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Mukilteo's Asian Americans speak out



Beacon photos by David Pan

Left, residents march in support of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community during the Mukilteo Stands in Solidarity rally. More than 100 people attended the Saturday, April 3, event that featured several Asian American speakers. Above, student Nathan Duong addresses the crowd during the rally. Duong expressed concern about the recent rise of violence against Asian Americans.

Recent violence, microaggressions have community on guard

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

Many Asian Americans in Mukilteo are feeling uneasy.

The recent violence directed at the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community across the country is taking its toll.

During Saturday's Mukilteo Stands in Solidarity march and rally, members of the AAPI community shared their fears and hopes for the future.

More than 100 supporters gathered at the Mukilteo Library and marched along Mukilteo Speedway to a parking

lot at 84th Street SW, also the site of last summer's Black Lives Matters rally. Kamiak graduate Alex Callaway helped organize the rally to support Asian Americans in Mukilteo and to give them an opportunity to be heard.

"The Asian American community is exhausted right now," student Nathan Duong told the crowd "We open up our phones and the first thing we see is more videos of our elders being pushed to the pavement, having their faces stomped on like trash, and receiving only the apathetic stares from bystanders."

When they step outside, Asian Americans

are in fear – fear that they might be the next victim.

"We ask ourselves what separates us from those Asians in those videos," Duong said. "Deep down inside, we know that in the eyes of hateful people, there is no difference between us and them. It could be any one of us at any given time."

The roots of the violence against the AAPI community go way back, according to Hayley Aho, who said these crimes are not random, nor do they come out of the blue.

"America normalizes and desensitizes attacks on Asian people out of systematic

racism and harmful perceptions," Aho said.

She noted the suspect in the recent Atlanta shootings that claimed the lives of eight people, six of Asian descent, admitted his motive was out of fetishization.

"The fetishization of Asian women ties the ideas that Asian women are submissive, docile, lustful and cannot adapt to life, Western ideals," Aho said.

Jennifer Lin Kwong, a stay-at-home mother of two, told of how she was overly sexualized and fetishized ever since she was a young teenager.

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NOAA decides against rebuilding waterfront Mukilteo Research facility

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

The decision not to rebuild the Mukilteo Research Station on the waterfront appears to be final.

In a letter sent to local government officials by Rep. Rick Larsen (D-2nd District), the congressman wrote, "It is with regret that I acknowledge the replacement facility for the MRS will not be built due to unexpectedly high construction costs."

Larsen praised the world-class research work conducted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Northwest Fisheries Science Center since the 1970s. He noted that the research not only supported the regional commercial and recreation fishing industries, but helped scientists restore critical wildlife

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Waterfront proposal: Parking garage with retail, commercial office space

BY DAVID PAN

REPORTER@YOURBEACON.NET

A three-and-a-half-level parking facility with ground level retail and commercial office space could be coming to the Mukilteo waterfront.

The operative words are "could be."

The property, at 707 Front St., is situated where the former ferry holding lanes were, across from Ivar's. It is owned by Mukilteo Landing LLC., whose lease agreement with Washington State Ferries will end once the new road to the ferry terminal is completed in the second or third quarter of this year.

Mukilteo Landing filed a preliminary application with the city to determine if the plans for the parking facility were in compliance with zoning, city codes, and other requirements.

They were, according to Patrick McCourt, president of Land Pro Group Inc., which was hired to be the project manager by Mukilteo Landing.

As of this month, no formal permit applications have been submitted to the city for a development proposal at the site, Mukilteo



A rendering of a proposed waterfront parking facility with retail and office space.

Illustration and photo courtesy of Mukilteo Landing, LLC.

Community Development Director Dave Osaki wrote in an email.

Osaki added that, "While Mukilteo Landing expressed interest in still pursuing this development option at a recent meeting with city staff, they indicated that they would also consider other development options."

In a proposal presented to the City Council in January 2020, Mukilteo Landing indicated that of three different options – retail and residential condominiums, hotel, and parking facility with commercial space – the latter was its preferred use. The project would include 261 parking stalls, 15,588 square feet of commercial space, four parking decks and access



The location of the proposed waterfront parking facility.

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"I have had very crude sexual remarks made to me directly to my face, relating to my race," she said. "If I even gave them a dirty look, we are told to relax. It's a compliment."

A term Kwong recently became acquainted with is "microaggression." She likened them to paper cuts, which she said are annoying but are not the end of the world.

