

TALKING STORY IN ASIAN AMERICA

■ Polo



At Chapman Square, there is a life-size bronze statue of a resettling family. (AR Photo/Polo)

There's a tall obelisk marking the end of the nascent Philippine nation's 1898 Declaration of Independence. Our America did that.

Love hurts

Our parks and our shared histories

I love Portland, *jah tentu*. Sure I do. And surely too, loving this place is new for Portlanders like me. What I mean is, while I've worked in our nationally envied city since 1984, loving this place didn't figure into living here until the inspiring administration of mayor Tom Potter, coincident with the heady presidency of Barack Hussein Obama.

American dreamers love *guapos* like these. They take your breath away — the promise of love and of course, the loss of it. So when that blue collar mayor and that dignified president left us, I was left breathless. I'm not complaining, mind you. I'm just saying: Love hurts.

I first heard this saying soon after our family fled deadly political violence in our beloved spice island homeland, Indonesia. "Love Hurts" by American country artists The Everly Brothers was on our youngest uncles Max and Wally's cookie tin-sized record player, up in their little attic bedroom of our grandpa's packed household in the chilly Netherlands.

*Love is like a cloud
Holds a lot of rain
Love hurts
Oh, oh, love hurts.*

Yeah, kind of crybaby stuff. Pero let me set out some context for how much this concept matters, here and now.

We began our community law practice around the back tables of N.E. Sandy's Yen Ha Café, back in 1984. Also back there and back then, the esteemed Dr. Tri and hilarious Dr. Kiet, both Republic of South

Vietnam army battle surgeons, were peering down refugee elders' throats and poking around buddha-belly babies' tummies. We've since been blending Anglo-American law with the cumulative boatloads of social and spiritual capital banked by Portland's South and Southeast Asian, East and North African, Middle Eastern, Pacific and Caribbean islander, Russian- and Spanish-speaking communities' elders, and savvy younger activists. A vigorous mix we make. Like America's always made and remade.

We're those crews of stubborn community mechanics working the destructive and the instructive intersections where Portland's 70 ambitious ethnic streams and our mainstream's staid institutions daily meet. We've done this through six River City mayors, five U.S. presidents, and nine ugly American wars against peoples just like ours, in places just like Portland. A world of hurt lives in our shared city. And overwhelming joy too. Love's this way.

Shared history lives here

Each workweek of every next decade, our crew of community builders crossed downtown Portland's Chapman Square or adjacent Lownsdale Square. Like everyone hurrying to City Hall, our federal and our Multnomah County courts, must. Enduring monuments stand in our parks. Each expresses Anglo-America's historical relationships with our ethnic minority communities' ancestors and our elders. And because traditional peoples live our histories, our children and our grandkids

live inside these troubled realities too.

Our chit-chatting ends as we near them. Those statues. Chins drop into chests. I can't breathe. I ache in all our *kualarga kualarga* (our familias') bruised and broken places.

Chapman Square has a life-size bronze of a resettling family. There's a Conestoga wagon wheel, a bearded dad, his brave boy. There's a mom holding tight her absent daughter's dolly. They have a Bible and rifle. They're so far from home, surely so afraid of men like me and boys like ours. Much like foreigners settling our homelands' rich riversides and generous valleys, must've feared us.

New Americans understand them. We've survived this. Our elders say those settlers' ferocious armies made of their own men and boys — eliminating our leaders, levelling our cities, terrifying our families — did not secure peace. And could not secure law or order. Not ever, not anywhere.

Lownsdale Square is anchored by a limestone memorial for 16 Oregon sons who didn't return to their anxious families after warring on Filipinos. There's a tall obelisk marking the end of the nascent Philippine nation's 1898 Declaration of Independence. Our America did that. Maybe 200,000, maybe one million baby girls, handsome dads, elegant grandmas died in their neighborhoods during that U.S. military mission — Just how many no one can say, though any Pinay auntie, back there or right here will softly tell you about entire towns mass murdered. Places just

like Portland. People on their way to work, just like us.

That's a lot of history living here and now. Same love, same love lost.

Our elders say our ancestors told and told them that a mother sorrowing her soldierboy lost across a deep gray sea is exactly like another *amala's* sorrow over her smart schoolgirl lost to a fire for a downtown intersection. Love lost is indistinguishable, inarguable, inconsolable. Our elegant aunties say every determined dad's dread — a father migrating his family from 19th-century St. Louis, a papa slipping his kids out of gangland Guatemala, or pulling us out from under collapsed Aleppo — is exactly the same dread. The same anguish gets etched by the same humiliation into every good man's achy bones. Here, history is coded. Accordingly from here, his children and their children act out our shared present in our shared *komunita*, in our shared country and shared future. We are this love and love lost. *Punto*.

About our downtown parks, let's walk them, Native and settled and New Americans together. Let's go as we begin another uneasy New Year. Before another exhausting workweek squanders the enormous institutional wealth and the irrepressible cultural capital our blending city's main and ethnic streams bring to this place. This blessed confluence of rivers Willamette and Columbia and our deep blue sea.

Parks are meant for laughing and quarrelling and crying. Love is too. *Insh'allaah*.

Age limit now 21 across U.S. for cigarettes, tobacco products

By Linda A. Johnson
The Associated Press

Anyone under age 21 can no longer legally buy cigarettes, cigars, or any other tobacco products in the U.S.

The new law enacted in December by congress also applies to electronic cigarettes and vaping products that heat a liquid containing nicotine.

The provision raising the legal limit from 18 to 21 nationwide was in a massive spending bill passed by congress and signed by the president on December 20. About one-third of states already had their own laws restricting tobacco sales to people 21 and older.

"This is a major step in protecting the next generation of children from becoming addicted to tobacco products," new Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioner Dr. Stephen Hahn tweeted.

Usually, new legislation doesn't take effect right away. The change simply increased the age limit in

existing law, so it was able to go into effect immediately, a spokesman for the FDA said.

The agency has regulated tobacco products since 2009. It enforces the law partly through spot checks. Stores can be fined or barred from selling tobacco for repeat violations.

Anti-smoking advocates say the higher age limit should make it more difficult for young people to get tobacco, particularly high school students who had friends or classmates over age 18 buy for them.

Millennial Money: Six empowering money moves

By Kelsey Sheehy
NerdWallet

Raise your hand if you feel confident about your finances. Not feeling it? That's OK.

Perhaps you're among the 60% of Americans living paycheck to paycheck, or one of the 81.6 million paying off student loan debt.

It's hard to feel confident when your loan balance doesn't seem to budge and you're fishing through the couch cushions for spare change to put gas in your car.

But you can gain some control over your finances, bit by bit, until that confidence comes. These six empowering money moves will help you build momentum with small gains.

1. Track your spending for one month

Knowledge is power when it comes to finances. Still, most people don't know exactly where their money goes. Tracking your spending for one month will help you identify habits and spot excess expenses, says Colin Walsh, CEO of Varo, an online bank.

"By keeping track of each and every purchase you make, you can more easily start to see how small purchases here

and there add up," Walsh says.

Once you know where your money is going, you can make informed decisions about where you want it to go, giving you a sense of purpose with your spending. You might even decide to keep on tracking.

2. Switch to a high-yield savings account

If you're already doing the hard work of saving, why not make money on your money?

Most savings accounts earn minimal interest — the average annual percentage yield (APY) is just 0.09% — but several offer close to 2% interest.

Here's the difference that can make: If you have \$1,000 in a savings account with an APY of 0.09%, you'll earn a measly \$4.51 over five years. In a 2% APY account, that same \$1,000 would earn about \$105.

3. Increase your credit score

Continued on page 8

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