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Asian Pacific Support Network

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[www.gapsn.org](http://www.gapsn.org)

# Inform sian

## Merry Christmas

### Check Out GAPS.N.org



*Howard Y.*

The long anticipated GAPS.N Web Site is finally up and functional. The discussion of having our own web site has been going on since early 1997. Given other busy commitments of the board members, it never comes to fruition.

On the site, one can find most background and event information about GAPS.N. And there are more to come like the discussion forum and personal for the members to network. There are pages that are still under construction and all of your inputs are welcome in this process.

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### December Chair Message

*Howard Y.*

Greetings! We are approaching the cold winter season. One can feel the drop in temperature and see the change in scenery. Just in case we don't see you at the December GAPS.N functions; on behalf of GAPS.N, I wish you all a happy and safe holiday season.

The end of year is also a good time for reflection and a recap some of our ongoing programs and achievements for the year.

**Monthly Rap.** This is GAPS.N's longest running program. The goal is to provide a space for gay and bisexual API men to participate in a facilitated

discussion of community-related topics. For the past few years, the rap attendance has fluctuated depending on the topic and other concurrent community events. I



think a discussion forum will continue to be necessary for gay APIs to exchange ideas; the format may need adjustment. Perhaps in the future, we can provide the forum through our web, where the flow of ideas can be done from the leisure of your home. No matter which format the rap will evolve into, the bottom line is to construct a safe space for gay APIs to communicate.

**Cultural Events.** GAPSIN proudly engaged both the Asian and gay communities. This year GAPSIN participated in both the Dragon Boat Race in Echo Park and the Christopher Street West Parade and Festival in West Hollywood. In addition, GAPSIN organized the Mid-Autumn Moon Festival celebrated in the heart of West Hollywood. We will continue to expand our presence in both communities.

**Asian Pacific American Heritage**

**Month.** As part of its goal to educate the mainstream community about gay and lesbian issues, GAPSIN sponsored a forum concerning the experience of gay Asian Pacific Islanders during the 1970s. During the Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, GAPSIN presented this program to the mainstream API community and to the mainstream gay community.

**Political Affairs.** GAPSIN keeps its members abreast of social and political issues that impact gay and bisexual API men. GAPSIN spoke out against an anti-gay hate crime perpetrated against a young gay Filipino student at the University of La Verne and joined in a legal brief filed against this bigotry. This past year, GAPSIN met with elected officials such as California Speaker of the Assembly Antonio Villaraigosa, Attorney General Bill Lockyer, and presidential candidate Bill Bradley. GAPSIN also co-sponsored the organizer’s meeting for the No on Knight Initiative campaign (the antigay marriage initiative). More and more, GAPSIN is being recognized as viable political entities in the community

because of we are a multi-Asian organization, and the mainstream establishments value our positions and opinions.

As I’m writing my last message as the Chair, I have to say that it has been a learning experience. When I took this position, I did it more out of obligation than anything else. I am grateful for all the friendship and support and camaraderie that I have gained from GAPSIN. I can’t end this message without expressing my gratitude to my fellow board members: Pei, Henry, Andrew, and Tani for their contribution in the past year. And special thanks to Myron for being the spring-board that I can bounce ideas from and Gordon for the many late hours to help me with GAPSIN biz. //

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*Continued from Page 1: Check Out GAPSIN*

Special thanks to Oscar Hur for being such good sport and decided to serve as our web master. He has been working diligently for the past month in assembling all the pieces. On behalf of the GAPSIN board, our hats are off to you Oscar. //

## The Struggle of LGBTQ Youth in Orange



*Myron Q.*

Orange Unified School District has been mistreating its lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning youth. Since the beginning of the school year, two students at El Modena High School have been attempting to get permission to meet on campus as the Gay Straight Alliance. Rather than approve the request—as required by federal law—the district school board has held several board hearings.

On November 9, nearly one hundred people showed up to testify about the GSA. Most of the speakers in favor of the GSA were students, community leaders—including clergy—and concerned parents. Many of the speakers against the GSA were parents and a few radical religious people.

