

Currents

Asian American Pacific Islander Community Newspaper Serving
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AAPIs: “Step up to defend democracy”

The January 6, 2021 US Capitol invasion by the pro-Trump mob, followed by the votes of 145 senators and congressmembers to overturn last November’s Electoral College results are direct assaults on the democracy upon which this country is built. Asian and Cuban immigrants who fled communism need to realize that Obamacare, a fair immigration system, and the Black Lives Matters movement are not steps to socialism, but programs to build a more humane and prosperous society which benefits everyone. The Republican party relegated their national convention to the Trump family to rant claiming that everything that the Democratic Party stood for was a “socialist” (hence, communist) takeover. WAKE UP AND DON’T BELIEVE THE LIES.

When the UC Berkeley alumni magazine

“California” (Winter 2020) received push back from alumni that the magazine’s focus on Black empowerment was excessive, editor Pat Johnson responded: “But I’ll say this as well: If 2021 and the coming years and decades are going to bring better, it won’t be because we ignored difficult issues. It will be because we had the courage to confront them head-on and change things for the better.”

Many in the AAPI community have achieved the American dream - higher incomes, good jobs, education, economic security - and we can make a difference - LOOK AT GEORGIA.

What can AAPIs do:

Vote and encourage others to register and vote. This last election may have been flipped by first-time voters. There are many politicians who want to destroy our democracy and they need to be voted out of office.

Learn and share the facts. Convincing others that they may have heard things wrong is difficult. Show them with compassion that the reasoning behind previous decisions was misguided and present alternative rationales. We need to rebuild relationships and promote real facts. Listen and treat people with kindness.

Speak out against injustice when you see an opportunity.

Share your time and money with socially responsible efforts.

Do everything possible to help heal the racial and economic divides in this country.

Think collectively. Wearing masks, getting the vaccine, staying home during the pandemic is better for everyone. Do what you can to recycle, reduce waste and stop global warming. Support (and don’t recall) those leaders who act for the protection and benefit of the greater society.

Support equal opportunity, fair treatment and social justice.

Understand that poverty - substandard education, poor job opportunities, absent health care, chronic food and housing insecurity - takes away any chance to advance and improve one’s economic future. The trauma of poverty affects cognitive reasoning and place many people in a unhealthy norm of being always in survival mode thinking. Chronic toxic trauma can be passed from generation to generation not by intention.

Drug abuse and mental health issues are often linked to poverty. Some drug abuse comes from the intentional flooding of poor communities with addictive drugs to create wealth for

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Happy New Year, Year of the Ox
February 12, 2021

domestic and foreign drug dealers.

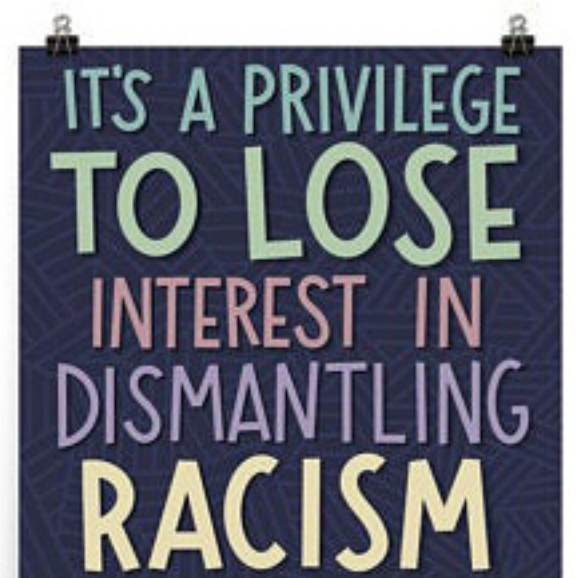
We are living in a great country and have responsibility to lead the world by example. But, there are many problems that can be solved to improve life for those left behind.

As AAPIs, we can make a difference.
Pledge that 2021 is the year to do more.

145 legislators support Trump’s claim of a “stolen election”

Starting on January 6th and ending at 3:41am on January 7th, 7 US senators and 138 members of Congress attempted to overturn the November 3rd presidential election results. There were two critical votes - an objection to reject Arizona’s election results (requesting a 10 day audit because the election was “rigged” and an allegation of election fraud) and a vote to reject Pennsylvania’s election results (arguments against mail in ballot laws). The objections were introduced to the Senate and House even after

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Poster by SF based Meg, aka megemiko, a trans non binary artist in SF. See her work on etsy.com

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145 legislators

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sixty-one lawsuits contesting the presidential election in states including Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin had been dismissed or dropped due to a lack of evidence and described as frivolous and without merit. The only lawsuit that prevailed was in Pennsylvania and voters there were given three days to provide proper ID to “cure” their ballots.

On the Arizona issue, 6 senators and 121 house members supported the objection to reject Arizona’s election results.

On the Pennsylvania vote, 7 senators and 138 house members objected to Pennsylvania use of mail in ballots.

These votes took place after both the Senate and House reconvened after pro-Trump supporters mobbed the Capitol building with the specific intent to reverse the election results as urged on by the president at his “Stop the Steal” rally. The Capitol was locked down with legislators and their staff secured in safe rooms for hours.

These legislators refusing to certify the electoral college results had embraced Trump’s lies about a stolen election and other falsehoods which fired up pro Trump protestors. Their loyalty to the president undermined democracy. The mob yelled that their invasion was “necessary to save democracy.”

Four years of unrestrained falsehoods by the president had become alternative truths to the mob. Republicans tolerated his lies and erratic behavior with the expectation he would improve or that the previous impeachment (bribery of Ukrainian president) taught him a lesson. The silent Republican party implicitly endorsed his lies and the lies only grew bigger. They doubled down on the big lie of a “stolen election” by announcing their plan to overturn the election results. This is called “bad parenting” and “enabling.” Their inaction amplified the president’s falsehoods which the white supremacist mob embraced and used to justify violently overtaking the Capitol. Five people died during or as a result of the attempted coup. The damage to the Capitol will be in the millions. The damage to the US democracy is priceless. The Republicans continue to enable the president and endorse his lies by voting against impeachment on January 13th.

Complicit in this unrest are the tech platforms which allowed the president to repeatedly violate hate speech regulation and foment violence. It took them too long to shut down his fake news. During the Trump administration, “fact checking” became a job description. By allowing the president to amplify his racist and anti-democracy ranting, social media enabled him for four years. For those years, critics warned that the president was unstable and irrational, a deranged lunatic and a dictator, and a threat to national security.

The 8 senators who objected to the

Electoral College results are Ted Cruz (TX), Josh Hawley (MO), Cindy Hyde-Smith (MS), John Kennedy (LA), Cynthia Lummis (WY), Roger Marshall (KS), Tommy Tuberville (AL), and Rick Scott (FL).

139 members of Congress voted to oppose Arizona or Pennsylvania election results, or both are:

Alabama - Jerry L. Carl; Barry Moore; Mike Rogers; Robert Aderholt; Mo Brooks; Gary Palmer

Arizona - Paul A. Gosar; Andy Biggs; David Schweikert; Debbie Lesko

Arkansas - Rick Crawford

California - Doug LaMalfa; Jay Obernolte; Devin Nunes; Kevin McCarthy; Mike Garcia; Ken Calvert; Darrell Issa

Colorado - Lauren Boebert; Doug Lamborn

Connecticut - 0

Delaware - 0

Florida - Matt Gaetz; Neal Dunn; Kat Cammack; John Rutherford; Bill Posey; Daniel Webster; C. Scott Franklin; W. Gregory Steube; Brian Mast; Byron Donalds; Mario Diaz-Balart; Carlos A. Gimenez

Georgia - Buddy Carter; Andrew S. Clyde; Jody Hice; Barry Loudermilk; Rick Allen; Marjorie Taylor Greene

Hawaii - 0

Idaho - Russ Fulcher

Illinois - Mike Bost; Mary E. Miller

Indiana - Jackie Walorski; Greg Pence; Jim Banks; James R. Baird

Iowa - 0

Kansas - Tracey Mann, Ron Estes, Jacob LaTurner

Kentucky - Harold Rogers

Louisiana - Steve Scalise; Clay Higgins; Mike Johnson; Garret Graves

Maine - 0

Maryland - Andy Harris

Massachusetts - 0

Michigan - Jack Bergman; Tim Walberg; Lisa C. McClain

Minnesota - Jim Hagedorn; Michelle Fischbach

Mississippi - Trent Kelly; Michael Guest; Steven Palazzo

Missouri - Blaine Luetkemeyer; Sam Graves; Billy Long; Jason Smith; Vicky Hartzler

Montana - Matthew M. Rosendale

Nebraska - Adrian Smith

Nevada - 0

New Hampshire - 0

New Jersey - Jefferson Van Drew

New Mexico - Yvette Herrell

New York - Lee Zeldin; Nicole Malliotakis; Elise Stefanik; Chris Jacobs

North Carolina - Gregory Francis Murphy; Virginia Foxx; David Rouzer; Richard Hudson; Dan Bishop; Madison Cawthorn; Ted Budd

North Dakota - 0

Ohio - Steve Chabot; Jim Jordan; Bill Johnson; Bob Gibbs; Warren Davidson

Oklahoma - Kevin Hern; Markwayne Mullin, Frank Lucas, Tom Cole, Stephanie I. Bice

Oregon - Cliff Bentz

Pennsylvania - Daniel Meuser; Scott Perry; Lloyd Smucker; Fred Keller; John Joyce; Guy Reschenthaler; Glenn Thompson; Mike Kelly

Rhode Island - 0

South Carolina - Joe Wilson; Jeff Duncan; William Timmons; Ralph Norman; Tom Rice

South Dakota - 0

Tennessee - Diana Harshbarger; Tim Burchett; Chuck Fleischmann; Scott DesJarlais; John W. Rose; Mark Green; David Kustoff

Texas - Louie Gohmert; Pal Fallon; Lance Gooden; Ron Wright; August Pfluger; Ronny Jackson; Randy Weber; Pete Sessions; Jodey Arrington; Troy E. Nehls; Beth Van Duyne; Roger R. Williams; Michael Burgess; Michael Cloud; John Carter; Brian Babin

Utah - Chris Stewart; Burgess Owens

Vermont - 0

Virginia - Robert J. Wittman; Bob Good; Ben Cline; Morgan Griffith

Washington - 0

West Virginia - Alex Mooney; Carol Miller

Wisconsin - Scott Fitzgerald; Thomas P. Tiffany

Wyoming - 0

The Lincoln Project warned the country

On July 8, 2020, The Lincoln Project, a Republican super PAC, released an ad accusing a slate of Republican lawmakers of “cowardice” and “betrayal.” The ad stated “Someday soon, the time of Trump will pass. This circus of incompetence, corruption and cruelty will end. When it does, the men and women of Trump’s Republican Party will come to you, telling you they can repair the damage he’s done. They’ll beg you to forgive their votes to exonerate Trump from his crimes, ask you to forgive their silence, their cowardice and their betrayals as Trump wrecked this nation.” The ad featured Senators Mitch McConnell (KY), Lindsey Graham (SC), Thom Tillis (NC), Cory Gardner (CO), Martha McSally (AZ), Ted Cruz (TX), Joni Ernst(IA), Marco

Asian Pacific State Employees Association/APSEA

APSEA Holiday Mixer 2020

We here at APSEA would like to give a big thank you for those that joined us for the APSEA Holiday Mixer via Zoom.

We are glad that we were able to get together for the holidays to celebrate everything that APSEA represents. It is important that we come together during these times, whether it be in person or on Zoom, so that we can collectively show our support to the APSEA organization and to the people around us.

While it would have been great to meet and socialize with every one of you in person this year, we are grateful for your attendance and look forward to the next time we are all together in the same room again.

We would like to thank our keynote speaker, David Kim, for kicking off the event and bringing our audience joy for the festive occasion.

From there, we broke the ice and said hello to those that were in attendance. As the introductions were completed, we heard some inspiring words from Dan Kim.

One of our special guests, Maeley Tom, provided a wonderful performance by singing to us. Maeley elevated the mood for everyone, which helped lead to a fun game of bingo, where we were excited to provide prizes to our three winners.

Our attendees were treated to a slideshow of what APSEA has accomplished and what we are aspiring to do. One of our aspirations is to help the community around us that are in need, and for this holiday period, we are helping the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento fulfill the wishes that the children requested this year. We would like to give thanks to all that contributed to the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento this year.

Two of our VIP guest speakers, Henry Jones and Amy Tong, provided their insights and messages.

Current APSEA President, Stephenson Loveson, announced the recognition of our



members that showed leadership and support to the Asian Pacific Islander Community. APSEA would like to recognize Alicia Wong as the recipient of the President's Award, Stephen Chan as the recipient of the Member's Award, and Shivani Bose-Varela as our outgoing President.

Following the award recognition, our attendees were tested on their knowledge of movies related to the Christmas and holiday season. Many memorable moments were recognized and recalled.

After declaring a winner of the trivia game, APSEA discussed with everyone about the benefits of joining and being a member of APSEA.

Bekah Christensen spoke and relayed her message to the audience.

Our last and special speaker of the night was in the form of a video message from founding member and first president of APSEA, Jim Kahue. Jim talked about how APSEA is a special organization, as it has helped many Asians and Pacific Islanders fight discrimination in order to have the same opportunities that others have. Jim would like us to enjoy and live our lives in this world together and to be successful, so we can continue to contribute to our society in a peaceful and effective way. Jim

enraptured the spirit of the holiday season by singing us a special Hawaiian Christmas song.

On that momentous note and as the year draws to an end, we are grateful to have the opportunity to speak to you all about how much APSEA means to all of us.

From all of us here on the APSEA Board, we wish everyone to have a happy holiday and that they stay safe and have a Happy New Year.



The Lincoln Project

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Rubio (FL), Susan Collins (ME), John Cornyn (TX), James Inhofe (OK), Mike Rounds (SD), Steve Daines (MT) and Tom Cotton (AR) "Every time they had a choice between America and Trump, they chose Trump. Every time they were called to the service of this nation and their sacred oath, they chose Trump." "Learn their names. Remember their actions. And never, ever trust them again," Reed Galen, co-founder of The Lincoln Project, said "These are senators who have abandoned their consciences, left the American people behind, and failed to stand up for the Constitution and common decency."

Acting US Attorney General Jeffery A. Rosen

Jan 7, 2021, WASHINGTON - "Yesterday, our Nation watched in disbelief as a mob breached the Capitol Building and required federal and local law enforcement to help restore order. The Department of Justice is committed to ensuring that those responsible for this attack on our Government and the rule of law face the full consequences of their actions under the law. Our criminal prosecutors have been working throughout the night with special agents and investigators from the U.S. Capitol Police, FBI, ATF, Metropolitan Police Department and the public to gather the evidence, identify perpetrators, and charge federal crimes where

warranted. Some participants in yesterday's violence will be charged today, and we will continue to methodically assess evidence, charge crimes and make arrests in the coming days and weeks to ensure that those responsible are held accountable under the law."

