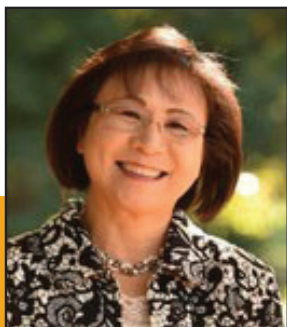


This AAPI Heritage Month, share the joy of being who you are



Gary Locke



Florence Chang



John Chen



E.J. Koh

By **Janice Nesamani**
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

This year has been tough, and if you identify as an Asian or Asian Pacific Islander (AAPI), then it has been like a crescendo of rising hate gradually built up over the years. As we celebrate AAPI Heritage Month, we talked to some members of the AAPI community who acknowledge our history, the effect of additional scrutiny since the advent of Covid, and help us see ways to heal and support each other.

Florence Chang, executive vice president and COO of MultiCare Health System, saw the pain and anxiety many

of her Asian colleagues, friends, and communities felt, and recognized those feelings as her own after the Atlanta shootings.

“I worried for my parents, relatives, and adult children’s safety and—for the first time—asked them not to go out at night,” Chang said.

She admits she resisted speaking or even thinking about these events for fear of awakening painful memories. “But these heartbreaking incidents and the wellbeing of my fellow Asian American colleagues, friends, and family members has been weighing heavily

see **AAPI HERITAGE MONTH** on 8

SPD Chief Diaz wrestling as liberation



Seattle Police Chief Adrian Diaz

By **Mahlon Meyer**
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

Adrian Diaz was chasing a suspect down Jackson Street. When he caught him, Diaz, then a 28-year-old police officer, employed a wrestling move and lifted the man off the ground, simultaneously apprehending the

see **DIAS** on 9

May Day march



May Day march through Seattle on May 1

About 150 people marched through the Chinatown-International District and downtown Seattle on May 1—as part of an annual May Day March organized by El Comité.

The crowd started at St. Mary’s Church, and stopped along south King Street for speeches by state Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos and JM Wong of Massage Parlor Outreach Project.

Wong spoke of the violence that has been inflicted on the Asian American community—and an insistence on a better future.

Santos said, “The struggles of today are not new but, rather, enjoin us to every racial and

ethnic group...For APIs, this fight for freedom, justice, and civil rights are largely interconnected by racial animus, xenophobia, and economic conditions.”

Santos told the crowd, “Today, your presence in the International District shows that the people’s movement is more united than ever. Today, you march with and for one another. Today, you march with the spirits of those who fought before us for they are here, all around us, joining in their ongoing struggle for freedom, justice, and civil rights. Today, you march for your future and for mine . . . because we are stronger, together.” ■

New law protects victims of nonfatal strangulation

By **Jason Cruz**
NORTHWEST ASIAN WEEKLY

A senate bill protecting victims of domestic violence via strangulation was signed into law this past April. The bill covers costs of a forensic nurse examination related to nonfatal strangulation when it is part of a sexual assault or if a victim applies for program benefits. Washington becomes the first state in the nation to provide this service.

The proposed law aids domestic violence survivors and was supported by Washington state senators T’wina Nobles and Manka Dhingra.

see **FORENSIC NURSE** on 11



Manka Dhingra

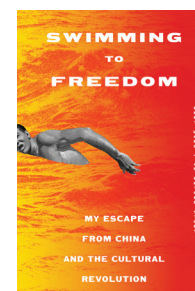
THE INSIDE STORY



NAMES IN THE NEWS
Tana Lin nominated to District Court judgeship ◀ 2



PUBLISHER’S BLOG
Long live “crazy” moms! ◀ 5



PROFILE
Swimming to Hong Kong: A bold Chinese refugee looks back ◀ 6

COMMENTARY

The fight against anti-Asian hate must include fighting economic racism



Shomya Tripathy

By Shomya Tripathy
FOR NORTHWEST
ASIAN WEEKLY

This past year, the Asian community has experienced a heightened level of racism, violence, and harassment. As a result, community members are rightfully fearful of the physical violence

they might encounter on the street, at the workplace, or in their homes. As we honor victims and survivors of this new wave of physical violence, it is important to also reflect on the multitude of other ways that Asian and immigrant communities continue to face systemic racist violence.

