



THE DRUM CIRCLE

A communicative gathering of people coming together into the light with their own natural human-beat

The L.A. County Asian American Employee Assoc. Newsletter



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President's Message

EDWARD YEN, PRESIDENT

When I became president of this association over three years ago, our goals were to develop programs focused on networking and cultural appreciation. We were known to host wonderful banquets, Meet and Greets, annual Heritage Day and Fish Fry. Over the last two years LACAAEA (pronounced La-Say-Ah) has been on a journey to determine what benefits we needed to provide to add value to a LACAAEA membership.

Initially, we focused on career development events for our members, like hosting networking events and workshops to learn more about county exams, improve resumé writing and practice interviewing skills. We also collaborated with other Asian employee associations and the Secretarial Council to celebrate the retirement of our last AAPI CEO, Sachi Hamai. It was a demonstration of what a united coalition of employee associations could do when we work together.

Encouraged by the success of 2019, 2020 was to be an optimistic year. Instead, with the global pandemic there were many challenges to planning events, but it also brought to light some of the ugliest hatred for AAPIs. These challenges have spotlighted how we must evolve to help our County workforce be aware of implicit biases and how we can support the AAPI community in its effort to combat racism and hate. Together, we can overcome it by teaching, collaborating, networking, advocating and building trust amongst each other.

That is why we begin 2021 with new programming focused on four strategic priorities: Advocacy, Community Service, Career Development, and Connecting. These strategic priorities were formed as a result of planning sessions by your new Executive Board members over the last several months. As part of the strategic priority, our Board authored an **open letter** to the County to give voice to the pain suffered by Asian Americans after the hateful shooting in Atlanta, Georgia. This letter is supported by every County employee association.

In this inaugural newsletter edition, I am excited to announce the appointment of the new Executive Board. In the following editions, we will introduce you to the new Committee Chairs and Liaisons, also part of the Board.

Please continue to support us through your membership and involvement, as we embark on the journey of stamping out hate and being a more inclusive County.

Edward is a Director of Operations at the Office of the Assessor. He manages staff in the Assessment and Public Services subdepartment. He is also responsible for the Assessor's Communications and Public Affairs Unit. Prior to joining the Assessor, Edward was a Principal Deputy County Counsel at the County Counsel's office. Before joining the County work force, he was an attorney in private practice. In addition to working long hours, Edward enjoys playing basketball and anything USC. He even named his kids after the school, Scarlett and Caleb.



Distinguished Speaker Series



Tuesday, March 30, 2021 at 6:00PM

Bill Fujioka

Former LA County Chief Executive Officer (2007-2014)

LACAAEA's Distinguished Speaker Series is a monthly virtual event where we invite the movers and shakers in and outside of LA County leadership to share their compelling journey with us. We hope it will encourage

and inspire all participants in their career development and community advocacy.

Mr. Fujioka will share his life experiences growing up in LA County, how he became involved in local government and management, memorable stories from his time as CEO, his tips and insights for employees seeking promotions in government, and his thoughts on how to address the rise of anti-Asian sentiments, attacks and hate crimes in this country. Please use the **registration link** to register for this event. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing info about joining the Zoom meeting.

THE DRUM CIRCLE CONTRIBUTORS

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Op-Ed: We've had enough!

We – Asian Americans (yes, that includes ALL Americans of South/East Asian and Pacific Islander descent) have had enough of this ugly hatred against us. We've had enough of all the vitriol, diminishing us and erasing us into nothingness like we don't matter. WE ALL MATTER!

Even before this pandemic started, we watched in silence as our properties were looted and our businesses were burned down. We were made scapegoats to the anger against society's economic woes. Yet no one expected us to complain because we are the invisible victims. For far too long, mainstream culture ridiculed our physical features, mocked our customs, and sexually objectified our women. And now, during this worldwide pandemic, we are once again blamed as an entire group for a virus we did not cause or for someone's fetishes.