The most powerful speakers that spoke eloquently for the need of a GSA were the students. Many of the current students and a number of graduates described the harassment and discrimination that they faced at El Modena High on a daily basis. Teachers also described the many students they have counseled and stated that a GSA would reduce the harm to these young people. Finally, a whole host of groups including PFLAG, GLSEN, PFAW, and Lambda Legal Defense presented policy and legal reasons for allowing the GSA to meet on campus.

On the other side, the radical right trotted out Lou Sheldon as the first speaker. The other speakers included one ex-gay person, several people of color who argued that “homosexuality is not the same as racism,” and adults who did not even have children attending the high school!

The anti-GSA forces raised all sorts of red herrings. For example, some speakers conflated sexual orientation and sex education and argued that parental consent was necessary for membership in the GSA. Some also argued public health reasons—gay people are at higher risk for sexually-transmitted diseases—while ignoring the underlying homophobia in the healthcare system that might actually cause the higher rates of disease among the gay community. And, of course, a number of speakers spoke about Biblical passages and morality.

The Board has deferred on deciding whether to treat the GSA like a regular club until December 7. If you would like more information on GSAs or the specific situation in Orange County, please

contact me at mquon@lambdalegal.org.



# Ways to Connect in Clubs

Howard Y.

For the past few months, InformAsian has been focusing on various spots where gay APIs hang out and the associated dynamic. In recent months, we have witnessed the flourishing of Asian clubs geared toward queer APIs. This actually is a positive trend because it means businesses and club promoters are starting to recognize the presence—and perhaps potential profit—of gay Asians. Personally, I don't frequent clubs unless I'm taking care an organizational obligation or meeting friends there. So by no means, do I consider myself an expert in this area. For this article, I interviewed some gay API players to find out the "ins and outs" of the club scene. And the cruising behavior at clubs is the topic of conversation this time.

According to PC, a self-proclaimed ex-player, playing cool is the key to cruising in clubs. Don't ever feel rushed, once one enters the club, and take some time to circulate the whole arena. Once the desirable target is identified, there is a decision to be made. Is the target going to be a one-time fling or dating material? One can determine this by watching the type of crowd around the target. If the target's friends are a bunch of club boys, one can assume the target is not relationship-minded. This way one knows what to expect of the target. The next step is the actual approaching of the target. Once again, be natural, find something in the surroundings that you can comment on, like the music that is playing or a go-go boy on the stage. If the target responds with interest to the comment, one's move is to get alone with the target. PC recommended the dark corner or the staircase in the club.

## Hey G-Man



Hey G-Man,

I'm a 40 year old GAM (but look 8 years younger), have a good job, and work out regularly. Recently, I've been dating a wonderful 22-year-old guy. We have wonderful chemistry. We relate well both physically and mentally.

We have been seeing each other for six months. However, at the back of my mind, age has been an issue. I've been contemplating that, in ten years, I'll be in my 50s and he'll be in his prime. Do you think that this relationship will work? Any feedback would be appreciated!

Generation Gap

Generation Gap,

I sympathize with your predicament. After all, you are a 40-year-old guy with a good job, nice body, and a caring disposition. To top it off, you're dating an attractive guy who is half your age. What an awful situation to be in. (We should all be so lucky!)

But seriously, with all of the aforementioned positive characteristics, I think that it's the 22-year-old that should be considered lucky. After all, how many happy, well-adjusted gay Asian men are there in Los Angeles—not that many, trust me. Also, you've mentioned that you guys get along really well and that there is definitely "chemistry" between you two.

Also, you seem to forget one of the many benefits of being Asian. We don't age like some non-Asian people do. We are on a slower aging curve. Throw in the gay gene, and you can almost stop time. I know Asians who look fabulous in their 50s and 60s.