Anti-Asian violence is not just physical violence—it is also economic violence that is deeply affecting our day-to-day lives. In addition to what our families face on the streets, our communities experience real harm when our businesses are shuttered, our neighbors are losing work, and unemployment insurance is linguistically and culturally inaccessible.

This year, we needed our representatives to go beyond a symbolic statement of support and to instead take active steps to protect us. Many of the people we work with at Asian Counseling and Referral Services (ACRS) have been doubly or triply hit by the pandemic and face many barriers in addition to the fear of physical violence. As our lawmakers debated the budget and the economic crisis, we worked to make sure that they acknowledged the violence we experience, and all the other ways our systems leave us out.

One of these systems is our deeply regressive and

racist tax code. In Washington, those of us with the lowest incomes, who are disproportionately people of color, pay up to six times more of our incomes in state taxes than our wealthiest neighbors. We have allowed the rich to get richer without asking them to contribute to childcare, health services, good roads, or any of the other shared investments that make our communities great places to live. As a result, the services that are supposed to help us remain under-resourced and inaccessible to non-English speakers.

This year, our lawmakers finally listened to us when we talked about the economic violence that has only been exacerbated by the pandemic.

Gov. Inslee signed two landmark bills into law on May 4. One was a tax on large profits from capital gains, which will make sure that the wealthy few will also pay their

see **TRIPATHY on 10**

DIAZ from 1

suspect and throwing out his back for the next two decades.

Now at the helm of the Seattle Police Department (SPD), Chief Diaz, 45, faces a restorative process not only for his own back, but for a department that has hit its “nadir,” according to an authority on policing, the former federal monitor.

For himself, he undertakes small workouts in the morning, with no hope of getting back to the 122-pound star wrestler, soccer player, and baseball player he was in high school, not to mention the champion jujitsu and judo competitor he would later become.

For the department, he has taken larger steps. In the less than one year since he was tapped to replace Carmen Best, the first Black female police chief in the city’s history, he has made drastic changes. He has terminated nine personnel and moved 100 officers back to patrol.

“That allowed more officers to respond to 911 calls,” he said in an interview. “We had to focus on the core foundation of police work.”

His morning workouts, by contrast, are minimal. He is just shooting for maintenance.

“I used to be able to do splits and back flips,” he said.

Still, when he walked to the podium in January after five Seattle police officers were found to have taken part in the demonstration at the United States Capitol, he moved agilely like a cat.

But with the police department, the task is a little more challenging, to say the least.

“It was chaos,” he said, when he took over in August.

Two police chiefs had abruptly departed in a row. When the former mayor was caught up in a scandal, some members of the police department illegally released screen shots of a dispatch computer, in an apparent attempt to smear him, according to a report by the Office of Police Accountability (OPA).

The current mayor announced she would not launch a search for a new chief.

And the departing federal monitor (Seattle has been under a federal consent decree since 2012 for excessive force and possible racially biased policing) recommended that the department bring in someone from outside the department.

Diaz acted decisively. He fired three personnel for racial bias—one officer, one

member of traffic enforcement, and one in dispatch, he said. He fired five for lying and one for violating policies.

The nightly protests that were wracking the city last year were pulling officers away from patrol. The homicide rate was up. Moreover, the department had been hit with the greatest mid-year funding cuts in history. Morale was low and 185 officers had left.

Asked in a follow-up email why the police took no action when Black Lives Matter (BLM) splinter groups looted and attacked the Chinatown-International District last May, Diaz responded he was not chief at the time so was not privy to all the decisions.

However, he said he believes the splinter groups were not associated with BLM, but were anarchists/direct action demonstrators focused on destruction, not on exercising their First Amendment rights. Also, he said, the SPD had very little information that these splinter groups were going to attack the CID—or anywhere—that evening.

A family history of police work

Diaz said he has police work in his blood. His father was a police officer in the Air Force. And his brother, eight years his senior, was and still is a member of the SPD.

His own progression toward police work started perhaps when he was a 98-pound stripling his freshman year in high school. He had played other sports, but was willow thin and relatively weak.

