conference in which community, local, and state officials including Gov. Jay Inslee addressed the spate of violence toward the Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) community.

The press conference, held on March 22 at Renton City Hall, highlighted the cause of the increase in violence against Asians and sought out ways they could address the issue. On March 16, eight people were shot and killed in Atlanta, at three different spas. Six of the victims were Asian women. Although no official reason for the murders has been released, an eyewitness stated that the individual targeted Asians.

“It’s totally unacceptable, it has to end, and I am calling on every Washingtonian to wrap our arms around this threatened community,” said Inslee. “It is a virus of hate and fear that too often is being fanned by some political figures for political purposes and this itself is a virus and we must defeat it.”

Inslee, without directly mentioning former President Donald Trump, inferred that the prior administration blamed China for the COVID-19 pandemic. Inslee and other speakers also pointed out the “enablers,” that allowed Trump and other politicians that made similar racist mentions

of Asians causing the virus, are equally to blame for the spike in hate crimes.

In addition to Inslee, state representatives Sharon Tomiko Santos and My-Linh Thai, King County Executive Dow Constantine, and Washington State Commission on Asian and Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA) Executive Director Toshiko Grace Hasegawa spoke at the press conference.

“We, and when I say we, I really mostly mean white people—must embrace the humanity and the value of every person,” implored Constantine, “When hate and violence affects one of us, it affects all of us.”

“As we collectively grieve as a community, united, we name out loud that discrimination, hate, and violence have been culturally, politically, and structurally supported throughout American history and continues today,” said Hasegawa. “The seeds of hate were intentionally sown and watered and we must weave them out.”

State Rep. Thai spoke about ideas for change.

“We must end violence against all communities of color by protecting the rights to housing, supporting low-income families, and shut down the Northwest Detention Center.” She called on the legislature to break down systemic racism in Washington to build a stronger democracy.

“We have not been silent,” pled Rep.

Santos. “But nobody is listening to us, and that has to change.” She called on the members of the community to take responsibility and report incidents of hate.

On Feb. 25, Nasu was hit in the head by a sock filled with two rocks while exiting a vehicle in the International District (ID). She suffered a fractured face, four broken teeth, a concussion, and lacerations to her face. Nasu believes that she was the victim of a hate crime. Sean Holdip, 41, has not been charged with a hate crime as prosecutors indicated that he would receive a longer sentence if he was convicted of felony assault. A spokesperson for the King County Prosecutor’s Office noted in an email response for comment, “[W]e plan to prove that the injuries suffered by the victim were excessive in comparison to the level of bodily harm contemplated by the law. If we are successful in that, a judge would have the ability to increase the defendant’s sentence up to a maximum of 10 years.”

Nasu is not alone with the fear of being out in public. Elders in the ID are concerned with being assaulted. There have been numerous stories around the country where elderly Asians are being pushed down or assaulted in broad daylight. Communities in other cities have banded together to escort elders while out.

In Seattle, a community collective instituted a night watch to check on local businesses, help the homeless, and even

break up fights in the ID. Tanya Woo, one of the organizers, said, “We feel that all the issues that we are seeing could benefit with more social workers and a lot of the incidents are happening when we are de-escalating fights or feeding the unhoused.”

While some of the speakers mentioned the need for a greater police presence, laws to enhance hate crime punishment and community education, there was no bright line solution for the perceptions of using a race of people as scapegoats for the pandemic. Activist group Stop AAPI Hate logged 3,800 hate crimes since the coronavirus pandemic began. The Trump administration repeatedly used the term, “China virus,” and others used the term, “Kung Flu,” as a way to place blame on Asians to deflect responsibility for addressing the issue.

Nasu’s attack has left a lasting scar with her. In addition to the physical effects she still suffers, she no longer feels safe in the ID, and since her name is now public, she is afraid of being attacked again. Nasu has received an outpouring of support from the public and some have shared similar instances of hate. Yet, this highlights Nasu’s fears. “I’m just horrified to know that so many of us have been experiencing this hate, and yet nothing is being done. The system is not made for us.” ■

Jason can be reached at info@nwasianweekly.com.