People might say something that appears relatively harmless.

"You can continue about your day, mostly forgetting about it," Kwong said. "But imagine getting these paper cuts every single day for the rest of your life. This is the life of an Asian American. We are constantly made to feel we don't belong."

Some of the comments directed to Kwong include "Your English is so good" and "Where are you really from?"

These individuals might think they are making small talk.

"But what they're really saying is that I stick out in a sea of White people," Kwong said. "I don't look like I belong."

Loren Poisel, who is of Japanese descent, noted she was born and raised in America, has never been to Japan, and doesn't even speak the language. Yet people don't see her as American.

During a visit to SeaWorld, Poisel and her family had the misfortune to sit next to an intoxicated woman, who told her that she smelled like Chinese food, made fun of her eyes, and then made fun of her nails, while commenting, "Aren't you people supposed to be good at doing nails?"

Poisel recalled a conversation with someone in Mukilteo, who shared that since a Vietnamese family moved into their neighborhood, some dogs have gone missing.

"At first I didn't understand what she was saying, and then she explained to me, 'Well, you know, these people, they eat dogs,'" Poisel said.

Just a few days ago, Poisel was talking with someone about her concerns about sending



A Mukilteo Stands in Solidarity supporter raises his fist to acknowledge the sound of a horn from a car driving by the march.



Two young supporters wait for the Mukilteo Stands in Solidarity march to begin.

Beacon photos by David Pan



Kamiak graduate Alex Callaway (left) leads the Mukilteo Stands in Solidarity march and rally.

her children back to school because of the rise of hate crimes against Asian Americans. Poisel's husband is of European descent, and their children are biracial.

"This person told me, 'I'm sure your kids are going to be OK. They look more White than Asian,'" Poisel said. "Think about that.

America is not a White country. America is an immigrant country.

"Your skin color should not be the reason that you have privilege. Your skin color should not be the reason you live in fear."

The recent attacks on Asian Americans brought back unpleasant memories for Ton

Nyugen, who emigrated with his family from Vietnam when he was about 5.

Nyugen remembers walking home from school one day when all of a sudden rocks started flying at them.

"All we heard was 'Hey, go back to where you came from. You don't belong here,'" Nyugen said.

Two weeks ago, Nyugen and his family were in Edmonds and, as they approached a White man, they heard him say, "Oh, here comes corona."

A couple months earlier, Nyugen's wife was involved in a road rage incident and she told him that the other driver said, "Go back to where you came from."

For many Asian Americans, responding to such hate is hard.

Poisel noted that for hundreds of years most Asians were colonized people, living under the rule of others.

The way they survived was to stay silent, keep their heads down, don't get involved, and don't rock the boat, she said.

Poisel stressed that Asian Americans have the same rights as everyone else – the right to feel safe, to be protected, and to feel at home.

"When those rights are violated, we cannot stay silent," she said. "We cannot keep our heads down. We must get involved. We must rock the boat."

Aho encouraged everyone to be an ally of the AAPI community.

"Use your voice to amplify ours, support our business, recognize your language and your microaggressions when you talk to us," she said.

Though Asian Americans are struggling with their fears, Duong was heartened by the turnout and support from Mukilteo.

"It's moments like this, in which we come together and stand in a bold act of solidarity, in which we are braver together, in which we are stronger together," he said. "This gives our community hope that someday we won't have to have fear, as we step outside for groceries or errands, because as you have all shown us here today, solidarity is the solution."

The Great Mukilteo GARAGE SALE Is Back!

Saturday, May 15th

All listings will be in the **May 12th Mukilteo Beacon** & the **May 13th Edmonds Beacon** as well as online at mukilteobeacon.com

FREE newspapers will be distributed around town the week of the Garage Sale, just look for a Beacon newspaper box.

NEW this year, ALL online listings will have a map link for Google Maps to your location

How to submit your Garage Sale Listing:

- ☀ Online at mukilteobeacon.com
- ☀ Cut out the Garage Sale Form in the newspaper and mail it in with your payment
- ☀ Stop by the Beacon office and fill out a Garage Sale Form
- ☀ Email your listing to classifieds@yourbeacon.net with the subject line Mukilteo Garage Sale
- ☀ Call the Beacon office at 425-347-5634


Only \$12 for up to 25 words, plus address

All Garage Sale listings must be received by Thursday, May 6th at 5 p.m.



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