Racism does not require logical thinking. It is oftentimes unconsciously minimized and conveniently made into excuses to direct hate towards innocent victims. When COVID-19 was termed the "China Virus", it painted a large target behind the heads of every Asian American. This kind of language emboldened acts of hate and set ablaze the fire of bigotry across the nation.

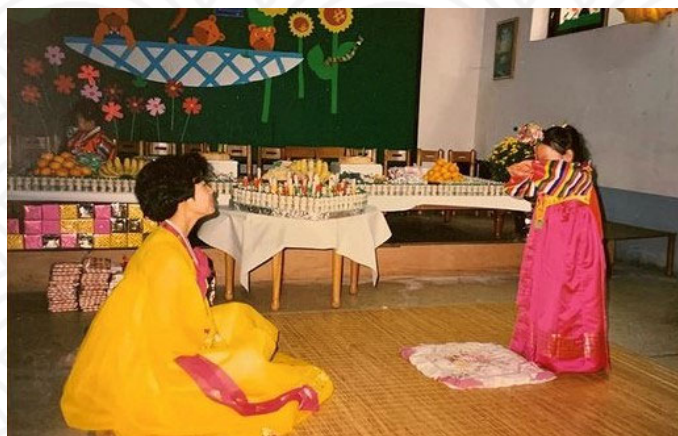
Very few people know about the Chinese Massacre of 1871 that took place in Los Angeles Chinatown in which 17 Chinese men were lynched by a mob of 500 rioters. Of those 500 rioters, only 10 were put on trial. All charges were later dropped and no reparations were ever made. The truth is, this tragedy received little coverage; and to this day, it has been brushed over in our history books, never getting the attention it deserves. 150 years later, this type of hate against Asian Americans still permeates our society.

No longer will we tolerate these hate crimes. These racists have cowardly targeted our elderly who sacrificed blood, sweat, and tears to provide for us just so that we can live the kind of life that they could only dream of – the American dream. Our hearts break seeing them attacked helplessly because in our culture, they are held with high regard and the greatest respect.

Many of us are not strangers from a foreign land. Our roots were planted in American soil and sowed back into the community. Our sacrifices and sufferings are weaved into the fabric of America. Being faithful citizens, our entire race obediently endured internment camps despite our allegiance to the United States. The United States of America cannot be what it is today without the immense contributions from the Asian American community. In times past, our ancestors gave their lives to building the transcontinental railroads that connect all of America, and today we are fighting alongside other Americans as frontline workers against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please stop seeing us through stereotypes. We won't play the model minority anymore. Our culture tells us to suck it up and work hard because getting along with others was the only way to survive. However, the need to be heard and represented is necessary for us to move forward. Please engage us in diversity talks and include our faces in leadership positions. Show us that we matter by ensuring accountability when we courageously disclose being harassed.

(continue on page 3)



I use to think that

Asians in America were an **invisible people**.

Then in grad school, I learned that no, we are not invisible people but, more appropriately, an **erased people**.

America has had a major theme regarding us: to erase our existence and deny our problems.

They smudge us out of textbooks, news, photographs, surveys and statistics, offices and momentous events of all kinds.

Then in my first year teaching young Asian Americans, I learned that it's not just something done *to us*.

We've been made faithful servants who complete the task of our own erasure.

We mute our voices, shame our truth-tellers, starve our consciousness, burn our books, everything but prepare for moments like these when our realities erupt onto the scene.

So, if you're of Asian descent and you're unaffected by what's happening,

or if you find yourself here at this moment without the language, tools, knowledge to make sense of this and move forward,

I have questions without judgement:

When and where did you last see you?

At what point did you allow this world to erase you?

Julie Yeeun Kim is a lecturer of Asian American Studies at CSU Long Beach and a seminarian at Fuller Theological Seminary. She spends her free time writing, singing, and putting her creativity to positive use for her communities.



Op-Ed: We've had enough! (continue from page 2)

We are part of the County family. We are your friends when you need a shoulder to cry on. We are your teammates when you need support. We are your neighbors when you need a helping hand. We ask that you stand with us when we're hurting. We ask that you'll support us in our time of greatest need.