In the popular imagination, Asian Americans inhabit a vague purgatorial status: not white enough nor black enough; distrusted by African Americans, ignored by whites, unless we're being used by whites to keep the black man down.

Cathy Park Hong, Minor Feelings



What's Ahead for Tule Lake in 2021?

Approaching a new year, the Tule Lake Committee continues the fight to preserve what remains of the Tule Lake concentration camp, a fight that has demanded unwavering persistence and diligence.

Since 2014 the Tule Lake Committee filed five lawsuits addressing two issues; seeking environmental review of fence construction on the concentration camp site, and seeking due process in the July 2018 giveaway of the Tulelake airfield. As we search for resolution of these issues, litigation has kept bulldozers from destroying the fabric of this rare social justice site.

The Tule Lake Committee's most recent lawsuit, *Tule Lake Committee v. FAA, et. al.* seeks to void the transfer of the Tulelake airfield to Oklahoma's Modoc Nation. The Oklahoma Tribe, described as "the Whitest Tribe in America," won acceptance in the Tulelake region by promising to expand aviation on the Tule Lake

concentration camp site, and by collaborating with water-users who oppose local Native American efforts to save endangered sacred fish.

This January 2021, we are appealing the dismissal of our lawsuit challenging the city of Tulelake's giveaway of the 359-acre Tulelake airfield for \$17,500. More litigation is expected as we pursue our decades-long goal of protecting this American civil rights site from incompatible, destructive activity.

We are also reactivating the grassroots campaign to STOP THE FENCE on the Tule Lake concentration camp site. Two major draft reports that examine the impacts of the proposed Tulelake airfield fence (Environmental Assessment and Environmental Impact Report) are expected to be completed in early 2021; the date remains uncertain. It is essential that Tule Lake's supporters participate in the public comment period by submitting comments and criticisms about the proposed fence.

Your comments are the most important way to tell the FAA and Modoc County that we want to preserve the Tule Lake concentration camp site, not destroy it by building a fence that will keep us out.

Of the ten War Relocation Authority concentration camps, Tule Lake became the only maximum-security Segregation Center used to punish over 12,000 Japanese Americans who courageously resisted the injustice of their WWII incarceration. Tule Lake is a sacred site where 331 imprisoned Japanese Americans died, a National Monument that honors Japanese Americans who struggled for social justice. It is a place resonant with lessons to future generations.

Take a moment to prepare for the comment period. Consider Tule Lake's significance to your family and to the nation, and write down your thoughts about why it is important to protect this American civil rights site. Be ready to respond when the FAA and Modoc County decide to open the comment period, a critical time for us to send a clear message, "Protect Tule Lake, don't destroy it." Please watch for updates and stay vigilant!

With gratitude and best wishes for a happy and safe 2021.

Tule Lake Committee Board of Directors

Hiroshi Shimizu, Chair; Barbara Takei, Chief Financial Officer; Ken Nomiyama, Secretary; Satsuki Ina; Stan Shikuma

California corporate boards changing

On September 30th, legislation - AB 979 and SB 826 - was signed by Governor Newsom, which requires each publicly held corporation with principal executive offices in California to have a minimum number of directors from "underrepresented communities" on its board of directors. California is the first state in the country to require publicly held corporations in California to adopt these requirements. Nasdaq is seeking to adopt new rules requiring all Nasdaq listed companies to have, or explain why they do not have, at least two diverse directors, i.e. one who self-identifies as female and one who self-identifies as LGBTQ or an underrepresented minority. Embedded in these commitments and regulations is an implicit presumption that board diversity might promote racial equity in the economic sphere, particularly with respect to Black people.

The new California Corporations Code 301.4 requires a minimum of one director from an underrepresented community no later than December 31, 2021. Underrepresented communities include Black, African American, Hispanic, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Native Hawaii or Alaska Native, or gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender persons. By December 31, 2022, the minimum increases to 2 directors on boards with 4-8 directors and 3 if the board has 9 or more directors.

While the mandate for greater board diversity may result with some influence on racial equity, effective racial reckoning must address why such racial imbalance exists and

persists at this and other levels of the corporate world, economy and society.

Prof. Lisa Fairfax (George Washington University) spoke at a UCD King Hall ZOOM in January adding:

White women will undoubtedly disproportionately satisfy the new law (A Deloitte survey of current boards found that 95% believed that diversity was vital, but 90% felt that diversity was possible without ethnic or race diversity.) Some boards have already voluntarily committed to board diversity; some shareholders have been pushing for diversity. Boards will not know how to recruit; existing mechanisms - asking current board members and using recruiters or professional networks - will not work. Even conservative or non-assertive "diversity" board members will add value because they will have life experiences and perspectives which the other board members never had. One person can make a difference. Some boards will add board seats; others will use vacancies. Board diversity will encourage white board members to speak up and raise issues. Boards have in the past required CEO or corporate community experience which limits the pool. Realizing that board diversity adds value is not readily embraced and implicit bias - presumption of incompetence - may appear in the form of an attitude that the value of diversity must be proven; Whites have a presumption of competence and that they add value even when they make mistakes. Board diversity is part of the solution but itself will not move the needle

of economic justice. Progressive white board members often don't do much more than a conservative black person. Diversifying boards is about surfacing unconscious bias, naming it, understanding where the biases are, and one goal is to get to the point that the board acknowledge biases, have conversations, and becomes engaged on those issues. Diversity on the board can result in diversity in the corporate suite. Not every board position is created equal; who is the chairman, other officers, or on the nominating committee carries influence. Diversity can discourage the creation of corporate "man-els" (male dominated panels). Board positions come with money, is an economically exclusive club, and board members' pockets are lined with corporate wealth; this kind of generational wealth is not likely in the Black community. Board can ask questions, set the tone, and request studies (and solutions) about their own company.

Fairfax added that she is optimistic about the power of the younger generation - to push as shareholders, put their money where their mouths are, make investment choices and consumer choices which are socially responsible.

Race is a very challenging issue for everyone in the room especially how to responsibly engage in the discussion. Fairfax encouraged everyone to allow for some grace, expect mistakes when engaging, and even give room for others not to engage. It will take a really long time to see change. But to Fairfax, board diversity is like the canary in the mine.



ACC SENIOR SERVICES

FREE ONLINE CLASSES, WORKSHOP AND CONCERTS

Keeping you engaged and connected to the community

Live Virtual Concerts

Asian Pair, Feb 11, Thursday, 7:00-8:30p. Back by popular demand, George Connor and Mary Nakamura will perform old standards and contemporary songs for an evening of fabulous entertainment. Live on Facebook and YouTube.



Flute & Guitar Duo, Feb 26, Friday, 2:30-3:30p. Francesca Anderson is Principal Flute with the Folsom Lake Symphony. Guitarist Daniel Roest has received wide acclaim for his classical guitar concerts. Together, they are amazing! Live on Facebook and YouTube.

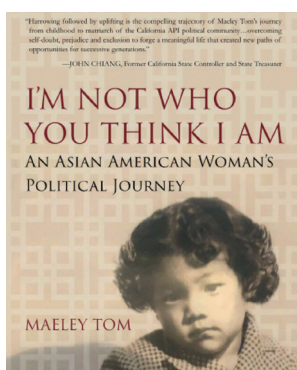


SoLunAire, Mar 11, Thursday, 4:00-5:00p. Musician Carla Fontanilla and her crew will play blues and jazz. Watch it live from ACC on Facebook and YouTube.



Workshops and Events

A Conversation with Maeley Tom, Mar 4, Thursday, 2:00-3:00p. Tom Nakashima talks to Maeley Tom about her unusual upbringing, her life in politics, and her new book, "I'm Not Who You Think I Am: An Asian American Woman's Political Journey." In every decade since the 70s, Maeley shattered a new glass ceiling, bringing other women with her.



Storytelling Hour with Liana Ma, Mondays, 2:00-3:00p. Storytelling keeps people engaged. A good story activates pathways in the brain and creates positive emotions. Liana Ma from ACC Maple Tree Village, will read stories to your loved one over Zoom and engage them in conversation.

Your Life History — A Guide for Writing with Lora Connolly. Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00p, Your Life History is a guided workshop to help you write your story two pages at a time by focusing on themes like family, school days, key relationships, life's work, and your evolving values, beliefs, goals and spirituality. Each workshop topic has a set of questions designed to evoke memories of events related to these themes. Participants write a story based on a particular theme each week and share their story with the group.

Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body: Tips from the Latest Research, with Jennifer Harrington, Alzheimer's Association, Jan 19, Tuesday, 3:00-4:30p. For centuries, we've known that the health of the brain and the body are connected. But now, science is able to provide insights into how lifestyle choices may help you keep your brain and body healthy as you age. Join us to learn about research in the areas of diet and nutrition, exercise, cognitive activity and social engagement, and use hands-on tools to help you incorporate these recommendations into a plan for healthy aging.

Fitness

Yoga Bodhisattva with Joaquin Ngarangad, Mondays, 11:00a-12:00p. For beginning and intermediate levels, this holistic experience benefits the body, mind, and spirit. Techniques for stretching and strengthening are explored through the sequential poses associated with breathing.



Gentle Yoga with Jeani Kim-Slesicki, Tuesdays, 1:00-2:00p. This beginner to intermediate level yoga class focuses on balance, circulation, stretching and strengthening from standing/seated Hatha Yoga poses.



Music & Motion with Rowena Alberto, Thursdays, 11:00a-12:00p. This exercise program starts with slow music for stretching, followed by more lively music with easy steps and moves in sitting and standing positions.



Tai Chi for Those with Limited Mobility with Robert Nakashima, Fridays, 11:00a-12:00p. Designed to serve the needs of students with a variety of mobility issues, including those living with chronic health conditions, this class will focus on developing a complete, individualized Tai Chi practice that can be enjoyed seated or standing, as conditions allow.



Sign up and join any of these sessions at

accsv.org/online

or call ACC Senior Services at 916-393-9026.
No registration fee required!

Movin' On with Joaquin Ngarangad. Fridays, 1:00-2:00p. This class consists of warmups and low impact cardio dances to disco, rock, Motown and hip-hop music.

Meditation and Soul Healing with Dennis Shimosaka. Tuesdays, 6:00-7:00p. We are focusing on easy meditation and healing practices using Tao Calligraphy tracing to remove the negative Chi (ancient Chinese wisdom) energy and promote increased health and reduce anxiety, pain, and stress.

Cooking Demonstrations

Yakisoba and Donburi with Koichi Mizushima, Feb 24, Wednesday, 11:00a-12:00p. Yakisoba is a classic pan-fried noodle dish made with meat and vegetables. Donburi is a traditional dish of chicken and vegetables served over rice.

Bibimbop and Japchae with Soojin Yoo, Mar 24, Wednesday, 11:00a-12:00p. Learn how to make two popular Korean dishes with almost the same ingredients, Bibimbop (mixed rice with vegetables, meat, and fried egg) and Japchae (glass noodles stir-fried with vegetables and meat).



Music

Beginning Ukulele with Carla Fontanilla, Wednesdays, 5:00-6:00p. This ukulele workshop will focus on learning the basic chords and strums that will have you playing many of your favorite songs in just a few simple lessons.

ACC Music Makers Workshop with Debbie Eto and Ted Fong, Jan 28, Feb 5, Mar 25, 2:00-3:00p. Music appreciation for all music lovers!

Support Groups and Caregiving

Family Caregiver Support Group. Caring for someone you love brings you the joy of giving back but has many challenges as well. For more information and registration, contact Soojin Yoo, MSW, Social Worker (916) 503-5386 or email syoo@accsv.org.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers. This award-winning, evidence-based education program helps caregivers take better care of themselves while caring for their loved ones. Call Soojin Yoo, MSW, at (916) 503-5386 or email syoo@accsv.org to register. Thursdays, 10:00-11:30a.



COVID-19 IMPACTS ON AAPI COMMUNITY

Summer 2020 has put a halt on many events and celebrations, due to the recent outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, Hope for 2021

By Randall Ishida, Sacramento Buddhist church

As an annual Buddhist event which began around 1947 or there after marked the beginning of the Sacramento Buddhist Temple and as other temples. The Bazaar, at which includes in some cases, Obon. The events are significant events will surely had be missed due to an abrupt stop in order to keep people healthy during this pandemic.

Since the time of WW11 the Japanese Americans rebuilt their lives and communities following their forced evacuation from the West Coast by Executive Order 9066 during this time. Many Japanese Americans lost their personal properties during this time. The Bazaar was primarily a social festival where church members and the local Sacramento Japanese American community shared good food, fond memories of reminiscing and lasting friendships. Originally it was a fund raiser to help them get back on their feet after the war.

In the later years, currently the Bazaar was expanded to include Japanese cultural exhibits and demonstrations such as flower arranging (Ikebana), classical dancing, origami, calligraphy, concerts, Taiko drum performances and many cultural programs. Today several the Bazaar's profits finances helped with Boy Scouts program, dharma school scholarships, building renovations , and several sponsorships for community events. Many Buddhist churches are humbled that the Bazaar's popularity has turned it into a major community event in their community and their congregation.

Obon is also another holiday that was missed this summer and is usually held during the hot months of July or August. It is a time when people come together and remember those who had passed and celebrated with Obon-dori. It is a time when people dance in merriment around the colorful lanterns. Obon begins with the lighting of lanterns, often hung to guide the spirits home. It is celebrated not only in Sacramento, but throughout the US and in Japan as well during the summer months. It graciously welcomes back annual attendees, and the churches are thrilled to see brand new visitors, traveling from miles around, to join in the festivities each year. As long as I can remember such events have been enjoyed by all. Working and volunteering in different capacities among friends is a pleasure. It is a chance to help support not only the church but the community. It is a time to reacquaint with old friends. I also was able to experience other church's Obon and Bazaars. Some churches combined both together. This year we couldn't participate, nor congregate with friends as we were in quarantine due to Covid 19.

These celebrations encourage many to participate regardless who you are whether you

are Buddhist or non-Buddhist, Japanese ancestry or not Japanese.

We live in such a world today of racial tension. Along with this pandemic that lurks among us currently we must retake baby steps reassure we get back on our feet again. We must keep the heritage an ongoing venue no matter and persevere. If we keep up with the protocol, rules & regulations our legacy will live on a lifetime. Things may be different and have changed , but the truth is nothing is forever. Life is forever changing and nothing is permanent.

It is hoped that these events in the future will bring jointly a closer knit of people for those not only just Buddhists but for non Buddhists, Japanese and non-Japanese. It will soon be back together in a physical state of togetherness. Yes, all lives matter. It is a chance to connect our Buddhist & Japanese heritage, learn and beware more about others and be there for each other no matter where we are and who we are .