View the solution on page 14

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 7 | | 5 | | | | | 9 |
| 8 | | | 7 | | 4 | | 5 3 |
| | | | | | | 7 | |
| | | 6 | | 9 | | | 5 |
| | | | | | | | |
| 4 | 3 | | | | 8 | 6 | |
| | | 9 | | | | 1 | 6 |
| | 8 | 4 | | | | 9 | |
| 1 | | | | | | | 7 |

northwest **asianweekly**

ASSUNTA Ng
Publisher
assunta@nwasianweekly.com

JOHN LIU
Associate Publisher
john@nwasianweekly.com

RUTH BAYANG
Editor
editor@nwasianweekly.com

HAN BUI
Layout & Web Editor
han@nwasianweekly.com

Account Executives

REBECCA IP
rebecca@nwasianweekly.com

KELLY LIAO
kelly@nwasianweekly.com

JOHN LIU
john@nwasianweekly.com

GEORGE HIRA
ghira@nwasianweekly.com

The only weekly English-language newspaper serving Washington’s Asian community. The NW Asian Weekly has one simple goal: “To empower the Asian community.”

The Editorial Board reserves the right to reject any advertisement, letter or article. Subscriptions cost \$40 for 52 weeks of the NW Asian Weekly and \$30 for 52 weeks of the Seattle Chinese Post. The NW Asian Weekly owns the copyright for all its content. All rights reserved. No part of this paper may be reprinted without permission.

412 Maynard Ave. S., Seattle, WA 98104 • t. 206.223.5559
editor@nwasianweekly.com • ads@nwasianweekly.com • www.nwasianweekly.com

A tale of two rallies

Kids protest over Asian killings in Georgia, in Seattle's Chinatown

By Assunta Ng
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

For two consecutive Saturdays, rallies against Asian attacks in Georgia were held in Seattle's Chinatown, but the contrast was as dramatic as day and night.

The March 13 rally was a "Who's Who" in the crowd with former Gov. Gary Locke and King County Executive Dow Constantine. Some of



A protest led by children at Hing Hay Park on March 20.

Photo by Assunta Ng

the organizers are elected officials, community leaders, who have deep records of activism and organizing protests. The

audience was mostly Asian Americans.

But the one held a week later, March 20, was organized by

Seneca Nguyen, a fifth grader.

see **KIDS PROTEST** on 3

Inslee, community leaders address hate against Asians



Gov. Jay Inslee

Photo by Assunta Ng

By Jason Cruz
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

"I feel as if I was abused twice, first by the attacker, and second by the legal system," said Noriko Nasu, a teacher at

see **PRESS CONFERENCE** on 6

Third vaccine adds more tools in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic



Former ICHS Foundation Executive Director Ron Chew said of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine: "Having had the vaccine is reassuring. I feel safer. I'm in the older age group, so I want to stick around and see what my kids end up doing with their careers and see what the next generation will be doing."

By Travis Quezon
ICHS

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout in Washington has expanded with the Federal Drug Administration approval of the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine in February.

Health care providers are letting the community know that by taking the first vaccine you can get, you are helping to stop the virus from circulating. You'll also avoid the risk of finding yourself without protection if infection rates surge.

As of March 9, over two million vaccine doses have been delivered in Washington state, exceeding the Department of Health (DOH)'s goal of 45,000 vaccinations a day.

see **ICHS** on 13

Families rejoice at end of nursing home lockdowns

By Mahlon Meyer
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

During the past year, Angela Wong, 51, often drove 30 miles each way to drop off chao shao bao, shumai, face cream, candied ginger, and other things for her mother. Occasionally, she would see her through a window in the lobby of the nursing home, where she is locked down. But now that Kin On is opening up for family members, Wong knows this: she will have a chance to see her mother, Lee Shee Lo, 96, in person before she dies.

"During the pandemic, I was so worried about my mother, any time I got a call from Kin On staff, given her age, I would worry and feel dread that it could happen any time and we've gone so far without seeing each other," she said.



Angela Wong, 51, and her mother, Lee Shee Lo, 96.