And to our fellow Asian Americans, we can no longer stay complicit and let others dictate the conversation. Find courage to speak up and make sure the country hears us. **#UnitedInAction**



REPORT HATE
Call 211 or www.211la.org,
www.lavshate.org or www.stopaapihate.org

REPORT ELDER ABUSE
(877) 477-3646

MENTAL HEALTH 24/7 HELPLINE
(800) 854-7771

REPORT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
(800) 978-3600

APPLY FOR GENERAL RELIEF, IHSS, MEDI-CAL, CALWORKS, CALFRESH
(866) 613-3777

GET YOUR VACCINE APPOINTMENT
(833) 540-0473

COUNTY EQUITY OVERSIGHT PANEL HOTLINE
(855) 999-CEOP

On March 9th, Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to identify funding to expand the County's Anti-Hate program in an effort to combat hate against AAPIs. LACAAEA's letter writing campaign led the charge in encouraging other Asian employee associations to also show their support for this historic Board Motion.

"On behalf of the members of Los Angeles County Asian American Employees Association (LACAAEA), we would like to express our unquestionable support of Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis' motion to fund and expand the County's Anti-Hate Program to combat hate against AAPIs (March 9, 2021, Agenda Item No. 4, Funding for the County's Anti-Hate Program to Combat Hate Against AAPIs.)"

Since the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, there has been a dramatic and continuous increase in hate crimes targeting Asian American Pacific Islanders (AAPI), especially directed at the most vulnerable in our community. We strongly condemn these attacks that have become an atrocious reality on the daily news. However, we also bring to your attention that many hate crimes are underreported not only due to fear, but also because of cultural barriers.



We urge the Board to vote in favor to fully fund and expand The County's Anti-Hate Program, LA vs. Hate, as it will do the critical work of helping victims and survivors of AAPI hate. This is a dire need in the AAPI community that has been ignored for far too long. It's time that we focus on racism against the AAPI community in LA County. We also highlight the website www.StopAAPIHate.org that provides statistics of hate incidents in Los Angeles County.

As a member of the Los Angeles County of Board of Supervisors who serve the residents of County of Los Angeles, you also represent approximately 1.5 million AAPI (approx. 15% of the populace) in Los Angeles County that are part of the five (5) supervisorial districts. We urge for your advocacy and support in addressing this targeted discrimination by voting for the motion."

Meet our new Executive Board

VENKAT PEDDI | DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



Venkat is an IT Professional living in Los Angeles for the past 25 years. After graduating with an M.B.A, he worked as an IT professional in the private sector for 10 years. Fifteen years ago, he joined the County as a Project Manager in Los Angeles Superior Court. Venkat enjoys serving the community for the past two decades.

He currently serves as the President for County of LA Indian American Prof. Assoc. (COLAIAPA) and he's also involved in 6 different nonprofit organizations as a President, Board of Director, Regional Director, Secretary, Treasurer. Along with his wife, they feel blessed with two lovely children, a daughter and son. Their daughter is an IM doctor and their son currently is an undergraduate senior in college.

JAGIT DHALIWAL (JD), DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

JD is a Deputy Director at the Chief Information Office and is a Technical Advisor to Public Safety & Health Departments. He brings in 20+ years of technology consulting, strategy, and operations experience from various industries.

Apart from his profession, JD is involved in various social/community organizations. He also serves as Secretary at COLAIAPA, he is involved in Sikh Temple promoting awareness of Indian culture, teaching Indian languages, and volunteer programs for the homeless community. He is an Executive Board Member of Data4Good, a non-profit focusing on leveraging the power of data to create a positive social impact in our community and he is also a Director for Programs at MIT Club of SoCal to enrich the lives of MIT alumni and engage them in contributing to local social-economic issues.



TRUC MOORE, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Truc is a Principal Deputy County Counsel. She is an 18 year practicing attorney, and has been employed with the County for the last 14 years. She advises the County on information technology, intellectual property, contracting, procurement and government law matters. Truc is an avid traveler, foodie, cook and USC fan. In her free time, she is fond of traveling, trying out new restaurants, and spending time with her husband and kids.