Seriously, I wonder if this is truly an issue of the difference in age or if it's just that you have hit the 6-month mark. Many relationships tend to cool down after the first 6 months. This is a natural part of being in a relationship. The relationship is hitting a more measured pace and it feels like you guys are starting to settle down. It doesn't mean that your relationship is dying, just that it is moving into a different phase. You might be more secure in knowing that this is simply another step in the process of having a long-term relationship.

If you work at keeping yourself attractive and your boyfriend does likewise, there is no reason that the two of you can't have a long, fulfilling relationship. My only caveat is to remember to keep working on your relationship and not to ever take it for granted—I would say that to any couple, regardless of their ages.

Best of luck!

G-Man

ML, a regular player in the club scene, stresses the crucial element of comfort level. If one wishes to connect with someone at the club, one cannot appear to be intimidating. This is why one has to work alone. When one is with a group of people, one becomes not accessible to the interested prospect. After one makes his round around the club, one has to identify the lone-standing clubbers. They are the ones who are more accessible than the ones in a group. Find a spot near the prospect. One needs to stand alone close to him and eventually gravitate toward the prospect. For initial contact, one needs to start with a "come-hither look," see if he responds. When one sees no reaction, one has to move on and should not linger. Another tip: if one doesn't see any desirable prospect after ten minutes, he needs to walk out of the club and maybe come back later.

Some of the guidelines here are pretty universal to both straight and gay folks. Some contend that clubs are just like a meat market. And the reality is with the loud music in the background, it's hard to have a meaningful connection with anyone there. One has to love either dancing or cruising in order to go there. For those of you, who are enthralled by the club scene, hopefully the advice of these two experts can help you in making that connection for a fling or possible long-term relationship. //

## Hostile Climate Essay

Arthur D.

For (THE LONGEST TAGLINE IN THE WORLD:)

Arthur Dong is a Peabody Award-winning independent filmmaker. His work includes "Licensed To Kill," nominated for an Emmy this year; "Coming Out Under Fire"; "Forbidden City, U.S.A." and the Oscar-nominated "Sewing Woman." This essay is taken from the book "Hostile Climate 1999: A Report on Anti-Gay Activity," published

in November by People For the American Way Foundation. For more information on Arthur Dong, visit his website at [www.deepfocusproductions.com](http://www.deepfocusproductions.com). For information on "Hostile Climate," visit [www.HostileClimate.org](http://www.HostileClimate.org).

I was asked by a student at a recent presentation of my films: "What keeps you going after all these years?" My answer: "Anger. Anger that the world is an unfair place. Anger that after over 25 years I still need to make films that attack social injustices. And most of all, anger that any sexuality other than heterosexuality is condemned equally by all sectors of our society, regardless of race, religion, nationality, class or gender. My films are my weapon, it's what I know best."

"Coming Out Under Fire" was my first major film to probe the hypocrisy of our heterosexual-oriented society. Based on the book by Allan Bérubé, it documented the World War II origins of the military's anti-gay "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Working on the film, I learned how a branch of government, without consent from the governed, officially sanctioned the discrimination of an entire class of citizens by creating a policy that branded homosexuals as mentally ill and unfit to serve. I learned that subjective personal views were sufficient grounds to relegate an entire community into second-class citizenship, as the military did when gay soldiers were stripped of all rights, discharged, and shipped back to their hometowns -- stigmatized forever as sexual perverts.

Above all, I realized the power held by public servants and how their prejudices could lead to devastating consequences for the individual lives they were charged to protect.

Coincidentally, as we began production on our film in January 1993, President Clinton proclaimed that he would lift the ban on gays in the military. The ensuing public debate brought the issue of

homosexuality openly into the halls of Congress, and created unprecedented media headlines. Untruths spewed from politicians, ordinary citizens, and religious and community leaders alike. Suddenly it seemed as though everyone who disapproved of homosexuality felt free to unburden himself; it was open season.