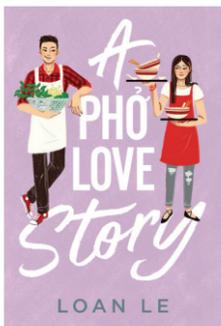
Wong is not the only one to feel a sense

see **LOCK DOWN ENDS** on 12

THE INSIDE STORY



NAMES IN THE NEWS
ICHS employee appreciation
◀ 2



ON THE SHELF
Family, it's complicated
◀ 5



HEALTH
Homegrown spine surgeon returns to care for local AAPI population
◀ 7



PICTORIAL
Rallies against anti-Asian violence
◀ 9



PUBLISHER'S BLOG
The secret to losing weight during a pandemic
◀ 8

COMMUNITY NEWS

The time to Stop AAPI Hate is NOW



Conrad Lee



Janice Zahn



Angela Kugler



Satwinder Kaur



Salim Nice



Benson Wong



Tanika Padhye



Kim-Khanh Van



Peter Kwon



Susan Chang

Doris Fujioka
McConnell

Cynthia Johnson

As King County elected officials of Asian descent, we are outraged by the increase in hate incidents directed at members of our Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in this country. A new report by Stop AAPI Hate documented nearly 3,800 hate incidents nationwide during the past 12 months. Closer to home, anti-Asian hate crime rose 33% from 2019 to 2020 in Seattle, and rose in the aggregate 149% during the same period in 16 of this country's largest cities (which included Seattle).

While the tragic murder of eight individuals, six of whom were of Asian descent, in Atlanta has yet to be ruled a hate crime, the murder

of these innocent lives has increased the fear and anxiety that many Asian Americans feel. Locally, the violent attack against an Asian woman in the Seattle Chinatown-International District last month is unacceptable and many in our Asian community are now afraid for their personal safety.

All cities must work together to fight against racism, xenophobia, and bigotry in whatever form they take. We must be silent no more. We must speak up against misinformation, call out scapegoating, and condemn violence. Individually, we can do better. Collectively we will do better.

Join us. Work with us. Unite together. ■

Bellevue City Councilmember Conrad Lee
Bellevue City Councilmember Janice Zahn
Kenmore City Councilmember Angela Kugler (appointed January 2021)
Kent City Councilmember Satwinder Kaur
Mercer Island City Councilmember Salim Nice
Mercer Island Mayor Benson Wong
Redmond City Councilmember Tanika Padhye
Renton City Councilmember Kim-Khanh Van
SeaTac Deputy Mayor Peter Kwon
Shoreline City Councilmember Susan Chang
Shoreline City Councilmember Doris Fujioka McConnell
Tukwila City Councilmember Cynthia Delostrinos Johnson

KIDS PROTEST from 1

There were no “movers and shakers” lining up as speakers. The crowd was much smaller. It didn't even have a big banner or any setup. The lack of sophistication in organizing didn't matter—it was enough to earn supportive honks of passing automobiles.

How it began



Seneca Nguyen

When 10-year-old Nguyen watched the news on March 16 about Asian Americans being killed in Georgia's Asian-owned spas, he told his mom, “I want to have a demonstration.” His dad, Matt, recalled that he and his Black wife were surprised.

The Nguyen family had never organized a protest in their life. The family attended the Women's March in 2017, and three or four Black Lives Matter rallies in the past year, said Matt.

Nguyen told the Northwest Asian Weekly that he wanted to have a demonstration because “Asian Americans were being murdered,” and that's an injustice. He wanted to do something to bring awareness.

Nguyen's wish was unusual, not just because of his age.

“Seneca is a shy kid,” said Matt. “But he is aware of what's going on, aware of the injustices I've faced, growing up as Asian American...people spitting on me at a theme park.” He's also aware of what his grandfather went through as a refugee from Vietnam, and “that things had happened to him.” And he was concerned for his grandfather after the Georgia incident.

Most parents might have rejected Nguyen's idea. Instead, Seneca's mom, Tia, responded calmly, “Let's plan it.”

“I supported him because that's what our family does,” Tia said. “We teach our kids their voices matter and to speak up for what's right.”