JOANNA DELACUESTA, TREASURER

Joanna works as a Senior Accountant-Auditor at the Dept. of Auditor-Controller (A-C), where she leads audits to assess and provide recommendations to strengthen the County's controls and processes. She started with A-C as an Accountant-Auditor and has been working with the department for almost seven years. Before starting her career with the County, Joanna worked as an Accounting Supervisor at various nonprofits and has also worked as a Senior Financial Auditor at a regional CPA firm.

During her personal time, Joanna enjoys staying in touch with friends and family, going to k-pop concerts and stand-up comedy shows, and exploring different cities and theme parks with her husband. Joanna was born in the Philippines and moved to LA at the age of 16. She is excited and looks forward to serving LACAAEA and the AAPI community.



JODI CHEN, PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER



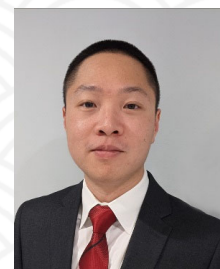
Jodi has been with LA County for over 12 years. Prior to the County, she worked in a wide-range of professions for 20 years, including becoming an award-winning Graphic Designer. She began her County service as an Intermediate Clerk and promoted through numerous County departments including, CSSD, DCFS, Fire, and BOS. She is currently a Management Secretary for the Internal Services Department under Operations Service.

Jodi has been a SoCal native after immigrating from Taiwan with her family when she was younger. She is an adventurous foodie and enjoys trying out dishes from different cultures. She hopes to travel more after this pandemic is over. Jodi continues to stay involved in the local community as a parent advocate for the special needs community.

MATTHEW LIANG, RECORDING SECRETARY

Matthew began his County career in 2018 and is currently a Management Analyst at the Office of the Assessor. Shortly after joining the County, he was introduced to LACAAEA. He continues to serve as LACAAEA's Recording Secretary.

Matthew graduated from Cal State Fullerton with a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Accounting. During his spare time, he enjoys reading, watching movies as well as spending time with family and friends.



Meet a County Leader



Michael Owh

Chief Deputy Director, Internal Services Department

In a safe, socially-distanced Q&A fashion, we will introduce you to a County leader whose work and words of wisdom may inspire you in your career development in the County. In this issue, we introduce you to Michael Owh, the recently appointed Chief Deputy Director of the Internal Services Department.

Why did you choose to work for LA County?

My greatest priority for my career, even before graduating from law school, was public service. That is why I have spent my entire career in government, first in New York City, then the City of LA, and now the County. The impact of public service is also important to me. Therefore, it was so rewarding to work in New York, which serves 8.5 million residents and has a budget of more than \$90 billion. Coming back home to LA, I am so grateful for the opportunity to work for the County, which serves 10 million residents with a budget of more than \$30 billion and encompasses more than 4000 square miles. That scale is hard to match.

What advice would you give to someone starting out?

Never say no to a project. When I was a young staff attorney, I took on any job that needed to be done whether it was legal or not. If someone needed help or if no one wanted to do a task, I'd do it. It allowed me to gain a lot of experience in areas that were not necessarily in my portfolio and it also showed management that I was eager and ready. Also, I'd tell people: never take anything personally. It helps you keep perspective.

What's the biggest factor that has helped you be successful in your career?

I wake up every morning and go to sleep every night reminding myself that I am a public servant. I work as hard as possible. I try to learn as much as possible about the job (and the jobs of the team) so I can understand the details and make good decisions. I try to overcommunicate and receive as much feedback as possible. However, if I'm being completely honest, I think the biggest factors that helped me be successful are timing and luck. I understand that I am very lucky and privileged to be where I am in my career; lucky that the timing for new opportunities aligned with my availability and privileged that I've been selected for such positions. That being said, I still made sure I was ready for those opportunities.

What are your success habits?