“I was always getting my butt kicked by my best friend and held down by my older brother,” who was a wrestler, he said.

(When a reporter clarified if his brother is currently a lieutenant, Diaz quickly corrected him. “Acting lieutenant,” he said.)

Diaz tried out wrestling and it changed his life. He was soon virtually undefeated. As he grew older, he wrestled at different weight classes, all hovering around 120 pounds.

He also began to read, as he progressed into martial arts, about Eastern philosophy, and stoicism.

He learned two things in wrestling—it takes others to succeed. One always needs a partner to train with. And without that partner, you will never progress.

“But when you’re wrestling, it’s all you,” he said.

Wrestling became a symbol for liberation. His brother moved on and joined

the military, which Diaz described as a vehicle many Latino boys take to escape various societal systems.

“It is a way for many Latinos to get out of the barrio,” he said.

Diaz did not come from a strictly oppressed or impoverished background.

But he “didn’t grow up with money,” he said.

His father, after leaving the Air Force, managed a grocery store while his mother cut hair in a convalescent home.

“Both of my parents were very engaged with me.”

For the sake of his schooling, they moved from Anaheim up to the Eastside of Seattle, where his grandmother lived. It was in fact his great grandmother who had come over from Mexico and the family had originally settled in Kansas. Diaz speaks some Spanish.

But there was always wrestling.

When his father brought him up to Mercer Island High School for the first time, having just moved up there, he said to the wrestling coach, “When he’s not with me, he’s with you.”

Diaz later passed on that commitment to countless other boys. He coached wrestling at Mercer for five years, then after a break, he coached for another five years at Chief Sealth, then again another five years at Mercer.

Along the way, he joined the academy. He had offers for both Seattle and Los Angeles. But he chose Seattle.

Shortly before joining the SPD, he studied for a short time at Bellevue College and then took Chicano studies and Ethnic Studies classes at the University of Washington. Later, after he joined the department, he went back to school and finished his degree in Criminal Justice and Law. He later earned a master’s degree.

Coming into this role, he’s had to distinguish himself as a leader yet cleave to the common ideals he shares with his predecessor. Describing himself and Best as “servant leaders,” he said his leadership style did not differ from hers significantly. However, he was quick to point out that he had terminated more officers than any previous chief.

“We must have accountability,” he said. “Police officers must follow the laws and policies they are sworn to keep.”

He is opposed to defunding the police. However, he said, he clearly understands the need to support marginalized communities with additional services.

“I completely support community investment in BIPOC communities. I’ve seen kids not able to reach their potential because they deteriorated up to the point of incarceration,” he said.

The department has adopted ABLE training, which coaches officers to intervene if they perceive anything wrong in the way another officer is handling a situation.

It is working through crowd management issues and crafting a “usable strategic plan.”

He has also held listening and learning sessions with the community.

“I’ve done what I’ve needed to do to build relations back with the community, it doesn’t mean there haven’t been hurdles.”

Diaz likened the need for police to the needs associated with handling long-term domestic abuse. Police are needed to handle the potential for homicide or abuse involving the parents. But for kids, he said, that is where you need community partners.

“It takes a partnership.”

In 2004, a community group asked the SPD to address violence among young Latino gang members. Diaz was asked by the department to become a liaison with the community, which also marked the creation of a broader Community Outreach Unit.

According to a law enforcement publication, Diaz focused on building strong relationships with community members. He also engaged with the gamut of problems facing the community, facilitating ESL classes, public works repairs, and other initiatives.

He led funding drives to supplement department funds, including reaching out to every 7-Eleven in the city to raise \$12,000. He also sought funding from major corporations.

By 2005, the unit had expanded to 25 employees.

Before its inception, there had been seven homicides in 18 months. But from 2005-2016, the SPD reported no homicides related to gang violence, according to the publication, “Strengthening Relationships Between Police and Immigrant Communities in a Complex Political Environment,” published by the Police Executive Research Forum in 2018.

“I will have led the department through some of the most challenging times and I haven’t been afraid to lead.” ■

Mahlon can be reached at info@nwasianweekly.com.