



Photos: above, Logan Rasmussen; Below, Maurice Ramirez

Activists marched to Alameda City Hall in response to recent crimes against Asian Americans March 26.

Alamedans March, Showing Solidarity

Katherine Mejia

On March 26, hundreds gathered for an Anti-Asian Violence march down Park Street.

The march, organized by Youth Activists of Alameda (YAOA) culminated in speeches, from students and adults, outside of city hall.

"We think it went great and it started a dialogue for varying age groups about hate crimes, especially those against Asians," said YAOA. "We also are going to continue to push for justice and equity as well ... starting with creating a city-wide hate crime hotline."

The march was a response to a rise in hate crimes and attacks against the Asian American community. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Anti-Asian hate crimes have increased by 150%. In an attempt to stop these attacks, people across the country have come together to call for an end of the biased hatred.

"One thing to keep in mind is that the sigma and racial bias against the AAPI community isn't something new or a trend we can all support, then forget about a few weeks later," said Encinal junior Robbie Camarillo.

While the attacks seem to be primarily targeting the elderly, it's something that affects everyone.

"The sigma that all Asians carry a virus is the most disgusting thing and can not be tolerated. I am not a virus," said Camarillo. "My grandmother asked me, 'Why can't I go shopping alone or go to parts of chinatown myself?' I responded, 'There are people attacking people like you, and for that reason, I don't know.'"



The march included many residents of Alameda from all backgrounds.

"We need to work together and in love, so we can grow together, so we can rise together, and that people stop killing us together," said Alameda High School senior Raquel Williams.

The mass shooting in Atlanta, in which eight people of Asian descent were killed, sparked similar protests around the nation.

"We don't want what happened in Atlanta to be at Alameda. We don't want to be the next landmark of a mass shooting, the next landmark of a racist town," said Williams.

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— Alameda High School senior Raquel Williams

YAOA also held a vigil for AAPI lives at Chochenyo Park on March 31.

With the spike of attacks these past few weeks, there has also been a spike of anger and desperation for the end of them. For many, working together to end the racial discrimination around us is something to strive for.

"We need to change that culture, change that energy, so we can be the diverse community we say we are," said Williams. "This island is an island where everyone belongs."

Katherine Mejia is a student journalist at Encinal High School.

Mayor Addresses Hate, Current Events

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Denouncing hate crimes

We have no place for hate in Alameda: Last month, Pres. Joseph Biden ordered flags flown at half-staff to honor the eight victims of a massacre in Georgia, six of them women of Asian descent. In cities across the country, including San Francisco, Oakland and Alameda, residents of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) heritage are experiencing increased incidents of race-related verbal and/or physical violence (See story at left).

My March 19 Mayor's Town Hall focused on this recent increase in anti-AAPI hate crimes. Panelists included AAPI community members Serena Chen, Carl Chan and high-school student Vinny Camarillo. Camarillo recounted experiencing racist verbal abuse in Alameda, beginning shortly after the first COVID-19 shelter-in-place orders were issued and continuing today. They fear for their personal safety, as well as that of their parents and grandparents.

Physical attacks on AAPI residents have also been reported to the Alameda Police Department (APD) over the past year. Chen associated this recent uptick in racist hate crimes to inflammatory and xenophobic language used by the previous federal administration when discussing COVID-19, as well as longstanding sexualized, misogynistic stereotypes of AAPI women. You can find the recording at www.youtube.com/cityofalameda.

In 2020, there were more than 1,700 reported incidents of violent crimes against individuals of AAPI heritage in Alameda County, but this is likely only a small percentage of actual incidents, according to Town Hall panelist, Alameda County District Attorney (DA) Nancy O'Malley. O'Malley and Chan noted that victims are often reluctant to report these crimes to law enforcement for fear of retaliation or fear of police.

To address these concerns, the DA's office created a Special Response Team (SRT) headed by two Asian American Deputy District Attorneys, including Deputy DA Annie Han Esposito who attended a youth-led "Asian Solidarity" rally in front of Alameda City Hall last week. SRT provides community education about reporting hate crimes and connects victims to victim advocates who speak multiple languages.

SRT also created a multi-lingual "Let Us Help You" poster that will soon be displayed in the windows of Alameda businesses and on AC Transit buses. The posters include the phone number for the Alameda County Hate Crimes Hotline where past incidents of verbal and/or

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physical racist violence can be reported. To make a report, please call the hotline, 510-208-4824.

APD Captain Matt McMullen and Officer Kevin Horikoshi also joined the Town Hall and urged residents who experience or witness such attacks to call APD's emergency number, 510-522-2423. Past incidents can be reported to APD's non-emergency number, 510-337-8340, in addition to the Alameda County Hate Crimes Hotline.