Maybe 2021 will bring a more secure lifestyle filled hope and closeness. We will soon see each other again in person. We will have gatherings as we once had, just in a safe and healthier environment.

COVID-19 devastating toll on Filipino nurses

Nearly a third of the nurses who have died of coronavirus in the US are Filipino, even though Filipino nurses make up just 4% of the nursing population nationwide. 18% of California's nurse workforce is Filipino. Nationally, 74 of 245 nurses who have died of the virus were Filipino, including both nurses born in the Philippines and US born. On a memorial website Kanlungan.net ("shelter" "refuge") these front line victims, nurses, doctors and other medical workers worldwide are being remembered and data is being collected. The website shows Filipino nurse COVID-19 fatalities in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, United Kingdom, Philippines, Guam, Canada, Bahamas and the US.

As of September 2020, the National Nurses United (NNU) estimated that at least 1,718 health care workers had died of COVID-19 and related complications, including 213 RNs of which 67 (31.5%) are Filipino and 38 (17.8%) are Black, both groups disproportionately impacted because Filipinos make up 4% of registered nurses (RN) in the US and Black nurses are 12.4%. NNU estimated that 124 (58.2%) RNs who died are nurses of color. Nurses of color comprise only 24.1% of registered nurses in the US. NNU found that the COVID-19 related deaths occurred 29.6% in hospital settings and 70.4% in nursing homes, medical practices, emergency medical services and other care settings. NNU called for expanded domestic

production of personal protective equipment (PPE), data collection and OSHA to establish emergency standards to better protect health care workers. New York, New Jersey, California, Illinois, Texas and Florida account for 61.5 percent of RN fatalities.

According to Catherine Ceniza Choy, UCB professor of ethnic studies, Filipino nurses in the front lines is not new. In her book "Empire of Care: Nursing and Migration in Filipino American History" the migration of Filipino nurses started in the early 20th century under the colonial rule of the Philippines. At that time, Americanized nursing curriculum was brought as an effort to build a new education system in the Philippines. Nursing shortages prompted American hospitals to recruit nurses from the Philippines and since the 1960s Choy estimates more than 150,000 Filipino nurses have migrated to the US.

Philippine-trained nurses are disproportionately in the ICUs, emergency rooms, long term care facilities compared to white US trained nurses according to Jennifer Nazareno of the Philippine Health Initiative for Research, Service and Graining at Brown University. They are also more likely to live in multi-generational households. As breadwinners supporting family in the US and the Philippines, they are more likely to stay in high stress jobs that put them more at risk. As primary income earners, they also under financial pressure to accept multiple nursing assignments. Nazareno's research also identified Filipinos and Filipino Americans facing significant chronic health conditions like having diabetes and heart disease.

Zenei Cortez, National Nurses United, adds another theory that Filipino nurses are less likely to question authority and speak up about the lack of PPE, especially if they came to the US on a work visa. Some may be undocumented and need to stay employed and under the ICE radar.

Filipinos are nursing around the world. When UK celebrated its first Pfizer vaccine recipient, 90 year old Margaret Keenan, it was Filipino nurse May Parsons who delivered the shot. "I'm just glad that I'm able to play a part in this historic day," Parsons said in a statement released by the UK's National Health Service. "The last few months have been tough for all of us working in the NHS but now it feels like there is light at the end of the tunnel."



2020 CACS Food Project Serve Communities

By Brenda Fong

With the Covid Pandemic raging around us, the CACS leadership cancelled its annual Gold Mountain Dinner event as well as its Operation Santa Claus for 2020. Nevertheless, to help those in need, it opted to organize this food project.

On October 9, 2020 Board members, advisors and volunteers from the CACS' Foundation and the Chinese American Council of Sacramento gathered at Happy Garden Restaurant for a special project to help API seniors and low-income families with food insecurity by providing free boxed lunches. A total of 400 lunches were prepared by the staff of Happy Garden Restaurant under the direction of Manager/Owner Fiona Duong (thank you for coordinating this big effort!) In collaboration with our API partners, the organizations selected included:

- Hui o Hawaii (Marshall Islanders, Hawaiians)
- TOFA (Tongan, Pacific Islanders)
- Hmong Youth & Parents United

- Lu Mien Community Services
- Sacramento Chinese Community Service Center
- My Sister's House
- St, John's Shelter for Women & Children

In acknowledgement, our heartfelt thanks to the following organizations and individuals who generously donated to this food project: County Board Supervisor Patrick Kennedy, Councilman Steve Hanson, Councilman Eric Guerra, ACC Senior Services, Asian Resource Inc., CAPITAL, Florin JACL, California Northstate University, Fidelity Charitable, Roger & Florence Fong, Dr. Herbert Yee, Jerry & Carole Chong, Lonnie Wong, Sylvia Sun-Minnick, Ervin and Catherine Gon, Denise Louie, June Fong, Aileen Nitta, Jonathan Canuela, Lindsey Fong, John & Mary Hughes, and Spencer Fong,.



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GEORGETTE K. IMURA

2002 Frank Fat Founders Award Honoree

The Frank Fat Founders Award is CACS's highest award and is earned by an individual who has performed an outstanding lifetime of service to the community; is a role model for our youth. Georgette epitomized that special person. Sadly we lost her in 2020 to cancer. Our heartfelt condolences to her family and to Roy, her devoted husband and best supporter throughout 56 years of matrimonial bliss...

Georgette Imura, a native Sacramentan, established consulting business in 1995, capping a 28 year career with the California Legislature. Her firm, Liberty Consulting, specializes in government and community relations and coalition development. Georgette has worked on behalf of many clients, among them; the Sac Regional Foundation, GeM Communications, The California Japanese American Community Leadership Council, No on Proposition 38 (School Vouchers), California Indians for Self Reliance, California School Boards Association, Asian Pacific Islanders, California Action Network, etc.

During her career with the California Legislature, Georgette was employed by the leadership of both the Assembly and Senate. As senior staff to the Senate President Pro Tempore, she established and co-managed a community outreach office that developed and maintained a positive working relationship with a vast, statewide network of opinion leaders and activists in California's fast-growing and diverse Asian Pacific Islander Community.

Georgette's work with the API Community often involved working closely with other communities of color and interest groups to develop coalitions and mutual support



Georgette Imura 1942–2020
We'll miss your smile...

networks for such projects as bilingual education, affirmative action, and legislation to address hate crimes and civil rights laws.

In terms of her volunteerism, Georgette is a role model and dynamo! She has served as co-founder, president, chair, board member of a host of organizations and community groups, serving many issues and programs. To name just a few; Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans, Asian Pacific Youth Leadership Project, and College Horizons. Georgette, with her experience has been an advisor and consultant with the API Constituent Committee, an advisory committee to the State Department of Alcohol and Drug Program, and Americans for Responsible Media and Speech (ARMS) which is a special committee of CAPITAL (Council of Asian Pacific Islanders Together for Advocacy and Leadership) to address anti-Asian slurs on trash talk radio.

(Reprinted fr -om 2002 CACS program)

CACS TIDBITS

During the month of November 2020, CACS Director Douglas Hsia received 3 appointments. He is now a board member of the Locke Management Association, board member of Chinese Benevolent Association, Stockton and member of Management Plan Advisory Committee of National Heritage Area (created by the US Congress in the 1980s.) There are 55 NHA designations in the country, many in the East; California Delta is the first one in California. With the increased responsibility, Douglas has decided to give up his position as the treasurer of the CACS Foundation, but will still serve on the board. CACS congratulates Douglas on his recent appointments; we continue to appreciate his service and lively enthusiasm!

Less-educated Asian Americans among hardest hit by job losses during pandemic

By Brian Cheung·Reporter, Yahoo Finance, @bcheungz.

October 7, 2020

In May, Kang Vanchiasong lost her job on an assembly line at a medical device company in Georgia. To make ends meet, she started selling lemongrass from her farm in Jefferson, opting to sell on Amazon (AMZN) after the local farmer’s market shut down due to the pandemic.

Vanchiasong, a Lao immigrant who moved to the United States 45 years ago, represents one of the communities hardest hit by the pandemic: Asian Americans with no more than a high school education.

“The ones that don’t have work right now, I don’t know what else they [can] do,” Vanchiasong, 63, told Yahoo Finance. “I have my farm, so I survived with that.”

A recent study from the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago notes that 77% of Asian men and 56% of Asian women with a high school degree or less were employed before the pandemic.

During the depths of the crisis, employment among those subgroups dropped to 46% and 32% respectively — worse than other groups when controlling for the same education level.

The Chicago Fed used microdata from the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey and found that Asian men and women with no college degree suffered the steepest job losses in the pandemic. (Credit: David Foster / Yahoo Finance)

The Chicago Fed used microdata from the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey and found that Asian men and women with no college degree suffered the steepest job losses in the pandemic. (Credit: David Foster / Yahoo Finance)

“There is a huge disparity across groups, including all minority groups, but the group that was hit hardest in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic is Asian Americans with no college education,” Chicago Fed senior economist Luo Jia Hu told Yahoo Finance.

For workers like Vanchiasong, questions loom over why the Asian American community has been so deeply affected — and the consequences for years to come.

Breaking down Asian unemployment

The unemployment rate in September for Asian Americans was 8.9%, worse than the white unemployment rate of 7% but better than the Black and Hispanic unemployment rates of 12.1% and 10.3%, respectively.

But as the Chicago Fed research shows, the headline unemployment rate for Asian Americans may be masking the economic fallout for low-skilled, less-educated workers.

A report from consulting firm McKinsey notes that Asian Americans have the highest within-group income inequality in the country

— the top 10% of earners make 10.7 times the income of the bottom 10%.

“Oftentimes, the narrative comes back: We don’t need to worry about Asians, they’re actually great, they all go to Ivy League schools,” McKinsey partner Emily Yueh told Yahoo Finance, adding that the Asian American community is not a monolith.

The McKinsey report adds that Southeast Asian and Pacific Islanders are less likely to have a high school diploma and tend to suffer from higher unemployment rates than East Asians.

A report from consulting firm McKinsey cites U.S. Census Bureau data (2018 American Community Survey 1-year estimates) in describing the demographic differences among different Asian American subgroups.

At first glance, one might conclude that the steep job losses in the pandemic may have something to do with high Asian employment in high-contact settings like restaurants, the heart of many Asian communities and a major employer for lower-educated workers.

But the Chicago Fed researchers still observed the wide differences even when controlling for occupation and industry, suggesting other forces are at play.

Another explanation may be the significant drop-off in business activity in Asian communities. Memories of the SARS virus in 2002, in addition to fears of xenophobia, pushed communities like New York City’s Chinatown to close before nationwide shutdowns began.

Job retraining

Federal Reserve Chairman Jay Powell has warned that “long stretches of unemployment can damage or end workers’ careers as their skills lose value.”

With small businesses closing their doors for good, the concern is that less educated workers face a steeper road to finding new work — even when a vaccine arrives.

People in masks walk past a closed shop in the Chinatown neighborhood of Manhattan during the coronavirus outbreak in New York City, New York, U.S., March 18, 2020. REUTERS/Mike Segar

The Chinatown Manpower Project, a New York City nonprofit, offers English language instruction and job training courses with a focus on helping new immigrants and low-income workers.

Since the onset of the pandemic, CMP has shifted its job retraining resources toward helping the jobless apply for unemployment insurance. CMP executive director Hong Lee said he is hopeful that workers will be able to get back to jobs.

CMP held a virtual job fair on Sept. 24, which included hirings for low-skill work, and attracted about 350 attendees and 16 employers, down from past job fair attendance of about 500 people and 35 employers.

“They are slowly trickling in [back to jobs], but not as big a spike as the reverse. Not the same as the amount of people applying for unemployment,” Lee told Yahoo Finance.

In Georgia, Vanchiasong made ends meet with her lemongrass and the federal government’s \$600-per-week bonus unemployment insurance — which she says “helped a lot.”

Her employer called her back in July, the same month the government’s \$600 unemployment bonus expired. But Vanchiasong recalls how scared she was when she was initially furloughed, uncertain about when or if the company would call her back.

“Largely I depended on what God planned for me,” she said. “So I prayed a lot for that.”

CARES On the Job Training (OJT)

Do you know someone who lost their job due to COVID-19? The Sacramento City CARES Rapid Re-Employment On-the-Job Training (OJT) Program can help them get back to work!

How the program works: They will be hired by an employer paying a wage of at least \$15.00 per hour who will train them for the job.

Who is eligible for OJT? To be eligible, they must live in the City of Sacramento and have lost their job or their job was displaced because of COVID-19.

Who do they contact? If they are interested, have them call one of the following providers and someone from the OJT program will be in touch:

Asian Resources Inc. (916) 324-6202; Greater Sacto Urban League (916) 286-8600; La Familia (916) 452-3601; Lao Family Community (916) 393-7501, (916) 359-2788; orth State BIA (916) 619-6242; SETA-Sacramento Works (916) 263-4066. For more information, please visit their website: <https://sacramentoworks.org/cares-ojt/>

Where are the AAPI in Biden’s Cabinet?

To date, President-Elect Joe Biden has not yet nominated any AAPI to cabinet posts. Of Biden’s 14 Cabinet-level nominations so far, seven have gone to women and nine have gone to people of color. California’s Labor Secretary Julie Su has been suggested for labor secretary. AAPI leaders say that a failure to place an AAPI in his cabinet would be unacceptable.

Biden has plans to nominate Neera Tanden to be director of the Office of Management and Budget and Katherine Tai to be US trade representative. Both are Asian American. The Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus wants AAPI in the higher-profile secretary positions. “To not include an AAPI official as a Cabinet Secretary overseeing a federal department would send the wrong message that AAPIs do not need to be included.”

Clinton had at least one AAPI secretary; Obama had three; even Trump had Elaine Chao who quit.

AAPAs made a big difference in Georgia elections

Georgia’s Asian American voters are among record demographic turnout

NPR, January 5, 2021

The 2020 election saw record turnout among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters in Georgia. Local organizers have worked to keep that momentum going for Tuesday’s runoff elections and beyond.

STEVE INSKEEP, HOST: When Joe Biden won Georgia in the presidential election, part of his winning margin may have come from Asian Americans.

NOEL KING, HOST: They’re believed to have turned out in record numbers. They are, in fact, the fastest growing demographic in the state of Georgia.

INSKEEP: They may be influential in the Senate runoffs that conclude today. And Asian Americans are not necessarily tied to one party.

STEPHANIE CHO: Asian Americans don’t vote, like, Republican or Dem, right? They vote by issue.

INSKEEP: Stephanie Cho is executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta. She says a big issue in her community is the pandemic economy.

CHO: If you’re an immigrant voter, most likely, you have a family member that owns a small business that is being dramatically affected by the pandemic.

