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MY TURN

■ **Dmae Roberts**



Stop Asian hate

The day after Ted Wheeler, the mayor of Portland, posted about the “disturbing rise in anti-Asian hate and bias,” six Asian women in and near Atlanta, Georgia, were gunned down at three different businesses. News outlets have provided updates about the horrific killings, but the shooter allegedly framed his act as a “sex addiction,” and at a news conference Capt. Jay Baker of the Cherokee County Sheriff’s Office characterized the perpetrator as having “a bad day.” (Baker was removed from his spokesperson position soon after the statement.) Hate crime charges have yet to be filed, though many people agree the suspect deliberately targeted Asian businesses where he murdered six Asian women and two others.

Hate and/or bias is so prevalent that many Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) often just shrug it off. I know my mother ignored it when she was harassed at the Oregon plywood mill where she worked for 25 years. My brother grew up with schoolmates bullying him (this was before the term “hate crime”) because he looked more Asian to them than I did. It’s angering that hate incidents have been on the rise since the former U.S. president called the coronavirus the “China virus” and other racially targeted names.

Mayor Wheeler also posted two weblinks. The first was the “Resilience to Hate” resource guide created by the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO). It details some examples that define a hate/bias incident:

- 1) A person is verbally harassed for being presumed to be from another country
- 2) A poster is displayed that singles out a racial or ethnic group to intimidate
- 3) A person shouts an offensive name at you while you’re walking down the street
- 4) A teacher intentionally ridicules another person for the pronouns that person uses, or
- 5) A wall is defaced with anti-Semitic messaging.

The 14-page report can be found on APANO’s website, <www.apano.org>. It also highlights available services, hotlines, and mental health information.

The mayor also listed the Oregon Department of Justice’s Bias Response Hotline, 1-844-924-BIAS (2427), as well as the weblink for reporting bias crimes to the Department of Justice, <www.doj.state.or.us>.

Stop AAPI Hate, <www.stopaapihate.org>, recently released a report summarizing the 3,795 incidents reported to the website between March 19, 2020 and February 28, 2021 by AAPIs around

the country. Of the nearly 3,800 reports, 68 percent of the respondents were women. The summary included the sites of discrimination as businesses (35.4%), streets (25.3%), and public parks (9.8%); online incidents accounted for 10.8%. The most common form of discrimination was verbal harassment (68.1%), followed by shunning (20.5%). Physical assault was 11.1%.

I’m sure none of this is surprising for Oregon AAPIs. Like elsewhere in the country, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders — along with Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people who settled here, even before Oregon achieved statehood — have faced countless exclusion laws that denied citizenship, land ownership, and voting rights. Locally, Dr. Jacqueline Peterson-Loomis, the executive director of the Portland Chinatown Museum, created a timeline of Oregon’s exclusion laws, many that preceded the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The timeline is located online at <www.oregonencyclopedia.org>.

A couple years ago, I created a comprehensive audio archive detailing 300 years of AAPI history produced through MediaRites, the nonprofit organization I founded. The archive is available to the public for free along with *Crossing East*, an eight-part audio series hosted by George Takei and Margaret Cho that received a Peabody Award. The site, <www.crossingeast.org/crossingeastarchive>, is easy to use and allows students, organizations, and members of the community access to numerous oral histories. It includes information about Southeast Asian refugees in Portland, the history of early Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, and the story of frontier herbalist Ing “Doc” Hay and businessman Lung On, who ran Kam Wah Chung & Co. in John Day, Oregon, from 1887 to 1940.

Education is crucial to fighting anti-AAPI hate. I recently searched the Oregon Department of Education website for information about Oregon AAPI history. The site lists six links. Two links are for Densho, a grassroots organization in Seattle that has created a digital archive about the Japanese-American experience during World War II incarceration. Another is for a book about Portland’s Japantown by a non-Asian writer. I wondered why the Japanese American Museum of Oregon (formerly called the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center), an Oregon-based organization that has worked to document the experience of Japanese Americans for more than two decades, is not included.

Another listing was for Oregon Public Broadcasting’s 30-minute Oregon Experience docu-

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