This was the first time I truly understood that achieving equal footing with heterosexuals would be an uphill battle -- not only in the military, but in all the institutions that govern our daily lives. This realization was reaffirmed by the evidence that our government did not learn from the history of World War II and was blatantly perpetuating the military's distorted views a hundred fold. More detrimental than before, these ideas were being transmitted without limits to the mass public as certified fact, via modern media technology.

It was no surprise, then, that incidents of anti-gay violence saw a dramatic increase across the nation immediately after the military controversy, and continue to escalate as I write this essay.

As for myself, my first of two gay-bashing experiences occurred in 1977. My initial thought was, "Why me?" This quickly grew into the larger question: "Why does this happen at all?"

It took me 20 years to find a way to explore this inquiry: I would go to prisons and visit killers who have been convicted of murdering gay men. I would ask them directly: "Why did you do it?" This formed the basis for my film "Licensed to Kill."

As I set out to meet these prisoners, to discover what these men were made of, I did not find misfits, outcasts, fanatics or lunatics. Instead, I found a deeply disturbing reflection of American society. I saw that while individuals are responsible for their actions, individual

minds can also be nurtured and molded by social conditioning.

One killer told me he was taught by his junior high school librarian that homosexuality was wrong. Another inmate recalled how he was told that gay men were weak, and that "you could take theirs and they wouldn't put up a fight." A third murderer claimed that the Bible preaches that homosexuality was a sin worthy of death, and if that's what the Bible says, it must be true. He remembers: "They were trying to sink into our heads then when we were kids that what's written in the Bible is right."

What they represented was not the freedom and liberty that America so proudly parades. On the contrary, they illustrated the deterioration of human values to a point where respect was no longer a virtue, where moral standards were set by charismatic, powerful leaders determined to impose their deep-seated, intolerant dogma on all Americans. For these leaders -- be they national figures or small-town teachers and those in-between -- there is no compromise on moral authority.

If I could go back to the day when that student asked me to discuss the motivation for my films, I would add: "As I work on each of my projects, I find that there is much still to be done to create a world in which I can be a proud citizen. And if anger is what pushes me forward, I hope that compassion is what comes forth."

**PULL QUOTE:**

If anger is what pushes me forward, I hope that compassion is what comes forth. //

## Thanksgiving Party

*Gordon H.*

For those who missed the Thanksgiving Party, we had a great time. There were a



lot of familiar faces as well as new comers. The turnout was so good, we didn't have enough seats for everyone, sorry about that. One thing we did have plenty of was good food. The course included BBQ turkeys, ham, sushi, stuffing, mashed potatoes, cakes, and many more.

GAPSN and CRA once again out did themselves. If this is a sign of what's to come, next years will be as good, if not better. //

## GAPSN Member's AIDS Marathon Update

*Michael L.*



On October 24th, I joined approximately 3,000 other very special people raising money in the fight against AIDS by running the 24th annual United States Marine Corps Marathon in Washington D.C. Girl, let me tell ya—it sure wasn't easy! My body wasn't used to running 26-plus miles in the low-30s temperature, and my muscles were starting to cramp around mile 15. Let's just say that I

struggled from mile 20 onward. But along the way, we got hundreds of spectators cheering us on, telling us what a great job we were doing. The experience of running by those timeless monuments, statues,

and buildings at the Capitol sure were amazing. And oh, running side by side with those hot Marines sure got my buns going! When I finally crossed that finish line—feelings of relief and joy overwhelmed me. All those months of training, all those Saturday mornings of running at 5:00 a.m. had finally paid off! Even though my night life has suffered, looking back, it was well worth it! Thank you, to those who supported me these past six months, and for having faith in me. Together, we've made a real difference in the lives of those affected by HIV/AIDS. Peace. //