KING: Long Tran owns a coffee shop in Atlanta, and he says Asian American voters want to hear plans from the Senate candidates.

LONG TRAN: For me and other small business owners, we’re wondering, when do our employees get vaccinated? How do we plan with this next round of stimulus? We don’t want to go through another shutdown blindly.

INSKEEP: Anjali Enjeti is co-founder of the Georgia chapter of They See Blue, which mobilizes South Asian voters. Enjeti says there’s a lesson there.

ANJALI ENJETI: In Georgia, we have shown how important it is for campaigns to have very specific and particular outreach to various racial and ethnic groups. I mean, I’ve been passing out campaign lit this afternoon for Asian American voters that have multiple Asian languages on them. People feel like they are very seen by politicians. And these are communities that don’t usually feel that way.

INSKEEP: She says the Georgia Senate candidates concluding their campaigns today should take note.

Democrats make gains among Hispanic and Black voters, early exit polls find

The Washington Post, January 5, 2021

By Scott Clement

White voters in Georgia are supporting Republican Senate candidates by similarly wide margins as they did in November, but voters of color appear to be more supportive of Democratic candidates in Tuesday’s runoff elections than they were in November.

About 3 in 10 voters in Georgia are Black, and they support Democrats Ossoff and Warnock by a margin of well over 80 points, according to preliminary network exit polling by Edison Research, wider than the 76-point margin by which Black voters supported Ossoff in November.

Hispanic voters make up a small share of voters in the state — about 5 percent — but the exit polling finds that nearly two-thirds support each Democratic candidate for Senate, up from 52 percent who supported Ossoff in November’s election. The Democrats’ current standing is closer to Biden’s 62 percent support in the presidential race among Latinos, helping fuel his narrow victory in the state.

Asian voters make up an even smaller share of voters in Georgia — so small that their vote support was not large enough to be measured in November exit polls. But in the runoffs, about 6 in 10 Asian voters in Georgia supported the Democratic candidates in both races, according to the early exit polls.

White voters make up over 6 in 10 voters in Georgia, and they favor Republican candidates by a more than 2-to-1 margin, counterbalancing Democrats’ large and growing support among voters of color.

Asian American and Pacific Islander turnout helped hand Biden Georgia

NPR, December 4, 2020

President-elect Joe Biden carried Georgia with less than a 13,000-vote lead, a tiny margin made possible, in part, by historic turnout among Asian American and Pacific Islanders in the Peach State. It’s the first time in nearly 30 years that Georgia voters chose a Democrat for president.

By some counts, AAPI voters nearly doubled compared to 2016, and Aisha Yaqoob

Mahmood of the Asian American Advocacy Fund says that’s no fluke. Her organization helps turn out voters for progressive candidates and causes.

“Our playbook wasn’t just the work that we did in 2020, but it’s years of organizing in our communities,” she tells NPR’s Morning Edition. “Within such a diverse Asian American community, we can’t just have one AAPI organizer and call it a day. We have to have very specific ethnic organizers that are doing the very important and very specific organizing necessary for some of these communities.”

Asian American and Pacific Islanders are the fastest-growing demographic in Georgia, and Asian American Advocacy Fund estimates of registered voters are even slightly higher than official state totals. There are more than 300,00 registered voters in Georgia who identify as Asian American or Pacific Islander. More than 185,000 voted in 2020. And that’s around a 63% increase compared to 2016, according to Asian American Advocacy Fund data.

NPR: Aisha Yaqoob Mahmood is with the progressive Asian American Advocacy Fund in Georgia and she points to five counties around Atlanta which saw the bulk of the participation that included her home county of Gwinnett.

Mahmood: Gwinnett County in 2016 became a majority minority county and flipped for the first time to elect a democratic president with Hilary Clinton. Yet In 2016 we had an all white all Republican county commission, an all white all Republican school board. Fast forward to 2020, we have an all Democratic all people of color county commission and a majority of people of color school board in Gwinnett. You can see the demographic shifts but also the political shifts, that are really in part due to the work of organizing.

NPR: Let’s talk about that organizing. Your group did a lot of organizing work leading up to the election. Asian Americans first, we should say, are diverse socioeconomically, in regards to religion, country of origin. But they did vote overwhelmingly Democratic this election. Why? What issues matter to them?

MAHMOOD: COVID and COVID relief was at top of mind for a lot of our families, as was health care. It was apparent that this year was the year for health care to be the top issue for our families because we knew how the lack of health care has come to impact our communities. Education continues to be at the forefront, just how expensive it is to access public education and public university these days. But honestly our communities also care very deeply about immigration reform. Making sure they can support their families who still want to come to this country through family based immigration. We talked a lot about how much it means to our community because the increase in immigration enforcement with the Trump administration and what could change with a new presidency.

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Turn out helped

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NPR: Indian Americans are the largest Asian American group in Georgia. Was Kamala Harris a factor in turning them out?

Mahmood: Definitely, I have spoken to so many Indian American community members who were already motivated and already excited about this election cycle. But it definitely motivated them to do more, to be more loud and to be more proud of supporting a Democratic ticket. And for a lot of people who maybe were on the fence about Trump or Biden, it really helped to tip the scales in Biden’s favor.

NPR: What was the playbook for how to reach voters that traditionally had really not been engaged in politics?

Mahmood: Our playbook wasn’t just the work that we did in 2020. But it was years of organizing in our communities. As you know, within such a diverse Asian community, we can’t just have one AAPI organizer and call it a day. We have to have very specific ethnic organizers that are doing the very important and very specific organizing necessary for some of these communities. So what that looked like was having a Korean organizer talk to Korean elders or having a younger Korean organizer talk to younger generation Korean Americans and really replicating that for each community.

NPR: And language?

Mahmood: For sure, language access is always a big thing for us. So we are really glad that a lot of campaigns are finally starting to think about language access. But it also goes beyond that. We also make sure that outreach is available in language, when we’re knocking on doors, or talking to voters on the phone, that we have in-language volunteers and staff making those calls, but also having two way communication to let voters know that they can always reach back out to us if they have questions.

NPR: So I guess the big question now is, how are you feeling about the Georgia Senate races. Is there enthusiasm? Will Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders turn out in a few weeks in the same way that they did in the presidential race?

Mahmood: There is definitely enthusiasm still in our communities. But it’s really important for us to keep that momentum up, to make sure that people just don’t get complacent and assume that because Georgia is blue that it will stay blue. People are also tired. Georgia became a battleground state very late in the cycle for some people. And so the last few weeks before the election were a lot for our people. They were getting calls and text messages and mail almost every day. And that has just picked right back up since the runoff. So not only are we dealing with logistical challenges with the holidays, but we’re also dealing with some exhaustion with being contacted. But it will be on us to make sure that we can continue to do the outreach in the most effective way possible. So that we can really drown out the other noise and talk with our voters in a way that resonates with them better.

Georgia Senate races may hinge on a small but growing Asian American voter population

LA Times, December 10, 2020

By Jenny Jarvie, Jennifer Haberkorn

SUWANEE, Ga. — When Stephanie Cho moved from Los Angeles to Atlanta seven years ago, she was dismayed to find Asians largely absent from Georgia’s political life — barely contacted by Republican or Democratic parties or represented in government corridors.

Lobbying at the state Capitol in 2015 when she became executive director of the Atlanta chapter of Asian Americans Advancing Justice, she typically saw just two Asian faces: Korean-born Republican state Rep. B.J. Pak and a member of his staff.

Fast forward five years, Georgia will have six Asian American state representatives — five of them Democrats — when the Legislature convenes in January.

After Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders helped Joe Biden beat President Trump by a razor-thin margin of 12,000 votes in this state, Cho and a new generation of activists are ramping up their work to mobilize their community to vote for Democrats Jon Ossoff and the Rev. Raphael Warnock in twin runoff races that will determine which party controls the U.S. Senate next year.

“The Asian American population in Georgia is coming of age just now,” Cho said. “You have newer populations of Asian Americans across the board. Already, I see it’s very rapidly changing.”

Asian Americans make up just 3.2% of Georgia’s voting-eligible population — compared with about 15% in California — but they are playing an increasingly pivotal role in shaping the politics of this once-conservative and rapidly diversifying Southern state.

Turnout among Asian Americans in Georgia doubled from about 67,000 in 2016 to 140,000 in the 2020 presidential election — a faster rate of growth than Latino, Black or white voters. More than six out of 10 Asian American and Pacific Islander voters cast their ballots for Biden, according to exit polls.

At the same time, the overall Asian voter turnout rate of 58% still lags behind that of white voters, largely because of a lack of voter engagement and mobilization, as well as low English proficiency. In a state where overall turnout is about 66%, the rate is 70% for whites, 57% for Black voters, and 42% for Latinos.

Among the reasons for the higher number of Asian voters this year is that a new generation has turned 18, more recent immigrants became U.S. citizens, and transplants arrived from other states.

But voter mobilization is playing an even bigger role: 80,000 new Asian American voters registered in Georgia in the last four years, nearly doubling the turnout rate.

“The surge in Asian American turnout — especially amongst first-time, younger Asian American voters — helped Biden flip the state,” said Sam Park, Georgia’s first Democratic Asian state representative, elected in 2016. “If Rev. Warnock and Jon Ossoff are to be successful, turnout amongst the Asian American community will be critical.”

Across the northern suburbs of Atlanta, young 20-something activists have set up voter registration booths at Indian supermarkets, Vietnamese bubble tea stores and Korean churches. They are roaming suburban cul-de-sacs and modern apartment complexes that just a decade or two ago were rural farmland, urging Asians to vote for Ossoff and Warnock.

In the three months before the general election, Asian American activists with AAAJ reached out to 92% of Georgia’s estimated 238,000 eligible Asian American voters by phone.

Although activists did not knock on doors before Nov. 3 because of the pandemic, they have shifted strategy for the runoffs. Given the close margin of Biden’s victory, the high stakes of the Senate races and the confusion many voters have about runoff elections, the Asian American Advocacy Fund aims to knock on 100,000 doors before Jan. 5.

“Now we don’t have the villain we’re trying to defeat in the White House, the persuasion is really important at the doors,” said Aisha Yaqoob Mahmood, the fund’s director. “We’re trying to explain that this election is even more important than what they just did in November.”

Both Ossoff and Warnock have dedicated staffers focused on Asian American and Pacific Islander outreach, and have appeared at a string of meet-and-greets with Asian American voters. Since Nov. 3, the Ossoff campaign has made more than 100,000 calls targeting the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

Outreach is also happening with Republicans. While the campaigns of incumbents David Perdue and Kelly Loeffler declined to provide specifics, Republican National Committee spokesperson Kara Caldwell said in a statement that Asian Americans were Georgia’s fastest growing population and the RNC was “working tirelessly to ensure their voices are heard by door knocking and phone banking.”

Republican California Rep.-elect Michelle Steel, who was born in South Korea, plans to visit Georgia later this month to mobilize Asian American voters, seeking to generate the same enthusiasm that helped her flip a House seat in Orange County from Democratic control.

She hopes Georgia voters will see themselves reflected in her story as a first-generation Asian American elected official. “This

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Georgia Senate races

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is really important. So I’m going to do my part,” she said.

The level of Asian outreach in Georgia is unprecedented, given the relatively small size of the population, said Bernard Fraga, a professor of political science at Emory University who specializes in voter turnout.

“Even if only white people voted in California, Democrats would still win,” Fraga said. “In Georgia, obviously, that’s not the case. Democrats feel that they need to have a broad, multiracial coalition in order to win Georgia. They can’t just rely on white voters. That’s relatively rare.”

For some activists, like Cho, it feels like “Georgia is California 30 or 40 years ago.”

Comparing Asian American political participation in Georgia with California is tricky, given that the first major wave of Asian immigration started during the California Gold Rush in the 1850s, said Pei-te Lien, professor of political science at UC Santa Barbara, who specializes in Asian political participation and representation.

By 1980, Lien noted, California already had 68 Asian elected officials on school boards, city councils, county boards, in the state Legislature, statewide offices and Congress. Yet Georgia has something that California did not have back then: local grassroots advocacy groups like the AAAJ and Asian American Advocacy Fund focused on consolidating power.

“Even 20 or 30 years ago,” Lien said, “California didn’t have this kind of sustained community-based Asian American infrastructure.”

Activists emphasize that the work that’s gone into engaging and mobilizing Asian Americans in Georgia did not happen overnight.

“This was years in the making,” said Park, who in 2016 managed to defeat a three-term Republican incumbent in Gwinnett.

Working with Stacey Abrams, then minority leader in the Georgia House, Park launched a multilingual operation to phone bank and canvass in Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese, as well as Spanish, to reach young and minority voters seen as less likely to turn out and who had rarely been contacted by political parties before.

A year later, when Ossoff challenged Republican Karen Handel for Georgia’s 6th Congressional District seat, he recognized the potential power of Asian Americans, setting up a field office targeting the community in the northeast Atlanta suburb of Johns Creek and appearing at an Asian American block party and meet-and-greets with Asian voters.

California Rep. Judy Chu (D-Monterey Park), who traveled to Georgia for a few days in 2018 to help Abrams’ campaign with its Asian American mobilization, said the outreach was

worth it. A recent national survey, she noted, found that half of Asian Americans said they had not been contacted by the Republican or Democratic parties in the past year.

“If you do reach out” to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Chu said, “it’s like gold. They haven’t had contact before. When you do have that contact, it is very impactful.”

In Georgia, much of the on-the-ground outreach has been led by youth activists — 25 and younger — who see the U.S. through a different lens than their parents and grandparents.

“They saw how their parents worked really hard to assimilate, and it really didn’t necessarily get them any more respect or power,” Cho said. “So what can they do differently to actually affect change?”

On a chilly Saturday morning, Angie Thuy Tran, a 26-year-old Vietnamese American activist, put on a white KN95 mask and a plastic face shield and walked briskly around a Gwinnett County subdivision, knocking on doors in an effort to get out the vote.

Gwinnett, a once-rural conservative county that has seen the white share of its population plummet from 96% to 35% in the last 40 years, is now one of the most diverse suburban counties in the nation, with a population that is 30% Black, 22% Latino and 12% Asian.

“Xin chào! Hello!” she said brightly as she approached a middle-aged man sitting in a Lexus sedan in the driveway outside a two-story brick home.

The man rolled down his window and smiled as Tran spoke in their native tongue. But as soon as she asked if she could count on him to vote for Ossoff and Warnock, he shook his head.

Tran was not surprised. As a Vietnamese American community organizer for the Asian American Advocacy Fund, she knows older Vietnamese Americans lean conservative.

She thanked him politely, tapped on her cellphone to mark him as “strongly opposed,” and marched on to the next house, confident she would find Indians, Bangladeshis and maybe younger Vietnamese and Koreans open to voting for Democrats.

