

STATE & NATION

'I belong here': Rallies denounce violence against Asian Americans

By The Oregonian and The Associated Press

A diverse crowd gathered Saturday near the Georgia state Capitol in Atlanta to demand justice for the victims of recent shootings at massage businesses and to denounce racism, xenophobia and misogyny. Similar rallies were held from coast to coast.

In San Francisco, hundreds gathered in Portsmouth Square, in the middle of Chinatown, to grieve the victims and to call for an end to racist and sexist violence against Asian Americans. The participants waved signs reading "stop Asian hate."

And in Portland, about 200 people gathered Saturday evening along the waterfront, holding up candles and signs during a vigil honoring the victims.

"We are here just to show our unity and to tell the world that we are part of America, we are not a target to be discriminated against," said Liying Zheng, president of the Vancouver Chinese Association.

The event along Tom McCall Waterfront Park was organized by various Asian American organizations in Oregon as part of a nationwide night of vigils planned by United Chinese Americans, a national advocacy group for Chinese Americans. Volunteers from the Chinese Friendship Association of Portland handed out candles to attendees.

Ai Fen, 46, said she's not the type of person who usually attends these kinds of events, but she wanted to show up and be counted among those who are publicly decrying violence against Asian Americans. "We need to learn how to stand up and speak out," Fen said in Chinese. "We need to show that Asian people can't be treated badly like this."

Hyun-joo Oh, who is Korean American, said she came to "help us be more visible."

"I think it's time for change for us to stand up and show up more for one another because sometimes we're scared, so we hide away," Oh said.

A slate of Oregon leaders spoke at the event, including Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, state Rep. Khanh Pham, an Asian American legislator who represents Portland's Jade District, Multnomah County Commissioner Lori Stegmann and Christine Ryan Chin, president of the National Organization for Women Oregon.

Rosenblum urged those in attendance to use and spread awareness of the state's bias crime hotline.

'We see you'

In Atlanta, they cheered U.S. Sens. Raphael Warnock and Jon Ossoff, and Georgia state Rep. Bee Nguyen, the first Vietnamese American to serve in the Georgia House.

"I just wanted to drop by to say to my Asian sisters and brothers, we see you, and, more importantly, we are going to stand with you," Warnock said to loud cheers as passing drivers honked car horns in support.

Robert Aaron Long, a 21-year-old white man, is accused of killing four people inside two Atlanta spas and four others at a massage business about 30 miles away in suburban Cherokee County. Six of the eight people killed Tuesday were women of Asian descent. Another person was shot but survived.

Investigators have said Long con-



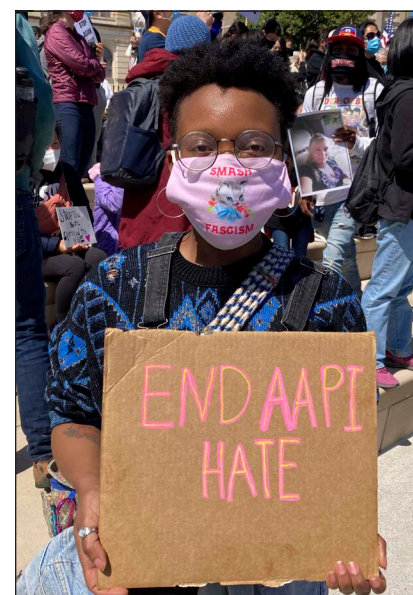
People gather for a "Stop Asian Hate" candlelight vigil at Waterfront Park in Portland on Saturday.

Sean Meagher/The Oregonian



A crowd, numbering about 200 people, gathers for the vigil in Portland on Saturday.

The Oregonian



Kate Brumback/AP

Camden Hunt poses for a picture at a rally in Atlanta on Saturday. Hunt said she came to the rally to "show Black and Asian solidarity." Her sign reads "End AAPI Hate," referring to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

fessed to the slayings but said they weren't racially motivated. He claimed to have a sex addiction, which caused him to lash out at what he saw as sources of temptation, according to authorities. Police have said they're still working to establish a motive, including looking into whether the attacks can be classified as hate crimes. Georgia lawmakers last year passed a hate crimes law allowing additional penalties for certain offenses when motivated by a victim's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender or disability. A hate crime is not a stand-alone crime under Georgia law, but can be used to add time to a sentence of someone convicted of another crime.