## Holiday Ice-Skating Party

*Announcement*

**The Los Angeles Blades Ice Hockey Club Announces Holiday Ice Skating Party**

## *Anti-Korean Incidents*

I have to apologize. You have no idea who I am or why I'm writing you. My name is PJ Kim and I'm a junior at Princeton. The reason I'm contacting you is because I'm trying to mobilize people from PA, NJ and NY to attend a rally at Palisades Park, NJ, this coming Tuesday from 12-2 PM, Nov. 23 to protest anti-Korean incidents that have occurred. Below is a background e-mail that I hope can be forwarded out to a membership list. If we learned anything from the LA Riots, it's that we as Asian Americans need to take a stand and be heard. This one of those few times when not only Asian Americans but Americans of all different origins can take a stand and definitively claim this country as our own. Please call me at 609 258 8418 or respond directly to this e-mail if you have any questions. Thank you very much. -PJ Kim

"KOREANS GO HOME" "NO MORE KOREANS." Believe it or not, that's what a white middle aged man wrote in graffiti on the window of a Korean-American owned computer store in Palisades Park, New Jersey (about half an hour from NYC). He was caught on surveillance camera. This and other acts of vandalism and graffiti occurred on the night of October 20, 1999 after a contentious town hall meeting between Korean American businessmen and the town's residents.

A little bit of background on the town: 15,000 residents, about 5000 of whom are Korean Americans. Mostly a residential town, except for a few commercial strips, 90% of the businesses are owned by Korean Americans, and they contribute 21 of the town's 42 million dollars in tax revenue.

The Democratic Mayor and town council have had a history of hostility and discrimination towards the Korean Americans in Palisades Park (for more detailed information, go to the Palisades Park Chamber of Commerce Website at <http://www.ppchamber.com/english/cvright/menu.html> and examine the links). The town passed an ordinance that shut down all business in town at a certain hour because of "complaints that unruly Korean American patrons were loud, aggressive and urinating in public after coming out of Korean restaurants and karaoke bars. There was one exception made for an "American Style Diner".

The Korean American merchants challenged this in court and won. Some facts that came out during the trial: There were no citations of any Korean Americans urinating in public, but there were citations for patrons of the "American Style Diner" that was allowed to stay open. There were also numerous citations for public disturbance given to non-Korean patrons of the town's non-Korean owned establishments. After the court victory, Mayor Sandy Farber asked the Korean American merchants why they didn't just give him "the finger" instead of publicly protesting his discriminatory policies. The mayor of this American Town in the 21st Century then proceeded to demonstrate to the merchants exactly what he meant by "the finger."

During the town hall meeting on the 20th, several angry residents told the Korean Americans to "Go back to your country!" and "You Koreans should not live here," among other disparaging comments. The graffiti and vandalism occurred shortly after the meeting. When this was reported in the local media, the mayor shrugged and basically said, "what's the big deal?" He continues to portray this debate as a "local" issue that's about greedy merchants who want to keep their stores and restaurants open 24 hours a day. If that were true, the graffiti would have said "Go Home Karaoke Bars" or "No More Stores Open Late at Night!" But instead, this local dispute has shown the town's true racist colors. So why should you care?

Because this mayor and other people like him across the US continue to think they can get away with this. They think that no one is paying attention to the abuses and discrimination suffered by people who have no voice. I hope you all realize by now that it doesn't matter if you're Korean American or not for this issue to strike a chord. The mayor, the council, and the bigots in that town would be just as willing to treat you or anyone else who was different from them in the same way if they thought they could get away with it. As responsible, conscientious Americans we have an obligation to speak out and call attention to outrageous situations when we see them. As Dr. King said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

College students from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York and the Palisades Park Chamber of Commerce are holding a rally on Tuesday, November 23, 1999 from 12-2 PM. We need people from all different backgrounds to be there. It is important to show

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*Continued from Page 6: Anti-Korean Incidents*

the Mayor and the town that Americans from all over the country and know what is going on in Palisades Park. I know this e-mail is ridiculously long, but I wouldn't be bothering you if I didn't think it was important. It's 1999. Let's make this happen.