Nationally, Asian American voters favored Biden by a more than 2-to-1 margin. Many Asian Americans have been turned off by Trump’s rhetoric against immigrants and his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, including his derogatory references to the “China virus” and “Kung flu.”

Cecelia Yoo, 70, a first-generation Korean immigrant, said she supported Trump before the pandemic but voted for Biden this year because she did not think the president had handled the pandemic well.

“Trump lost credibility and leadership,” she said Sunday in Korean through a translator at St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church, a red brick former Baptist church in Duluth.

Yoo planned to vote for Ossoff and Warnock in the runoff, “to restore democracy and justice,” but did not align herself with Democrats or Republicans. “I’m supporting people,” she said, “not parties.”

But some of Trump’s remarks and positions have also garnered intense support from some older Vietnamese and Koreans who despise communism.

Cao Thái Hải, 65, a quality control manager who this summer co-founded the Vietnamese American Republicans of Georgia, said many conservative Vietnamese immigrants did not feel engaged in U.S. politics until Trump took a strong stance against socialism — and China, “our enemy.”

He worried many Vietnamese did not grasp the importance of the Senate races, now that Trump is not on the ballot.

Rather than knock on doors or hold rallies during a pandemic, he said he found it more productive to organize on social media. Around 3,000 tuned in to his Facebook page last week for a livestream urging them to protect the Senate majority.

“They are already leaning Republican,” he said. “It’s a very targeted audience. I don’t have to spend a lot of time convincing people who come in already motivated.”

Even though Tran is a much younger, Democratic-leaning activist, she understands the older generation’s fear of communism.

Raised in Vietnam’s Binh Dinh province, a battle zone during the Vietnam War, Tran’s early life was shaped by communism: Her grandfather was a military commander for South Vietnam under the U.S. who was jailed for 10 years by the communists. Walking to school as a young girl, she passed multiple graveyards.

But Tran, who moved to the multicultural Atlanta suburban hub of Doraville when she was 8, has also been shaped by growing up alongside other low-income immigrants. After she was a student at one of the most diverse high schools in the nation, she became more political while attending a liberal arts college in Tennessee where she said she and other minority students were harassed for not being “American.”

“Sometimes we do have to leave our past behind,” she said. “America’s a different kind of democracy, and they need to have more faith in it.”

As Tran and a fellow canvasser traipsed through Gwinnett’s sprawling subdivisions, clutching fliers in English, Vietnamese, Mandarin and Korean, many on their list were not home or did not open their doors. Those who did answer

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Georgia Senate races

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were often undecided or wary of delving into politics.

It was not long, though, before they came upon Avni Sinojia, 44, a data analyst who was born in the U.K. to Indian parents. She said they could count on her to support Ossoff and Warnock and that she had already applied for her absentee ballot.

“The South has been historically Republican,” she said, “and we need to see a change.”

Still, she mused, her vote could be canceled out by that of her pharmacist husband, an independent who voted for Trump and typically aligned with Republicans. She had already reminded him about his absentee ballot, but he was very busy.

“I just hope he stays so busy,” she said, “he forgets to vote.”

Jarvie reported from Suwanee, Ga., and Haberkorn from Washington. Special correspondent Erin Woo in Duluth, Ga., contributed to this report.



January is Stalking Awareness Month

Here are some tips to recognize stalking and to keep you and your loved ones safe:

Keep a log of incidents. Include the message(s), dates, times, what happened, and a list of witnesses.

Inform family members, friends, coworkers about your stalker.

Provide a picture and additional details (i.e. car type, figure, ethnicity) so they can help keep you safe.

Social media is a tool stalkers can utilize. Monitor your accounts.

Make sure your posts are private. Avoid sharing location and pictures of you with friends. Stalkers are GREAT at finding you!

Develop a safety plan.

Regardless of whether you know what next step to take, document, document, document!

Source: My Sister’s House, www.StalkingAwareness.org

Waller sentenced to 897 years to life

AAPJ rape victims get justice and closure

“NorCal Rapist” Roy Charles Waller, 60, was sentenced to 897 years to life on December 18th by Sacramento County Superior Court Judge James Arguelles. After a one month trial, the jury convicted Waller of 46 counts of rape and other crimes. The jury deliberated for 2 1/2 hours. Eleven counts were attacks on UC Davis students, including AAPJ women. Waller was also suspected for a home invasion burglary in Woodland. Two rapes in the Natomas area of Sacramento also involved AAPJ victims. Five victims gave impact statements at sentencing.

Nine victims testified at the trial where for COVID 19 distancing some jurors sat in the jury box, others were scattered around the courtroom and public attendance was limited. Waller opted to testify and described his sexual interests in threesomes and bondage, but denied raping the nine victims and could not explain his DNA at the crime scenes. The nine rapes occurred between 1991 and 2006 in Rohnert Park (1991), Vallejo (1992), Martinez and Woodland (1996), Davis and Chico (1997), Davis (2000) and Sacramento (2006). At night he broke into the victims’ homes, bound, blindfolded, carried, and raped them and then demanded money or ATM cards; he stayed with the victims for hours.

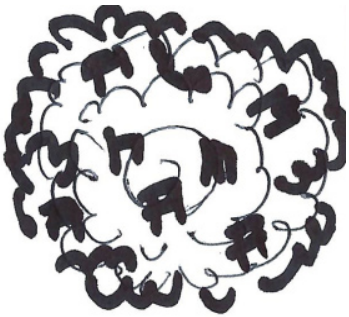
Waller testified that he used online dating websites and chatrooms involving Asian women particularly those of Chinese descent. Waller stalked the victims, knowing where they worked and routines, what they drove, their appearance and kept notes in computer databases. After the rapes and robberies, he forced them to wash before he left. He used a gun or knife, plastic ties, duct tape and wore a ski mask.

Waller was identified by uploading crime scene DNA to the genetic genealogy website GEDmatch, the same website used to catch “Golden State Killer” Joseph DeAngelo. After the website identified a closely matching relative in its public DNA database, law enforcement built a family tree and narrowed their search to Waller based on the victims’ suspect descriptions and his proximity to victims. DNA recovered from Waller’s trash matched DNA from six of the seven crime scenes; in the seventh incident prosecutors argued that it was Waller in a surveillance video of a male using the victim’s ATM card. In his two storage lockers, women’s panties, zip ties, masks, duct tape, handcuffs, condoms and adult toys were found

Many of the victims were Asian in their 20’s. The Woodland Daily Democrat wrote: “Prosecutors said he sought out Asian women, grading them on their appearance and build and studying their daily routines until he could slip into their homes and attack them.” Waller’s own attorney asked him if he had a preference for Asian women and why he had pornographic photos of two bound Asian women on his computer. Waller was non responsive, but stated that he had many friends and romantic interests who were Asian. “I dated a lot of Asian

women, my long term relationships were Asian women,” he said.

Waller was arrested in 2018 at UC Berkeley where he had worked for 25 years as a safety specialist. When the police arrested him, he and his second wife were living in Benicia.



South Korean Court orders Japan to compensate 12 WWII sex slaves

In early August 2020, a Seoul Central District Court ordered Japan to financially compensate 12 women forced into sexual slavery by the Japanese during World War II. The decision renewed tensions between the two countries, with Japan immediately rejecting the ruling. The court ordered Japan to pay each woman named in the lawsuit 100 million won (\$91,360). It is unlikely Japan will obey the ruling. Japan claims that it is not subject to Korean jurisdiction.

Seven of the 12 women named in the lawsuit died before the ruling was handed down. A separate suit filed by 20 women, some of whom are now deceased, is still pending. The former “comfort women,” as they were euphemistically known, have made it clear that it’s not the money they’re concerned with, but an apology from Tokyo.

The South Korean and Japanese governments previously reached an agreement to resolve the sexual slavery dispute in 2015. The deal included an apology from then-Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, and a billion yen (roughly \$8.3 million) fund to support surviving South Korean sex slaves. That agreement was criticized because the victims were not consulted and to some did not reflect their views.

This long-simmering feud, along with that of forced labor and other offenses committed during Japan’s 1910-1945 colonization of Korea, has spilled over into trade disputes and security cooperation between these two main US allies in Asia. In the past, the US has stepped in to mediate, including ahead of the 2015 deal. However, critics say the Trump administration’s disregard for its allies has allowed the dispute to fester unresolved.

AAPJ researchers still targeted in anti China sting

Professor Feng “Franklin” Tao, an engineering professor at the University of Kansas, has been accused by the US government of fraud. Tao came to the US in 2002, completed his doctorate and was a professor at Princeton University.

The government accuses Tao of not disclosing on conflict-of-interest forms that he had been accepted to a full-time professorship in China while being employed at the University of Kansas with funding from US federal agencies. He was indicted on 10 federal felony charges for wire fraud and making false statements. If convicted, he faces up to 25 years in federal prison and a fine of up to \$2.5 million. His attorneys argue that non-disclosure is not a crime and emphasize that Tao has not been accused of theft, espionage, or improperly sharing sensitive information. They filed a motion to dismiss the case, but a judge denied the motion in November.

Tao is the latest example, among many, of the federal government’s coordinated efforts to target Chinese American and Chinese scientists and researchers based on their ancestry rather than suspected criminal activity.

Past targets included the 1999 arrest of scientist Wen Ho Lee who worked for UC at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Lee was indicted on 59 counts and jailed in solitary confinement without bail for 278 days. In his plea bargain, he admitted to just one count of mishandling sensitive documents with other counts being dismissed.

Recently Xiaoxing Xi, a Temple University physicist was accused by the government in 2015 of illicitly sharing information about a superconductor device with colleagues in China; the “information” was later determined to be public knowledge. After much harm to his life, career, and his family, the government later dropped all charges.

Dr. Juan Tang is another Chinese researcher still being prosecuted. A cancer researcher who was affiliated with UC Davis, she is charged with failing to disclose any affiliation with the Chinese military. The government’s evidence includes photos of Tang wearing military style clothing in a photo; she claims she is not a member of China’s military. Tang initially fled into hiding in the Chinese consulate in San Francisco after being questioned by the FBI and she avoided arrest until she emerged for a doctor’s visit. She was released in September from the Sacramento County Jail to live under house arrest in the Bay Area. Her trial is scheduled for February 8.

US Dept. of Justice prosecutes these cases as part of its “China Initiative” to curb theft of intellectual property from American companies. The program began in November 2018 under Jeff Sessions, then the U.S. attorney general. It has continued under the present attorney general, William Barr. Since the program’s inception, the DOJ has brought numerous cases against researchers, professors, U.S. intelligence officials, and Chinese nationals working in the US. The investigations show a

similar pattern: the government claims that the researcher or scientist did not reveal their connections on conflict-of-interest forms. The fact that their resumes, biographies and publications list their Chinese affiliations has not helped their defense.

The Trump administration’s anti-Chinese rhetoric and demonization of China and Chinese people resulted in widespread racial profiling, surveillance, and an increase in hate crimes against innocent people, similar to what happened to the Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities after 9/11.

BEST! Letters from Asian Americans in the arts

South China Morning Post, January 1, 2021

Christopher K. Ho co-produced and edited BEST! Letters from Asian Americans in the arts with Daisy Nam, a book of letters about being Asian American today amid a tide of xenophobia unleashed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Ken Lum, a Canadian Chinese artist, has written a letter to his late mother in which he apologises for the contempt he felt as a child in Vancouver for his Chinese roots and her cultural practices.

“I so regret kicking up such a fuss whenever you wanted to go and see a Chinese opera in Chinatown. I felt embarrassed by what I thought of then as noise, the strange costumes, and painted faces. I did not appreciate your insistence that [...] I learn how to read and write in Chinese. I did not appreciate the strange medicinal brews you made me drink,” he writes.

The letter by Lum, Chair of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania’s Weitzman School of Design, is among 71 deeply personal epistles in the book BEST! Letters from Asian Americans in the arts, in which people in the arts explore how it feels to be Asian in North America.

The book is co-produced and edited by artist Christopher K. Ho, who was born in Hong Kong and whose family moved to the United States when he was four years old. Speaking from the state of Colorado, he says the book is a response to the racism and violence aimed at Asians that has been triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Canadian Chinese artist Ken Lum wrote a letter to his late mother expressing the regret he felt about disliking his Chinese roots as a child.

Ho’s own letter is a mea culpa addressed to all his former Asian students at the Rhode Island School of Design in the US.

“It acknowledged that I failed them. I did not account for their world views in critiques. I stayed mum when other faculty [members] made quasi-racist comments,” he says. Typically for someone trained in the West, Ho says he only studied one or two Asian artists, such as Yoko Ono, during the 11 years he spent in college and graduate school.

When he began teaching, he says,

he “misspent two decades transmitting the Western art [to students] that I had assiduously mastered”. It was only after the 2016 US presidential election that he started thinking of himself as an artist who is not necessarily Western. “I wish I had come to that realisation earlier,” he says.

The need to counter stereotypes with a more complex reflection of Asian American identities is all the more urgent since the global pandemic unleashed xenophobia against Asians in the US simply because Covid-19 was first identified in China, says Daisy Nam, a Korean American born in Los Angeles who is the curator of Ballroom Marfa, an art space in Texas.

Nam is the other person behind the book and Ho’s co-editor. She says not all the letters are about personal experiences. For example, Chinese American architect Philip Poon has written a letter to the US fashion brand Eckhaus Latta about its decision to open shops in the Chinatown district of Los Angeles and New York without engaging with the local community.

“The brand is run by two white Americans. Instead of saying that Chinatown has a really long history and there are many things about it that are complicated and incredible, they fetishise it as being grungy, rundown and exotic. Those are false narratives about Chinatowns,” Nam says.

She has had flashbacks to the 1992 Los Angeles riots while working on this book.

“The riots, where all the ethnic minorities were pitted against each other due to scarcity of jobs and resources, were a formative experience for me, for many reasons, like fear – a Korean female grocer shot a young black girl dead, which enraged the African American community. There was lots of anti-Korean sentiment then. It still stays with me,” she says.

The effects of the pandemic on the community now, with people turning on each other rather than offering support, is similar to that of the riots.

Lum says he joined the book project out of solidarity with fellow Asian Americans at a moment of inflamed racial tensions, and to pay tribute to his mother, who died before he attained success in the academic world.

“The rich history of Asian Americans, particularly the Chinese, is still very unknown to most Americans. They have no idea how much the entire country was built on the backs of Chinese labourers, who were not treated very well,” he says.

Lum portrays a childhood with an absent, unfaithful father who liked to gamble, and one in which he was on the receiving end of frequent racial taunts.

“My mother left Hong Kong on a [Vancouver-bound] ship from Honolulu. I was born two days later after the ship docked. I am a professor at an Ivy League University in the US. I worked hard for it. But my mother never saw me in this position.”