Community members can also help stop verbal and/or physical violence toward AAPI and other individuals, based on race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or disability. Intervene or speak out against verbal attacks; report physical attacks. Alameda will not tolerate acts of hate toward our AAPI and other community members.

Vaccine task force

Seniors 65 years and older have been eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine for almost two months, but some still haven't been vaccinated. Online registration sites can be difficult to navigate, some seniors don't have computers or smart phones and vaccine supply has been sporadic. To address these challenges, the City created a Vaccine Hotline that residents 65 years and older can call to get help scheduling their vaccines.

A postcard with the hotline number and instructions in four languages — English, Cantonese, Tagalog and Spanish — was mailed to Alameda households with residents 65 years or older.

More than a dozen volunteers answer and return hotline calls, help schedule vaccine appointments and arrange transportation, if necessary. The hotline includes messages in the four languages included on the postcard and hotline volunteers can access translators who speak a wide variety of other languages. If you or someone you know is 65 years or older and hasn't yet scheduled their COVID-19 vaccine, please call 510-747-7512.

Go Orange with caution

This week Alameda County moves into the Orange Tier of the state's Blueprint for a Safer Economy, because our COVID-19 case rates are declining and more residents are getting vaccinated. This allows indoor capacity to increase to 50% at restaurants, movie theaters, museums and zoos and places of worship and to 25% at gyms.

But remember, the pandemic isn't over yet; some parts of the country are experiencing surges in COVID-19 cases. Please keep doing what you've been doing to keep yourselves and others safe. Wear a mask when outside your home. Stay at least 6 feet away from anyone you don't live with and wash your hands often. And, when it's your turn, please get the first vaccine you're offered.

Stay safe, Alameda, and help make Alameda safe for all!

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft is the mayor of Alameda. She can be reached at (510) 747-4745 or mezzashcraft@alamedaca.gov.

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Date	Rise	Set
Today	6:55	19:31
April 2	6:53	19:32
April 3	6:52	19:33
April 4	6:50	19:34
April 5	6:49	19:35
April 6	6:47	19:36
April 7	6:46	19:37

Council Considers APD Vehicle

Sun Staff Reports

The Alameda City Council listened to options regarding the Alameda Police Department's (APD) Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) at its March 30 meeting.

Council will decide between keeping or selling the vehicle. Another option may come up. If Council decides to keep the vehicle, it will limit its use to specified tasks including active shooter situations and arrest/search warrants with consent from City Manager Eric Levitt. If the city sells the vehicle, the city will ask neighboring departments to assist with their ERVs for those specified incidents.

Council directed Levitt to initiate a process to sell the ERV last year, but APD opposed.

The ERV is used to protect and transport citizens and officers from potentially dangerous suspects.

APD has used the ERV 33 times since the vehicle was approved in 2012, but only three times for incidents in Alameda. Majority of uses were to execute arrest/search warrants, according to an APD report.

Newsom Taps Bonta for State AG

Dennis Evanosky

On Wednesday, March 24, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced that he had selected Assemblyman Rob Bonta to serve as the state's Attorney General (AG).

Bonta's appointment awaits confirmation by the state Legislature.

If confirmed, Alameda resident and former vice-mayor Bonta will fill the rest of former AG Xavier Becerra's term. Becerra left his post to serve as Pres. Joseph Biden's U.S. Health and Human Services secretary.

Bonta will be the first Filipino-American to serve as California's AG. Newsom announced Bonta's

appointment at San Francisco's International Hotel in Manilatown Center.

The governor pointed out that Bonta's parents, Warren and Cynthia, were "steeped in social justice movements."

Adam Bearn of NBC Bay Area relates that the venue Newsom chose to announce his decision to appoint Bonta is not far from the spot where Bonta's mother once joined with some 3,000 people "who locked arms and tried in vain to prevent 400 riot police from evicting the mostly Asian tenants of a hotel so developers could build a parking garage."

Cynthia also played a role in organizing both Filipino and Mexican American farmworkers for the United Farm Workers.

"Rob represents what makes California great — our desire to take on righteous fights and reverse systematic injustices," Newsom said when making the announcement.

The governor called Bonta "a national leader in the fight to repair our justice system and defend the rights of every Californian."

Bonta will have to earn the AG's seat on his own accord in the November 2022 election. He has already announced that he will run for the seat next year.

Maurice Ramirez
Rob Bonta, pictured here during Gov. Gavin Newsom's visit to Ruby Bridges Elementary School, is slated to become California's next Attorney General.



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