Yours,

PJ Kim

609 258 8418 [jhkim@princeton.edu](mailto:jhkim@princeton.edu)

*Continued from Page 5: Holiday Ice-Skating Party*

The Southern California Blades Ice Hockey team will be hosting their annual holiday ice skating party and fundraiser on Saturday night, December 4 from 10PM to 12:30AM at it's traditional location, Pickwick Ice Arena, 1001 Riverside Drive, Burbank (between Buena Vista and Victory exits off the 134 freeway).

Everyone is welcome to come on out and skate with the men and Blades Ice Hockey Team Announces Upcoming Ice Skating Party women from the SOCAL Blades ice hockey teams, even if you never ice skated before.

Admission is \$10, which includes ice skate rental, food, beverages and the icy hot and fun music to skate to by master D.J. Gregg. For more information regarding the Blades, the skate party, directions, game schedules, or joining one of the novice, intermediate or advanced teams, check out their website at [www.Bladeshockey.com](http://www.Bladeshockey.com) or call the Blades Voicemail/hotline at (310) 288-3632. //

Thank You



Hey G-Man,

I would like to thank you so much for your November column dedicated to me, Hopelessly Romantic. I appreciate your insight about relationships and sexuality.

My boyfriend may or may not be that "ONE in my life", but what I have experienced was as wonderful as I had dreamed in my fantasy. I believe what it boils down to, is that it was the right time and with the right person. I'm really sorry to hear that there are people who were not happy with their first time. I hope their experiences thereafter, was as great as they hoped.

I was sad to hear about relationships not lasting a lifetime. I guess since over 50% of marriages don't last, why would a gay relationship last? I will not loose hope in my fantasy of a lifetime relationship. If anything, I will prove to you that one does exist. Thank you again for your insightful article.

Hopelessly Romantic



Come celebrate the last millennium holiday of this century with GAPSIN on December 18 at Pei-Chi's house.

# Contact Information

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InformAsian is a monthly newsletter for the members & supporters of the Gay Asian Pacific Support Network (GAPSN). Publication of any person's name and/or photographs is not to be construed as an indication of sexual orientation. Opinions expressed are those of the contributor and are not presented as the views of InformAsian, its editor, or GAPSN. First name and last name by initial are printed unless otherwise instructed.

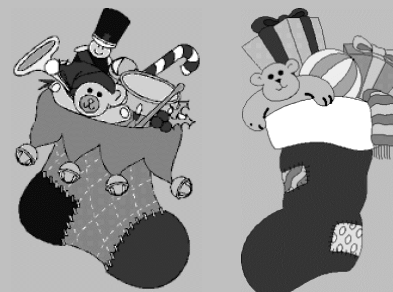
Annual membership fees for general and supporting members are: Single \$24.00, Couple \$40.00, Student \$25.00. There will be a \$12.00 charge for overseas postage. Checks (US funds, no cash) to be made payable to GAPSN. Send to:

GAPSN Membership  
P.O. Box 461104  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
(213) 368- 6488

The mission of GAPSN is to provide supportive environments for gay and bisexual Asian Pacific Islander men to meet, network, voice concerns, foster self-empowerment, and to advocate on issues of significance to the gay API community.



## This Month's Events



●December 11, Saturday  
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM, East West  
Players, 244 S. San Pedro St. #301,  
Los Angeles, CA 90012, (213) 625-  
7000

**Alec Mapa**

Pointless is Alec's new show, if you thought his other shows were hilarious, come see his new show. For more information call Howard Yao. (626) 527-5050

●December 18, Saturday  
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM, Pei-Chi's Place  
**Holiday Event**

We are having a GAPSN potluck Holiday Event evening of fun conversation and camaraderie. Please bring a \$5 gift for our gift exchange. Come celebrate the holiday with your other family. For more information call Pei. (310) 888-RICE.

## January Event

●January 8, 2000, Saturday  
Westin Bonaventure Hotel, 404 S.  
Flower St, Los Angeles, CA 90071  
**GAPSN 2000: 15 Years of Pride**

GAPSN is proud to celebrate our 15 year anniversary with a retrospective celebrating our prideful past and powerful future. Come join us! For more information call Pei. (310) 888-RICE.