Desperate to integrate into white society, he saw his mother’s Chinese practices as a hindrance to his personal ambition and happiness. Today, he has this to say in the letter to his mother: “I appreciate all of these things now [and] love being a person of Chinese descent, and I want to instill this appreciation in my children.”

Asian Americans, Racism, and White Privilege

By Jimmy Joseph Tran

Yes! Magazine, June 2, 2020

I am Asian. Globally, there are 2.7 billion of us and we constitute 40% of the world's population. I am American. There are 330 million of us and we constitute 4% of the world's population. Lastly, I am Asian American. There are 18 million of us living in America and we constitute 5–6% of the U.S. population.

Within the 5% Asian American statistic, there is tremendous fragmentation. Generally speaking, the six largest ethnic categories are (in the following order): Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese.

I happen to be Vietnamese (#4 in the U.S. population) and my wife is Thai (#10 in the U.S. population) and Chinese (#1 in the U.S. population). Growing up Asian American, I have observed many implicit and explicit forms of racism, expressed both within and outside our community.

Racism within the Asian American community

It can be tough to explain to Americans, but racism is rampant within the Asian American community. Lighter skin tones are more desirable and are associated with specific Asian countries. As a result, Asians spend absurd amounts of money on facial cremes and skin remedies to whiten their skin tone.

Throughout my childhood, I recall hearing family members comment on the skin tones of others, saying stuff like, “wow, she has such light, fare, and beautiful skin” or “what does that boy do to get so dark?” Some have told me that this originates from discrimination against the farmer class (who are typically rice pickers in Asia). Farmers are perceived as rural, poor, uneducated, and dirty. They are also dark. So growing up, we were taught to make a link between the value of an individual and the color of his/her skin. White is good and black is bad.

Racism outside the Asian American community

Asian Americans also extend racism outside their communities, even when this means stereotyping and applying racist views toward their fellow Americans. We know that the U.S. is a “country of immigrants” and that the original, indigenous inhabitants of America were Native Americans. Despite this fact, I have witnessed countless conversations where we, as Asian Americans, make insensitive and racist remarks targeted at other immigrant groups — particularly Blacks and Hispanics. We make assumptions about raw intelligence, inability/unwillingness to work hard, and other harmful generalizations. It's wrong, it's racist, and it happens all the time. I am as guilty as everyone else.

It's ironic to speak of racism in the context of being Asian American. We

are, after all, the “model minority.” Asian Americans outperform other minority groups along a variety of metrics such as education, unemployment, pay, and wealth.

Growing up, I've heard of all sorts of theories and explanations as to why Asian Americans outperform other ethnic groups. We work hard. We are good at math and science. We have an immigrant mentality. We have strong family systems. We don't complain. We work within the system handed to us.

Out of all the explanations I've heard as to why Asian Americans have been relatively more successful compared to Black and Brown Americans, the concept of ‘white privilege’ has rarely (if ever) come up. But as I learn more and continue to educate myself on American history and culture, I have no doubt in my mind that as an Asian American, I am the beneficiary of dominant white culture and a system that holds some down while lifting me up. This is difficult to admit but as I dig behind the injustices happening to my fellow Black Americans, this fact is becoming more and more clear to me.

None of this takes away from the hard work and ingenuity of Asian Americans. As immigrants, we often came to this country with limited resources and no credentials. We worked long and hard, often without fair pay or recognition. We were ridiculed, shamed, or worse. We opened and operated gas stations, hotels/motels, nail salons, doughnut shops and dry cleaners while trying our best to raise latchkey kids who would hopefully get an education and become doctors, engineers or lawyers. We did whatever it took to ensure that our children would have a better future. And for the most part, it worked. We were proof that the American Dream was alive and well.

Notwithstanding our individual merit, however, it is also true that we've had the invisible hand of white privilege acting as wind at our backs, silently but consistently pushing us forward. We do not fear for our lives after getting pulled over by the police. We receive the benefit of the doubt that we are studious, even when we are lazy and not academically inclined. We can live where we want, do what we want within the bounds of law, and move about freely without fear of repercussions. This is simply not true for our fellow Black Americans.

So what should we as Asian Americans do?

If we are distraught at the killings of countless Black Americans such as Botham Jean, Arnaud Arbery, and most recently George Floyd, then we need to own up to our white privilege and begin working to dismantle systems that severely penalize large groups of people based on race.

Specifically, here are four things we need to do to move toward becoming ‘anti-racist.’

First, we need to stop thinking we are immune to the injustices happening to people of color.

While I have met Asian American subgroups that live in high poverty

environments, this is generally not the case for most of us. Instead, we live in ethnic enclaves or suburban, primarily white environments. We send our kids to schools where there may not be many Black or Brown students. We believe that we should just put our heads down and charge forward as our parents did; racial injustices are not our problem. But in response to this, I'm reminded that Martin Luther King once said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

Please don't forget that Asians have not (and are not) always been welcome in the U.S. We have suffered through waves of resistance and discrimination — from being locked up in Japanese internment camps during World War II to being called “chinks” to being labeled “boat people” who steal American jobs. We were targeted as terrorists after 9/11 and in recent weeks, we have been attacked and mocked for bringing COVID-19 to the States by our own President. Thus, to condone racism is to condone these same egregious acts against our community.

120,000+ Japanese were sent to U.S. concentration camps from 1942–1945.

Second, we need to stop applying racist views to fellow Asian Americans and Black and Brown people.

This is hard to break. Speaking for myself, racist views have been ingrained in me and as a middle-aged adult, I find my racist views very difficult to shake off. It is odd to admit this since I attended a large, public high school with a robust blend of races and backgrounds. I also had many diverse friends throughout my life — one of my best friends growing up was Hispanic and one of my groomsmen was Black. My own sister married a Black American and I have many cousins who are mixed race. Yet none of this shields me from racism.

Just the other day, I saw a Black guy and had to catch myself for my negative thoughts and perceptions. Racism is real and denying that it exists only builds a wall to progress. In the same way, we also need to stop looking at fellow Asian Americans and labeling each other. North Asians are no better than South Asians or Southeast Asians. There are members of our own community (e.g. Hmong Americans) that are suffering behind the averages and charts defending the model minority myth. We need to stop (or at least reduce) the racism within and outside our communities.

Third, we need to stop hurting people of color.

Some of you may have seen or read this news of a group of Asian American applicants who initiated a lawsuit against Harvard University for what they believed was an unconstitutional use of race in Harvard's admissions policy (spoiler alert, they were ultimately unsuccessful). This is a sad reminder that we, as an Asian American community, are not united with other people of color. Instead, we seek to further our advantage by pushing down those that have been systematically

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downtrodden.

Rather than pushing others down, I urge us to lift people of color up, understand where they are coming from, and what they aspire to be.

If you’re in a position to help, please do so. A friend of mine told me that every time someone Black reaches out to him on LinkedIn for career advice or help, he always takes the call. I thought this was a great idea and I’ve started to follow his lead. Imagine if we all did the same.

Last, we need to stop being silent and speak up.

As Asian Americans, we are stereotyped as shy, as rule followers, as individuals who don’t speak up. As a community, we must change this. It is not right to sit on the sidelines and reap rewards in a system that advantages us while staying silent against the injustices of others. This is not a zero-sum game; I firmly believe that a more meritocratic and just system will raise outcomes for all. It is time to speak up, to act, to donate funds, to write a post on social media, to just do something. Over the long run, standing idle while others suffer will harm us at the same time it harms ‘them.’

I know it feels uncomfortable and that this goes against the grain of our social conditioning and upbringing, but we need to stand on the right side of history. Join me, and let’s unite as an Asian American community to help our brothers and sisters, specifically our fellow Black Americans.

Is There Such a Thing as Asian Privilege? Unpacking the Complexities of the Term

By Tria Chang

Mochi Magazine, Aug 12, 2018

Is There Such a Thing as Asian Privilege? Unpacking the Complexities of the Term

My work involves organizing dinners among strangers with different political perspectives in an effort to build understanding. Over a hot lasagna and homemade biscuits, people start to let down their guards. At one such dinner, the issue of white privilege came up as guests passed the wine. Most of us are familiar with the concept of white privilege – the idea that to be white in America is to have certain social and systemic advantages. One guest took offense at the term; “Well, if there’s such thing as white privilege, is there Asian privilege too? Asians are the wealthiest ethnicity in America.” While other non-Asian guests shook their heads, offended on behalf of Asians, I paused. No one wants to see themselves as part of a group that has unfair advantages, but if I dismissed the idea without truly examining

it, wouldn’t I be having the same defensive reaction as the guest who posed the question? Asian Americans are often left out of the race conversation in America. It is up to each of us to figure out where we stand. So I found myself thinking: what is Asian privilege?

Understanding privilege

To examine the idea of Asian privilege in the United States, let’s first understand the word “privilege” in a societal context. Vanderbilt University created a handout of Power & Privilege Definitions that states: “Privilege operates on personal, interpersonal, cultural, and institutional levels and gives advantages, favors, and benefits to members of dominant groups at the expense of members of target groups.” Everyday Feminism adds, “Privilege is the other side of oppression.” To understand the position of Asians in America, it’s important to look at both the challenges and the advantages.

Income

What started this conversation was the claim that Asians must be privileged if they’re the wealthiest group in America. This appears to be a misconception in a few ways. Asian Americans as a group have the highest median household incomes, but income is not the same as wealth. Wealth is measured by what assets one has and can be positively affected by family money, or negatively affected by debt. Despite a higher median income, the wealth gap among Asian Americans is wider than it is among white Americans. While some Asian Americans have accrued wealth, those struggling on the other end of the spectrum are often less established and more impoverished than their white counterparts.

Another issue arises from conflating many ethnic cultures under the umbrella term “Asian.” If you look at the breakdown of income by all ancestries, you’ll see that Indian Americans and Taiwanese Americans hold the first and third spots, while Bangladeshi Americans and Burmese Americans are in the bottom ten. To lump all Asian cultures together and call them wealthy is to overlook the difficulties specific communities experience.

Oppression

Asians in America come from a history of oppression. From the Chinese Exclusion Act to Japanese American internment, from lynchings to segregated neighborhoods, Asians have always been treated as unwanted foreigners. But what about today? A poll taken in December 2017 reports that at least one-quarter of all Asian Americans report discrimination in housing and work situations, and other studies show that job applicants with Asian surnames are 28% less likely to be called in for interviews. While we hope for things to improve over time, hate crimes against Asian Americans are actually on the rise.

Higher education

Education lies at the root of the model minority myth and white acceptance of Asian Americans. Historian Ellen Wu’s book “The Color of Success” describes how Asians in mid-

century America sought a path to respect. The tide started to turn in their favor in the 1950s, when the U.S. was concerned about juvenile delinquency and Chinese Americans saw an opportunity to present education as a key value of their culture. The U.S. government was also looking to gain allies in the Cold War by showing itself as a racially diverse democracy (while ironically resisting the Civil Rights movement). Lauding Asian American academic habits in the media accomplished these aims; it showed acceptance of other races and sent the message to other minorities that there were no unfair disadvantages. If Asians can do it, why can’t you?

It’s easy to assume that attainment of higher education is simply part of all Asian American cultures. Indeed, 54% of Asian Americans have a bachelor’s degree or more, the highest percentage of any ethnicity. Like with income, a closer look at individual communities tells another story. While 72% of Indian Americans have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, Cambodian and Hmong communities both come in much lower at 18%.

So what about Asian privilege?

Because Asians are a minority that still experiences oppression, the term “Asian privilege” does not ring appropriate or true, at least not yet. We are walking a fine line though; the definition of privilege is that the privileged group benefits in a way that hurts a target group. Asian Americans are already used as a wedge in ways that hurt other minorities. While Asians are not likely to ever be the most populous group in America, it’s entirely possible we’ll eventually be wrapped into the definition of whiteness. It was not so long ago that Italian Americans, Greek Americans, and other groups now considered white were excluded even more strongly than Asian Americans are today. With whiteness as a social construct, who knows what it will grow to include as political agendas evolve.

Through all of this, I urge my fellow Asian Americans to remember that were it not for the civil rights movement led by African Americans, we would not even be in a position to ponder whether or not there is Asian privilege. The civil rights movement led to anti-discrimination laws that have given all minorities the chance of being treated more fairly. As life improves for Asian Americans, instead of taking actions that push others down, let’s act as a rising tide that lifts all boats, as others have done for us.

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7 Reasons Why We Fall for Fake News

Critically thinking about fake news

By Christopher Dwyer PhD

Psychology Today, Nov 15, 2019

The concept of fake news is nothing new. It refers to a story that isn't true or is not entirely true, taking the form of, for example, accidental misinformation or deliberate disinformation. But what makes it problematic now more so than ever is its abundance and the fact that people keep falling for it. In a recent piece, "10 Ways to Spot Fake News," my purpose was to provide tips for identifying it; however, perhaps just as important is our understanding of why we fall for it.

1. Confirmation bias.

Confirmation bias refers to our favoring of information that confirms our existing beliefs. Without accounting for this bias in our thinking, we are more likely to fall for fake news if we agree with what is being said. This works the other way around as well; indeed, confirmation bias will yield the opposite effect, enhanced skepticism, for fake news stories we dislike. Yes, it's good that confirmation bias can, in some contexts, help us dispel fake news; but, at the end of the day, engaging this bias exhibits a lack of critical thinking.

2. Lack of credibility evaluation.

We engage the news in order to inform ourselves, generally because we weren't there to witness events unfold first-hand. As a result, we trust our source of news that the information they provide us is, in fact, true; and in doing so, we put trust in the source's credibility. But we cannot blindly do so. We must first evaluate it.

Such evaluation involves digging deeper into the article and assessing the sources of the claims, looking for evidence (rather than opinion, anecdotal support, or common belief statements), searching for replication across other news outlets and assessing the credentials of the author, publisher, and/or website. Though I list various steps for completing an evaluation of a news story, I must concede: this is a simplified version of what is required, it is quite an abstract concept and, as a result, people may lack both the skill and care to apply such higher-order thinking.

As I mention throughout this blog, time and time again, one should apply critical thinking only to issues they care about or that are important to them (e.g. given the negative effects of decision fatigue [Baumeister, 2003] and cognitive load [Sweller, 2010]). If U.S. politics or children's healthcare isn't important to an individual, it's probably not likely that they will dedicate time and effort to evaluating it; thus, making them more susceptible to fake news relevant to such topics.

3. Attention and impatience.

On the other hand, let's assume that the topic in question is important to you and that you do have the skill of evaluating credibility—you are still susceptible to modern

trends in information processing, let alone the other psychological factors presented in this piece. That is, in today's world, it can be argued that we have a surplus of information (Dwyer, 2017). We don't read everything in our social media newsfeed. We scroll past articles that are unimportant or uninteresting to us; we don't pay attention to them. Sometimes, we barely read the headlines. If we do manage to read the headline, that might be all we read.