I run early every morning to clear my head and get my mind ready for the day ahead. I read as much as possible, both fiction, nonfiction, and news. I also pick up the phone to call people instead of relying on emails too much.

Whose career inspires you and why?

I don't really look at one person; I like to study careers and leadership styles across the board. One example is the career of President Abraham Lincoln as told by Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals*. He brought in the best people to work with him, even though some of them were very critical of him personally and outwardly disagreed with him. Lincoln said: "We need the strongest men of the party in the Cabinet. We needed to hold our own people together. I had looked the party over and concluded that these were the very strongest men. Then I had no right to deprive the country of their services." His confidence, security, and self-awareness is inspirational to me.

If you weren't a Chief Deputy Director for LA County, what career would you like to explore?

My professional goal has always been to be the best public servant that I can be. It doesn't matter what the title is and where as much as how big an impact I can make and how best I can contribute to society.

What personality trait should every leader have?

I think a true leader needs to possess multiple traits to be effective, including (but not limited to) strategic vision, patience, empathy, self-awareness, and confidence.

What was the hardest decision you ever had to make?

When I was a General Counsel, one of my best friends applied to an open position for which I had final say and I chose a different person. It was personally difficult for me, but the best decision for the organization.

How do you push through your worst times?

Even when I'm super frustrated, I feel very grateful for the opportunity to serve the public. As Teddy Roosevelt said, "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best

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Meet a County Leader (continue from page 5)

knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

What mistakes have you made along the way?

I've made so many mistakes that it's hard to even list them. Generally, the mistakes stem from miscommunication or not communicating enough. There are also mistakes that stem from not being rigorous enough or being too focused on perfection instead of execution. It's all about continuous learning and improvement.

If you could start all over again, what would you do differently?

It all comes down to listening more, being kind, and trying to see from everyone's perspective. So in each circumstance where I've made a mistake, I would like to think I learned a lesson to apply to the next time and ultimately it improved my judgment.

Have you personally experience any form of discrimination as an Asian American?

Yes, especially growing up. I arrived in LA as a 5 year-old from Korea and didn't know how to speak English and had no friends. So you can imagine some of the challenges.

In light of the rise in AAPI hate crimes that are occurring in our community, what are somethings (or one thing) our community can do as a response?

I think the most important thing for us to do is continue to stand together and speak with one voice against discrimination and hate. We are all people and it's easy to focus on the differences, but in my experience, we have so much more in common and we have so much more power and agency than we think.

What is the best advice you can give LACAAEA members?

I would like to encourage all of you to truly appreciate being a public servant and the impact you have on our residents. You are in the arena – make the most of it.

Michael is a passionate public servant and a proven government executive with a track record of success in improving operational performance while prioritizing equity, transparency, and commitment to the public. With an annual budget of over \$873M, the ISD Executive team lead over 7,000 county and contracted workers in operations, information technology, environmental, administrative, purchasing, and contracting.

Prior to joining the County, Michael was appointed by Mayor Eric Garcetti to serve as the City of LA's first Chief Procurement Officer, where he led the launch of the City's online certification tool, providing unprecedented transparency into the City's spending. Prior to coming to LA, Michael was appointed by Mayor Bill de Blasio to serve as New York's Chief Procurement Officer and Director of Contract Services, responsible for the city's procurement policy and the oversight of more than \$20 billion coordinated through 40 city agencies. Michael is the recipient of many public service awards, including the Small Business Advocate Award (2019), Community Visionary Award (2018), and Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprise Advocate Award (2016). Michael received his BA from the University of California at Berkeley, and his JD from the St. John's University School of Law.

Supporting Local AAPI Businesses Doing Some Good!