I have to confess as much as I am for fighting injustice, I would likely say “no” to my own children if they suggested a protest. But the Nguyens' parenting philosophy would inspire other parents to think twice before dismissing their kids' unconventional ideas.

And the family started posting on Facebook, inviting friends to join, then later, parents and classmates of his school. The word got out. About 30 families signed up.

The demonstration

The crowd was made up of a diverse group of parents and kids. They understood the horror of the Georgia crimes, and their faces showed serious intent to do their part. None of the speakers was well-known and many were too nervous to stand before the crowd. The kids' message was short and simple. Most spoke no more than a minute.

“Everybody loves each other,” one boy said, as his voice trembled.

“I don't understand why people can't love each other,” another student said.

“Racism is wrong,” said yet another.

Nguyen, who was petrified, was never able to give his speech, even though he had it written down on a piece of paper and practiced numerous times. His parents' friend, Andrew Yoshiwara of Portland, finally read it on Seneca's behalf.

“My name is Seneca and I'd just like to thank you for coming here today to support violence against Asian Americans. It makes me angry so I did something. I organized this demonstration because us kids have the power to stand up and fight back against Asian-hating crimes because we are kids versus racism!”

For some, it was their first time speaking in public. These little people were no taller than four or five feet, and as young as 6 years old. But their one-line

or one-minute speech was no less powerful. What the protest had taught the kids and their parents were profound and far-reaching.

Impact on kids

We are proud of Seneca,” said Matt. “It's okay to be scared, it's okay to be nervous (at the event). But you should always keep your head up. He makes a difference in his friends. What they experienced from that day, they look up to him. A parent said Seneca is a good role model for his son.”

Matt said he and Tia wanted their children to “continue to be aware of injustices. We want to raise kids that are kind...speak up and not silence when they see something wrong.”

What Seneca learns, Matt said, even a kid “can organize and bring people together. And kids can voice their opinions and views.”

Seneca's siblings are proud of him, too. His 13-year-old brother Xaxier is the president of Black Student Union at his school. Matt said Seneca has probably been watching his brother.

Besides Seneca getting a thumbs up from many that day, what made him most happy was, “Seeing all the kids from my school and other people I didn't know supporting the rally,” he said.

When asked if the family celebrated after the event, Matt said the whole incident in Georgia is “unfortunate with eight people being killed, and it's tragic in the community.” It doesn't need any type of celebration, he added.

Matt hopes that non-Asians should be aware of the tragedy and defend Asian Americans when situations arise.

In this pandemic, parents and students have been moaning that they didn't learn as much as in a normal school year. Yet when Seneca and his classmates were participating in this rally, they were actually receiving an important real-life education, which wouldn't be possible in a classroom.

The impact on participants

Not all attendees were from Nguyen's circle. Jennifer Sun, who learned about the rally from her co-worker, brought her family along. Sun is a teacher at a Bellevue elementary school.

“As teachers, we were inspired to find there was a kid-organized rally against racism. It felt great to see a big multiracial crowd out to support our AAPI community. Oppression of any one group impacts all of us and we need solidarity, whether it's for BLM or #stopAAPIhate.”

“It's important in times like this to come out and show support,” said Gordon, Sun's husband.

“My friend and I were talking, and she shared that Chinatown is supposed to be a safe space, especially for our Asian elders. With this rise in hate crimes, it feels like that's been taken away from us and from them. Rallying at Hing Hay felt like we were taking it back,” said Megan, Sun's daughter.

“It's really great to see that so many people in the community are willing to stand up and fight against AAPI hate,” said Matthew, Sun's son.

“I was impressed that so many families turned out for [the] rally with support signs for Asian Americans,” said Gei Chan, a retiree. She was also “heartened to see ... many families staying after to explore the neighborhood businesses.” Some restaurants reported good lunch businesses that day. The rally started around noon.

But the lasting lesson these kids had learned, is they can be change agents, too. The seeds of change have been sown for years to come in just one March afternoon. ■

See pictorial for more rally events on page 9.

Assunta can be reached at assunta@nwasianweekly.com.