We want our information fast because we have been primed to get it fast. Now, I'm not saying fast, efficient access to information is a bad thing; it's not an issue of declinism here; but, I recall a time that if you wanted information on a current event, you'd have to hope it was covered in the newspaper, on the radio, or the evening news on television. Nowadays, we can just type a few letters into our phone and what we want, from a wide array of sources, is there. But along with that is other information, from unfamiliar sources, that we didn't necessarily seek out.

Moreover, we need to ask ourselves: Are we really attending to what is being said or are we just looking for a quick answer? How deep are we evaluating? Are we patient enough to engage this properly? Are we even evaluating or are we just skimming through before moving on to the next report? This brings me to a concept that probably deserves its own book, let alone blog post: Is knowledge about having an abundance of information or knowing what to do with it?

But, let's not go off on a tangent! So, we keep scrolling through our newsfeed. If writers are concerned with getting you to read their article, then they're going to dress it up in a way that makes it interesting. Thus, they grab your attention by using sensationalist language. Flip flops cause cancer was actually a headline from almost a decade ago. Of course, a thorough inspection of the article led to the understanding that any footwear that allows for exposure of skin on the foot to the sun, without proper protection, is correlated with increased chances of developing skin cancer—flip flops just happen to be the footwear that exposes the most skin.

Using the same logic, one could report, sensationally, Baldness causes cancer! In reality, a more truthful report would have read: Protecting yourself from the sun is important; but, that doesn't get clicks or sell papers. Notably, you don't have to believe it for this strategy to work—sure, I even read it! Even though I did so for the purposes of seeing how one could jump to such a conclusion, the news outlet still won because they got my click.

4. We are cognitively lazy.

As discussed throughout this blog, humans are cognitively lazy (Kahneman, 2011). Our brains have evolved to conserve energy for "more important" tasks; and, so, they don't very much like expending energy when an intuitive decision can be made that is good enough (e.g. satisficing [Simon, 1957]). Is our belief in a random news story really that important in our day-to-day lives? Well, it could be; but more

often it probably isn't... and so, we fail to engage evaluation and reflective judgment. Instead, we conduct a simplified means of information processing—yielding a conclusion that isn't necessarily accurate, such as choosing to believe the fake news report.

5. Our emotions are targeted.

One of the largest barriers to critical thinking is emotion, because, simply, it makes thinking irrational. When people think with their emotions, they think based on gut-level intuitive reasoning, fueled by how they feel and by past experiences associated with those feelings—the opposite of reflective, critical thought. Fake news, like propaganda, can evoke and breed emotions like fear and anger in the reader or listener. If you're emotional, you're not thinking rationally and are more susceptible to falling for fake news.

6. Reiteration: the illusory truth effect.

The illusory truth effect refers to the phenomenon in which the more we have been exposed to certain information, the more likely we are to believe that information. Earlier in this post, I mentioned that flip flops had been reported to cause cancer. If you have never been exposed to this information before, its very mention here is the second time you've encountered it. The more you read about flip flops and cancer, the stronger the link between the two becomes in your head. Of course, there is no causal relationship between the two. However, debunking isn't necessarily a helpful solution.

Now, I'll add the caveat that because you were introduced to this concept alongside the debunking, you're probably less likely to believe in the relationship; but, imagine being presented information with a fair amount of repetition, without any objection. Then, after repeated exposures, you're provided compelling evidence that this information is actually incorrect. Even though you accept the refuting evidence, the misinformation is still remembered and can implicitly affect your thinking in related contexts.

We are particularly susceptible to fake news, in this context, given the echo chambers we help create for ourselves on social media. As I outlined in the *How to Change People's Minds: The Art of Debunking*, Cook and Lewandowsky's (2011) concise handbook is a quick and useful read for methods of debunking; and addresses, as a foundational perspective, that once people process information (factual or fake), it's quite difficult to remove that information's influence.

7. Social pressure.

The final reason why people fall for fake news is kind of a big one with respect to its impact as well as the various subtopics it covers. One of the best-selling books of all-time, *How to Make Friends and Influence People* (Carnegie, 1936), was perhaps so successful because people recognize the importance of social influence and, likewise, social pressure. When you think about it, the mechanisms of

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such pressure are quite simplistic with respect to how it works within social media: if you say something that someone doesn't like, they might unfriend you; if it's something they really don't like, they might report you; the more you have in terms of friends, followers, likes, views or clicks, the more influence you and your (signaled) values have.

I would argue that though these mechanisms of social pressure exist in real life, perhaps they aren't as straightforward as they are on social media. With respect to the impact of social pressure on your decision-making regarding fake news, you might say, Yeah, but I think for myself, I don't let other people affect my decisions. Well, that's not entirely true. Social pressure plays a much larger role than you think. Again, think about your echo chambers. How many people or organizations present information with which you disagree? Maybe you're like me and enjoy a good debate; but for the most part, you may block, hide, or even unfriend or unfollow individuals with different views.

Indeed, friendships in real life are also largely based on similarity and common ground. We are molded by the people around us. For example, research indicates that over the past few decades, the ratio of American psychology professors/lecturers voting for a liberal presidential candidate has grown from 4:1 to 14:1 (as of 2012) with further research suggesting that this gap is increasing (Duarte et al., 2015). As you will know from Which side are you on?, I'm bipartisan in the arena of politics, which may explain why I find these results worrisome.

Remember, politics and social perspectives are not objectively wrong or right; they're based on beliefs about how things should be done. So, with that in mind, if your education or any job you work at takes place in an environment that is likewise biased to such an extent, surely there will exist some level of social pressure consistent with those views. Similarly, the problem here may be that, despite all the hubbub about diversity in perspective, the impact of mechanisms associated with social pressure may actually enhance polarized thinking—us vs. them—with everyone thinking they're right; and in a polarized arena, you're part of the majority or the minority. If the latter, you may be pressured, implicitly or explicitly, into changing your position by the majority.

But, just because the majority believes something does not make it true. Well, everyone has their own truth. No, that's not correct either—that's subjectivity. When we are tasked with separating fact from fake news, only objectivity can yield an appropriate response. So, be aware of the social climate, be aware of the political climate, be aware of the majority; because, the pressure associated with these are likely to impact the information you engage, as well your belief in its truth or fakeness.

Americans consumed twice as much dubious news in 2020 as they did in 2019.

By Emily Stewart

Vox, Dec. 22, 2020

America's fake news problem is getting worse, not better.

According to an analysis released by NewsGuard and first reported by Axios's Sara Fischer on Tuesday, websites that provide "unreliable news" increased their share of social media interactions this year. In 2019, 8 percent of engagement with the 100 top-performing news sources on social media was dubious. In 2020, that number more than doubled to 17 percent.

NewsGuard, which rates news websites according to reliability, found that people are engaging in a lot more news this year than they were last year. Engagement with the top 100 US news sources (meaning likes, shares, and comments on Facebook and Twitter) went from 8.6 billion reactions to 16.3 billion reactions between 2019 and 2020. That makes sense given, well, everything that has happened in 2020. There has been a lot of news, and due to pandemic-related factors such as unemployment and lockdowns, people have a lot of time on their hands to read stuff online.

But an increasing amount of the news people are seeing is problematic, inaccurate, or suspicious. And that's something to worry about. The analysis found that the Daily Wire, the outlet founded by right-wing commentator Ben Shapiro, saw 2.5 times more interactions this year than last.

The blossoming of false and unreliable news on the internet is a cultural, political, and technological phenomenon that's hard to get your head around, let alone tackle. Conspiracy theories, misinformation, and disinformation run rampant on the internet, and it's often difficult for people to tell what is true and what's not. Social media companies are not exactly doing a bang-up job of addressing the problem, either.

Right-wing content, in particular, thrives on platforms such as Facebook. But just because someone sees certain content doesn't necessarily mean they are particularly influenced by it, and figuring out just how powerful certain messages are can be complicated. Over the summer, Kevin Roose at the New York Times reported on what he described as a "parallel media universe" of super-conservative content on Facebook, noting that right-leaning pages and posts on the platform consistently get more interactions and shares than more liberal and mainstream ones. (Though just because someone likes a news post doesn't mean they actually read it.)

As Recode's Rebecca Heilweil pointed out at the time, it's hard to know what's happening on Facebook just by engagement: There's now a running debate among academics, analytics experts, and observers like Roose around what we know about what's happening on Facebook and why. Dartmouth political scientist Brendan

Nyhan recently argued that "likes," comments, and shares are just a small part of what people actually see on Facebook, and that it's difficult to draw conclusions from these interactions alone or to know what they might mean for an election.

Still, the trend is concerning. Social media is making political polarization worse in America, and it's often the case that people no longer agree on even basic facts. What people consume shapes what they see — basically, someone clicks on a certain article and algorithms start to predict what else they might like in alignment with that. And the further down the rabbit hole they go, the more they begin to seek out that media, often winding up in an information bubble.

For people who complain so much about supposed social media censorship, they are not really being censored

Republicans have spent years complaining that social media companies are biased against them and that their content is being censored and removed. President Donald Trump has often lashed out against tech companies with unfounded claims of bias. He and his administration have also attempted to undercut and scrap Section 230, a law that basically says social media companies are allowed to police their platforms however they want and aren't liable for the content third parties post on them. (Recode's Sara Morrison has a full explainer on Section 230.)

Rather than bias toward a certain political leaning, social media algorithms are often biased toward outrage — they push content that people have an emotional reaction to and are likely to engage with. The NewsGuard data and other research shows that people are increasingly being drawn to unreliable content — and often, unreliable content that has a conservative bent. And that content can influence all sorts of attitudes and cause confusion on even basic facts.

The New York Times recently took a look at Georgia and how misinformation and unreliable news is playing a role in the US Senate runoffs there. A conservative local news network called Star News Group announced it would launch the Georgia Star in November, and NewsGuard's analysis found that the website has published misleading information about the presidential election and the Senate races. One story making false claims about Georgia's presidential election results reached up to 650,000 people on Facebook.

Combating fake and misleading news would require efforts from multiple stakeholders. Yet Facebook recently rolled back changes to its algorithm that would promote news from reliable sources. Given the pace at which the problem is growing, the matter is likely to worsen without intervention.

Excerpts from

“The American Abyss”

By Timothy Snyder

NY Times, Jan 9, 2021

“Even when he won, in 2016, he (Trump) insisted that the election was fraudulent ... People believed him, which is not at all surprising. It takes a tremendous amount of work to educate citizens to resist the powerful pull of believing what they already believe, or what others around them believe, or what would make sense of their own previous choices. Plato noted a particular risk for tyrants: that they would be surrounded in the end by yes-men and enablers. Aristotle worried that, in a democracy, a wealthy and talented demagogue could all too easily master the minds of the populace. ...

“In this sense, the responsibility for Trump’s push to overturn an election must be shared by a very large number of Republican members on Congress. Rather than contradict Trump from the beginning, they allowed his electoral fiction to flourish. They had different reasons for doing so. One group of Republicans is concerned above all with gaming the system to maintain power, taking full advantage of constitutional obscurities, gerrymandering and dark money to win elections with a minority of motivated voters. They have no interest in the collapse of the peculiar form of representation that allows their minority party disproportionate control of government. The most important among them, Mitch McConnell, indulged Trump’s lie while making no comment on its consequence.

Yet other Republicans saw the situation differently: They might actually break the system and have power without democracy. The split between these two groups, the gamers and the breakers, became sharply visible on Dec. 30, when Senator Josh Hawley announced that he would support Trump’s challenge by questioning the validity of the electoral votes on Jan. 6. Ted Cruz then promised his own support, joined by about 10 other senators. More than a hundred Republican representatives took the same position. ...

“Making his fictions the basis of congressional action gave them flesh. Now Trump could demand that senators and congressmen bow to his will. He could place personal responsibility upon Mike Pence, in charge of the formal proceedings, to pervert them. And on Jan. 6, he directed his followers to exert pressure on these elected representatives, which they proceeded to do: storming the Capitol building, searching for people to punish, ransacking the place.”

Editor: Snyder’s essay is highly recommended, but too long to reprint here.

The Radical Individualism Raging Throughout America

Many Americans care more about protecting their personal liberty over the health of their communities. We take a look at the history behind this phenomenon.

By Matthew M.F. Miller

Shondaland, Nov. 20, 2020

Wearing a piece of cloth over your face seems like a reasonable request in exchange for saving hundreds of thousands of lives. Not so in the U.S., where an effective coronavirus prevention tactic (wearing a mask) has become a point of political and sometimes deadly contention, dividing Americans into two distinct groups: those who rail against being told what to do by state and local governments and those willing to suffer a minor inconvenience for the greater good.

When the CDC recently updated their mask guidelines to include new data that shows masks protect the wearer from coronavirus, too, it was celebrated as an opportunity to increase mask use.

Katherine White, a professor in Consumer Insights, Prosocial Consumption, and Sustainability at the University of British Columbia was quoted in The Washington Post as believing these new guidelines are a step forward in messaging, especially for those more motivated by a responsibility to take care of themselves than others.

“Overall, this seems like a win in terms of messaging that would appeal to Republicans,” she said. This was because “conservatives are strongly motivated by a personal responsibility to care for themselves.”

Masks have emerged as a microcosm for the burgeoning discord between two factions of our great nation: collectivists and individualists. America was founded on personal freedoms that evolved into a pull yourself up by your bootstraps idea that anyone can succeed without the help of others if they work hard enough.

And while that individualistic, freedom-loving streak has long sustained a democratic society that values liberty and justice for most, some have begun to view our self-absorbed nature as teetering on self-destructive selfishness.

New York Times columnist Paul Krugman, in a piece titled The Cult of Selfishness Is Killing America, espouses that too many Americans now subscribe to the positive power of greed and the innate belief that everyone is better off when they pursue their own self-interest.

Brené Brown, in a pre-election podcast interview with President-elect Joe Biden, proclaimed that America’s tombstone would be inscribed with the phrase, “Death by rugged individualism.”

It’s an issue she identified in a 2017 article for Fast Company, writing, “As members of a social species, we derive strength not from our rugged individualism, but from our collective

ability to plan, communicate, and work together. Our neural, hormonal, and genetic makeup support interdependence over independence.”

It’s easy to demonize the worst aspects of individualism, but as in all things, balance is key.

How to achieve that balance, to encourage more concern for the greater good in a polarized society founded on an every-man-for-himself strategy, requires all of its citizens to understand the better angels and worse demons of human nature.

A primer on individualism vs. collectivism

Individualism is a social theory that elevates the freedom of the individual over the collective. While some have taken to flying the Gadsden flag and living the “don’t tread on me” ideal to the extreme, most individualistic societies value uniqueness, independence, self-sufficiency, and autonomy.