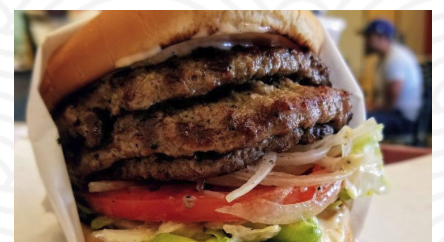
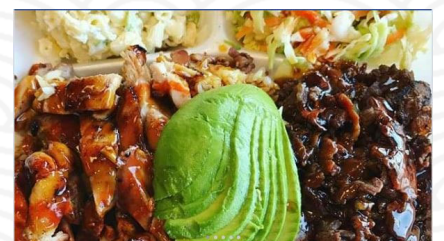
In every issue, we will highlight local businesses that are not only providing great products and services, but also contribute to the community. Please let us know of a business that is worthy to be highlighted, so that we can rally our support behind them.

B-Man's Teriyaki & Burgers

3007 E Huntington Drive #102 in Pasadena (626) 568-0386
1430 Mountain Ave #103 in Duarte (626) 305-3005
www.bmans.com

Byron Takeuchi, "The B-Man" grew up in the restaurant business where he watched his dad, Bob, create the "Teriyaki Bowl". Having worked at his parent's Spike's Teriyaki Bowl since they opened in 1976, Byron graduated from Cal Poly Pomona with a degree in Hospitality Management and a minor in Business. He began experimenting with various other recipes that didn't quite fit into the well-established menu at Spike's.

Not only does B-Man's serves quality fusion Japanese style Teriyaki, Curry, and Burgers at a fair price, they have been feeding the homeless through a non-profit group called Down But Not Out. It has been estimated that 66,433 Angelenos are homeless, either living on the streets, in shelters and in vehicles.



Upcoming Event

Career Workshop

Back by popular demand, LACAAEA has been busy organizing another career workshop. Presented by experts from the Department of Human Resources (DHR), many in and outside of county service has been taking advantage of these workshops.

Please be on the look out to sign up for our next virtual session of the DHR work shop in April 2021. DHR presenters will cover topics on preparing for county exams, accessing career pathfinder, and resume building. More details will follow.



Past Highlights

Los Angeles Chinatown Firecracker 5K Run

It was a great morning on February 27th, LACAAEA members participated in the LA Chinatown Firecracker 5K Run, supporting the non-profit LA Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee that is promoting health, fitness, and cultural awareness to the greater LA community. All proceeds from the 5K event are reinvested in the community and surrounding areas in support of elementary schools and other non-profit organizations, providing service and programs that benefit local neighborhoods.



LACAAEA Swag: Face Coverings

Last year, LACAAEA sent out emails to distribute LACAAEA face coverings as a gift for your membership. The face covering is from Variant Labs and is a 3D-knit, non-medical mask built for all day comfort and athletic use. It is one of the most comfortable high-performance masks available to the public. The one that you will receive has the LACAAEA logo on the front as well as elastic ear hoops.

If you have not yet received yours, please send us your name, department, phone number and address to mliang.lacaaea@gmail.com.

Join LACAAEA

Come support our work! **All former and current County employees** may become members. Simply complete the [Membership Application](#) and submit an annual due of \$60 or sign a \$5 per month payroll deduction card.

Not a County employee? Become an [Associate Member](#)! Many of our friends and families are Associate Members and regularly attend meetings and Association-sanctioned events. Come join us in our effort!

Welcome New LACAAEA Family Members

Lawrence Liu
Office of the Assessor

Chung Phung
Dept. of Parks & Recreation

Kimberly Reed
Office of the Assessor

AAPI Contributions

Larry Dulay Itliong

Born October 25, 1913 in the Philippines, Itliong worked in California and Alaska, becoming involved in union causes in both locations. In 1956, he founded the Filipino Farm Labor Union in California. His life as a labor organizer started when he and a group of Filipino farm workers instigated one of the American farm labor movement's finest hours – the Delano Grape Strike in 1965 that brought about the creation of the United Farm Workers union (UFW).

While the movement is known for Cesar Chavez's leadership and considered a Chicano movement, Filipinos played a pivotal role that began it all. The story of Larry and the Delano Filipinos and how they faced unfair and inhumane working conditions is as relevant now as it was then. Itliong devoted the rest of his life to improving the lives of retired Filipino farm workers and to a wide variety of community projects.

