



FOR THE RECORD -- CORRECTION

Clarifying ‘Around Town’ opinion column appearing in April 22, 2021 issue of La Nueva Voz

By Jeff Schenkel

Due to a reporting error, an “Around Town” opinion column appearing on page 6 of the April 22, 2021, issue of La Nueva Voz contained two errors in fact.

The column was based on an on-line Zoom meeting of Pomona Mayor Tim Sandoval’s COVID task force.

First, an audio recording of the meeting was provided by Pomona City Hall staff to this newspaper at our request after publication of last month’s issue. The “open microphone” comment by Pomona Unified School District Public Information Officer Oliver Unaka during that meeting was the subject of the “Around Town” column.

After reviewing the audio recording, La Nueva Voz was able to determine that the “open microphone” comment in question actually occurred moments after the conclusion of a planning discussion for last month’s Asian American - Pacific Islander community vigil held in the Pomona Civic Center.

In fact, the “open microphone” comment occurred during a general advance planning presentation by Natalie Chaidez of Fairplex – and the committee’s work in the future on the aftereffects of the pandemic in the future of Pomona – and had nothing to do with the Asian American - Pacific Islander discussion.

La Nueva Voz had reached out to PUSD Supt. Richard Martinez by e-mail before publishing the story for his comments and input but did not hear back from him until after the April issue of La Nueva Voz published.

In a three-way call with La Nueva Voz Publisher Jeff Schenkel and Deputy Supt. of Human Resources Darren Knowles, Mr. Martinez explained the discrepancy in the timing of the comments, adding that Mr. Unaka’s “open microphone” comments actually were part of an off-topic conversation between Mr. Unaka and the superintendent after Mr. Martinez happened to walk into Mr. Unaka’s office while the Zoom meeting was in progress.

Mr. Unaka immediately muted his computer microphone when asked to do so by another participant in the on-line meeting.

In addition, therefore, any reference to Mr. Unaka’s gestures or sitting position on camera should in no way be construed to have any connection with the Asian American – Pacific Islander discussion, community or way of life, and La Nueva Voz regrets any possible inadvertent interpretation of significance or association, whether implied or otherwise.

Second, PUSD Board member Dr. Roberta Perlman was mentioned in the opinion piece as being “surprised” by Mr. Unaka’s comments.

This portion of the opinion piece also has become a matter of concern.

To clarify, and following further review, the reference resulted from a text conversation after the meeting between Dr. Perlman and Renee Barbee of La Nueva Voz, in which Dr. Perlman said, “Is that what Oliver said???”

It appeared to La Nueva Voz at the time of the writing of the opinion column in question that the use of three question marks indicated an element of surprise. Dr. Perlman, therefore, indicated her surprise rather than mentioning later she was surprised, as the story originally stated.

And there was no reference to the Asian American – Pacific Islander vigil or community in the brief text exchange between Dr. Perlman and Ms. Barbee.

Finally, several other references in the opinion column represented, of course, the opinion or opinions of La Nueva Voz and, as such, should not be interpreted or in any way considered to be malicious in nature.

The purpose of this article is to update and correct any information that was incorrect and that may have been misconstrued, and to clarify and retract any such information or statement.

La Nueva Voz regrets any unfortunate inconvenience, concern, confusion or misunderstanding that may have resulted from this opinion column.

Editor’s note: This retraction / clarification, presented in this “special hard copy bulletin format” at La Nueva Voz distribution points and appearing on the La Nueva Voz web site at www.lanuevavoz.net, as well as on La Nueva Voz and Renee Barbee Facebook pages/sites, also is scheduled to appear in the May 27, 2021, issue of La Nueva Voz.