Individualistic cultures like the U.S. place individual rights and self-reliance above all else. We celebrate and honor personal achievements, often assuming that success comes chiefly to those who wanted and worked harder for it than others. Personal relationships and the needs of friends and family trump the needs of strangers.

Collectivism is a social theory that elevates the value of relationships and the connection between people – known or unknown – as guiding factors in individual identity. Collectivists adhere to a “we’re all in this together” mentality, believing that the needs of the group supersede the needs of each individual member. When one person wins, we all win. Collectivists generally value selflessness, working as a group to solve problems, always doing what’s best for society, and placing community above all else.

Thomas Talhelm, associate professor of Behavioral Science, University of Chicago, says that the enormous geographic footprint of the U.S. lends itself to the ideals of an individualistic society. Any time you have a scarce population where there are not as many cities, he says, people generally rely on themselves rather than institutions. Individualism is more prevalent in rural areas. Collectivism is more prevalent in urban areas.

“So that, for example, explains part of the differences within the United States,” he says. “You see higher rates of individualism in places like Montana and Wyoming than you do in Virginia or Pennsylvania, because you’ve got denser populations with institutions.”

In celebration of two competing ideas

Neither collectivism or individualism is inherently better, nor are the two ideas mutually exclusive, says Luis D. Medina, director, Collaborative on Aging Research and Multicultural Assessment, University of Houston. He refers to the U.S. as a W.E.I.R.D population – western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic – and while he says that as a whole the U.S. is characterized as an individualistic



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society, it's an incomplete conclusion.

"When we draw generalizations regarding Americans, we're usually talking about this very limited W.E.I.R.D group that is not representative of everyone," he says. "You can still identify a lot of folks who are high on collectivism within the U.S."

He points to diverse areas in major metropolitan areas such as Los Angeles, where pockets of collectivism still thrive.

"You go to East L.A. where you have a lot of folks of Chicano descent or Mexican-American descent or Central American descent, a lot of them are still holding on to some of the collectivist ideals that their family has passed on from generation to generation, despite being in the United States for a long time," he says. Oftentimes it's in regards to finances, such as offering short-term loans or gifts to relatives, or having everyone in the family regularly contribute to a pot of money and then, if anyone has an emergency, they can use that money no questions asked .

Both societies have their admirable qualities, says Talhelm, who admires collectivist societies for one of their most defining characteristics – the ability to rely on one another in times of need.

"One of the things that always sticks out to me when I'm in China is that among my close friends there, if I need anything, I don't need to even say why I need it. I just tell them that I need something and it's done," he says. "In America, if somebody needs help from me, I want them to first explain the situation, explain to me why it's necessary, and why they couldn't solve this some way on their own."

In individualistic cultures, Talhelm says communication tends to work a lot better, in large part due to the ability to confront conflict head-on. "One of the things I really like about living in the United States is that when conflict arises, we are good at resolving it, at least on a very micro, person-to-person level."

Everything all the time

Collectivism and individualism aren't fixed states of being. According to both Talhelm and Medina, we all have proclivities toward both depending on the setting and situation.

Politically, conservatives are often seen as individualists that long for a smaller government, fewer regulations, and lower taxes. Liberals generally are viewed as the collectivists, working to enact large, government-led programs and legislation – such as universal health care and environmental regulations – that benefit populations most in need.

In our personal lives, however, the small towns and rural areas in which the majority of conservatives live are the same places where neighbors and family members are more likely to come together to help one of their own in a time of crisis. In cities and suburbs, which trend more liberal politically, people are more likely to live at a distance from their families and less likely than their rural counterparts to know all of their

neighbors, let alone help them in a time of need.

Talhelm says it all boils down to how each society views relationships, and both social constructs have their pitfalls.

"Part of what makes societies collectivist is tight relationships," he says, pointing to countries such as Japan, Korea, and India, where people often feel stuck in relationships when their social world is fixed and tight. "These are cultures where people are dependent on each other, but it doesn't necessarily mean that they like each other."

Talhelm says that these tight relationships in collectivist cultures often report liking their friends less than people in individualistic cultures. Part of what makes individualistic cultures so unique, he says, is the freedom to leave relationships we don't find fulfilling.

"Individualistic societies offer freedom of movement in relationships. If you don't like your friends, you leave them. If your friends don't make you happy, you find new friends. It sounds shitty, but it makes things function better in a way."

It's something to which most people, he says, liberal and conservative, can agree is a positive.

Individualism in the time of coronavirus

The downside of individualism, however, can be a lack of concern for the "other" – those we don't know and to whom we have no personal connection.

Perhaps no moment in modern history has made it clearer that America's individualistic nature is out of balance that the coronavirus pandemic.

Anti-lockdown protests took place in more than 30 states as people demanded the freedom to live life as normal despite a deadly pandemic that has killed more than 240,000 Americans. Many states refused to issue mask mandates. Others, even some that initially shut down, opened bars, restaurants, and gyms while the pandemic raged on.

It's not simply a matter of whether a country is individualistic or collectivistic that determines success in the battle against the pandemic.

Other individualistic countries, such as New Zealand and Iceland, performed remarkably well during Covid-19, enacting safety protocols, lockdowns, and virus testing and tracing that all but stopped the pandemic in its tracks. Many collectivist countries, such as Greece and Portugal, have begun to struggle as the pandemic shows no signs of slowing.

One stark difference detached from outcomes, according to Medina, is that most collectivist cultures – and even many individualistic ones – have been willing to go along with government and public health mandates to protect others.

"It's funny," laughs Medina, "because especially with the pandemic, collectivist

cultures are laughing at the United States, because in collectivist cultures, when you are ill, you don't want to make other people ill, so putting on a mask or staying home is what you do by default. Here in the U.S. we're so individualistic that the idea of putting on a mask of being forced to stay home feels like a violation of our independence and our rights to be these independent individuals living within a society."

Is balance possible?

Medina points to two moments in recent history in which our individualistic society came together in a collectivistic manner.

"After 9/11 in New York City, the way that the city pulled together was consistent with what we would expect a collectivist culture to do," he says. "Here in Houston, after Hurricane Harvey, the city pulled together to ensure recovery for all of its citizens. I moved here two years ago, and I've seen that some of that still resonates with a lot of individuals today, but the notion is that when things got better, most communities reverted back to their individual default mode."

Oftentimes, Talhelm says, that when it comes to the stark differences between collectivists and individualists, it all comes down to a difference of motivation. One study found that individualists and collectivists volunteered at almost the same rates, but individualists did so because they saw career-related potential while collectivists were more drawn to the identity of being a volunteer. Achieving balance, he says, may look more like finding that type of common ground despite inherent differences.

"I'm definitely open to the idea that humans have mindsets that we can get into or not," Talhelm says. "I think at a cultural level, though, you kind of have to do one or the other."

Medina agrees, but believes we should strive for balance.

"In the context of behavioral and social situations, balance in general, I think is easily defensible and justifiable," he says. "The body seeks balance. In medicine, it's either too much of something or too little of something, and in the end, it creates some sort of physiological disruption or problem. So, societally, if we were to use that same framework, I can see that a balance would be something that would help us progress."

More important than balance, Talhelm says, is respect and understanding.

"I think we can and should strive to have the flexibility to understand and adapt to both ways of thinking," he says.

If we can respect that others have different needs than our own, he says, even individualistic societies like the U.S. can achieve some level of concern for the greater good.

As coronavirus cases continue to soar to new and more dangerous heights, perhaps that concern and respect for each other can begin with everyone wearing a simple face mask.

Not because we have to, but because we care.

CALENDAR

Thru Jan 23 **Fiber Art Exhibit-Forced to Flee.** Throughout history people have been forced to flee due to war, oppression, natural disasters and human rights violations. Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at Mills Station Arts and Culture Center (10191 Mills Station Rd, Rancho Cordova). Free.

Jan 21, 28, Feb 4, 11 **APSEA California Innovative Playbook for Government Change Agents.** Virtual Change Challenge Forums open to all state employees at no cost. Jan 14 8-11am Innovation Through Moonshot Projects. Jan 21 Innovation Through a Culture of Change Leadership. Jan 28 Innovation Through a Culture of Risk Intelligence. Feb 4 Innovation Through Digital Upskilling. Feb 11 Innovation Through Intrapreneurship. Info: See Cal-IPGCA's brochure available online.

Jan **PACT Virtual Programs** - PACT provides support for adoptees of color and their families. Virtual Youth Clubs - monthly Feb-June, 10-18yo, club members are added on first come first serve basis, \$25 deposit. Foster Alum and Adult Adoptees of Color Support Calls started Jan 5. First/Birth Parents and Families Support Calls starts Jan 27. Adoptive, Foster & Pre-adoptive Parents of Color started Jan 7. Support Call for Black Adults starts Jan 19. Adoptive Parent Support for Current PACT members starts Jan 21. Webinar How Educators Can Create Adoption Inclusive Classrooms-Jan 26. Info: www/pactadopt.org

Jan 23 Sat **My Sister's House - Volunteer Orientation.** 5-6pm by ZOOM. Register at www.my-sisters-house.org

Jan 29 Fri **Center for Fathers and Families: "Know your Liver" webinar and concert.** Guest speaker Dr. Amanda Cheung. 6pm. Free. Register at permissiontotalk.org.

Feb 6-March 6 Saturdays **My Sister's House - Spring 2021 Advocate Training.** 830am-530pm by ZOOM or in person. Training covers: crisis intervention, cultural responsiveness, coercive control, trauma informed care, community accountability. Register: shingmsh@gmail.com

Feb 19 1942 Day of Remembrance - President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed E.O. 9066 which imprisoned 120,000 Japanese Americans during WWII based on false claims that it was of military necessity.

April 29, 1992 Sa-I-Gu (Korean for 4-29) Los Angeles riots after the after the jury acquitted four LAPD officers for beating Rodney King.

May 4, 1983 Thong Hy Huynh was stabbed to death in a racially motivated incident by Jay Pierman at Davis High School.

May 13-23 **CAAMFest 2021.** Early Bird Submission Deadline-Jan 29 (\$30), Normal Deadline-Feb 12 (\$35), Late Deadline-Feb 26 (\$40). Info: festival@caamedia.

June 23, 1982 Murder of Vincent Chin in Detroit MI by unemployed autoworkers Ronald Ebens and Michael Nitz.

July 5-10 **PACT Family Camp West** - Santa Cruz, CA. August 9-14 PACT Family Camp East, Pine Mountain, Georgia. PACT is creating alternative plans with appropriate cautions for the pandemic. Attendance will be determined by lottery which closes January 31. Scholarships available. Info: www.pactadopt.org

Current Faces, New Places

Kim Ng, hired by the Miami Marlins baseball team as general manager with 30 years in the game, assistant general manager twice. After graduating from University of Chicago where she played softball for 4 years, Ng took in internship with the Chicago White Sox and got a full-time position in 1991. She grew up in Queens NY and New Jersey.

Alice Nishi died January 13th in Davis at age 97. She served on the Davis School Board, regularly hosted Davis Asians for Racial Equality meetings about racism and bullying and bulk mail labelling "parties" for Currents on her dining room table with dessert and tea following. A UC Berkeley graduate and school teacher, active advocate for racial justice on Presbyterian USA committees - Asian American Presbyterian Women, Ethnic Concerns-Northern California. She secured Presbyterian funding for the Chol Soo Lee Defense Committee and Asian American Women Married to Servicemen project.

Letters to Editor

Thanking you for assuring that Currents continues to get published and distributed. I like the portability and readability of this e-version. Thank you for your work and persistent hard work over all of these years! - Donna L. Yee

Recently received the first issue of Currents I have ever seen. I was very much impressed with the newsletter and would like to request to be added to your mailing list. Thank you for the sample issue. My husband enjoys reading actual news print and will enjoy reading this newsletter as well. - Jane Yabu

Currents is available on the APSEA website, www.apsea.org

Census Bureau forced to produce noncitizen data

In July 11, 2019, President Trump issued Executive Order 13880, ordering the Census Bureau to develop two reports of the 2020 Census - one showing the full count and a second report deleting undocumented persons to be used for reapportionment. Reapportionment is done after every Census to redraw congressional district to reflect population changes. EO 13880 is in line with Trump's anti-immigration policy and intention to punish those states (especially sanctuary states) with significant undocumented populations. By excluding undocumented immigrants from the official calculation will change how many seats each state gets in Congress and federal funding over the next ten years. When issuing EO 13088, the president alluded to a state with undocumented residents estimated at around 2.2 million (6 percent of the population) which could lose two or three seats in the House of Representatives. Trump was targeting California.

Trump originally wanted a "citizenship question" added to the 2020 Census questionnaire, but in June 2019, US Supreme

Court ruled that question could not be in the Census under the administration's stated rationale "to protect the voting rights of America's minority residents." Community advocates knew that any citizenship related question would discourage immigrants - documented or not - from responding to the Census in fear of retaliation or deportation. Hence, Trump issued EO 13880 to gets the results that he wanted in another way.

Nearly two dozen states and the District of Columbia challenged the order because the Census Bureau is responsible for counting the whole number of persons in each state irregardless to their citizenship or documented status. That case claimed that EO 13880 was chilling aliens and their families from responding to the census, thereby degrading the quality of census data and the president order violated law by ordering two sets of numbers - a valid tabulation and an invalid tabulation excluding aliens based on administrative records sourced from outside the Census Bureau. The US District Court for the Southern District of New York declared EO 13800 unlawful and ordered the Census Bureau to not include information that the president had ordered. The Trump administration appealed and on December 18, 2020, the Supreme Court postponed consideration of its jurisdiction to decide these issues as "premature" with a 6-3 decision, but also vacated the NY order to cease the calculation of undocumented persons. The three dissenting justices were Breyer, Sotomayor and Kagan.

The president previously tried to undermine the Census Bureau count by shortening the October 31st complete count date. The last count date had been delayed and extended to adjust for the COVID-19 lockdown. US District Court for Northern District of California (San Jose Division) issued a stay and preliminary injunction reaffirming the October 31 extension and ordered the deadline for reporting to the president to April 2021.

The administration is pushing the Census Bureau to complete its reports before Biden's January 20th inauguration as its "number one priority." Bureau insiders say it won't get done. And it can't be accurately calculated because there is no data collected by the Census Bureau identifying who is document or not (other than census counts in ICE detention facilities) and so producing the report which the president ordered will be based on speculation and outside data sources.

EthnicStudiesCurriculum

Public comment through January 21.

The state's 2020 Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is now open for public comment through January 21. Comments can be emailed to ethnicstudies@cde.ca.gov. The Advisory Committee will be meeting February 14-15, March 21-22 and April 25-26. The State Board of Education will receive this "third and final draft" on March 17-18 with final action by March 31.

Critics say the curriculum has gaping holes and some bigotry, its Critical Race Theory emphasis is devisive and lacks inclusiveness.