"No matter how you want to spin it, the facts remain the same. This was an attack on the Asian community," said Nguyen, an advocate for women and

communities of color. She noted the shooter targeted businesses operated by women of Asian descent.

"Let's join hands with our ally community and demand justice for not only these victims but for all victims of white supremacy," she said.

A couple hundred people gathered in a separate Atlanta park and marched through the streets to join the larger rally, chanting "Stop Asian hate" and "We are what America looks like."

Solidarity

Camden Hunt, a 28-year-old Black woman, said she first got involved in activism in her native Baltimore. She attended protests over the death of Freddie Gray, a Black man who suffered a broken neck in police custody in Baltimore in 2015. She moved to Atlanta four years ago and got involved in com-

munity organizing, last summer pulling together an event to support Black women victimized by police violence.

Hunt joined Saturday's rally to "show Black and Asian solidarity," adding "I think it's amazing. I look out and I see people of all shades and ages and backgrounds."

In Pittsburgh, hundreds also rallied, and videos posted to social media showed former "Grey's Anatomy" actress and Golden Globe Award winner Sandra Oh speaking to the crowd.

"I will challenge everyone here ... If you see one of our sisters and brothers in need, will you help us?" she said, later yelling into a megaphone: "I am proud to be Asian! I belong here!"

In Chicago, about 300 people gathered and in New York City, hundreds marched from Times Square to Chinatown, news outlets reported.

TODAY

Today is Monday, March 22, the 81st day of 2021. There are 284 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On **March 22, 1941**, the Grand Coulee hydroelectric dam in Washington state officially went into operation.

In **1820**, U.S. naval hero Stephen Decatur was killed in a duel with Commodore James Barron near Washington, D.C.

In **1882**, President Chester A. Arthur signed a measure outlawing polygamy.

In **1894**, hockey's first Stanley Cup championship game was played; home team Montreal defeated Ottawa, 3-1.

In **1945**, the Arab League was formed with the adoption of a charter in Cairo, Egypt.

In **1976**, principal photography for the first "Star Wars" movie, directed by George Lucas, began in Tunisia.

In **1987**, a garbage barge, carrying 3,200 tons of refuse, left Islip, New York, on a six-month journey in search of a place to unload. (The barge was turned away by several states and three other countries until space was found back in Islip.)

In **1991**, high school instructor Pamela Smart, accused of recruiting her teenage lover and his friends to kill her husband, Gregory, was convicted in New Hampshire of murder-conspiracy and being an accomplice to murder and was sentenced to life in prison without parole.

In **1993**, Intel Corp. unveiled the original Pentium computer chip.

In **1997**, Tara Lipinski, at age 14 years and 10 months, became the youngest ladies' world figure skating champion in Lausanne, Switzerland.

In **2010**, Google Inc. stopped censoring the internet for China by shifting its search engine off the mainland to Hong Kong.

In **2019**, special counsel Robert Mueller closed his Russia investigation with no new charges, delivering his final report to Justice Department officials. Jimmy Carter became the longest-living president in U.S. history; at 94 years and 172 days, he exceeded the lifespan of George H.W. Bush.

Ten years ago: NFL owners meeting in New Orleans voted to make all scoring plays reviewable by the replay official and referee; also, kickoffs would be moved up 5 yards to the 35-yard line.

Five years ago: Capping a remarkable visit to Cuba, President Barack Obama sat beside President Raul Castro at a baseball game between Cuba's national team and the Tampa Bay Rays (the Rays won, 4-1). Rob Ford, the troubled former mayor of Toronto, died at age 46.

One year ago: New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo ordered all nonessential businesses in the state to close and nonessential workers to stay home.

Today's Birthdays: Composer-lyricist Stephen Sondheim is 91. Evangelist broadcaster Pat Robertson is 91. Actor William Shatner is 90. Former Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, is 87. Actor-singer Jeremy Clyde is 80. Singer-guitarist George Benson is 78. Writer James Patterson is 74. CNN newscaster Wolf Blitzer is 73. Composer Andrew Lloyd Webber is 73. Sportscaster Bob Costas is 69. Actor-comedian Keegan-Michael Key is 50. Actor Guillermo Diaz is 46. Actor Reese Witherspoon is 45. Rock musician John Otto (Limp Bizkit) is 44. Actor James Wolk is 36.

—Associated Press



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