

## Pacific Bridge Awards



GAPSN 2000, Installation Dinner & Pacific Bridge Awards

by Patrick Mangto

Save January 13, 2001, as GAPSN is throwing one of the biggest parties to welcome 2001 with Pacific Bridge Awards!

This year, GAPSN is honoring Women in the Asian / Pacific Islander (API) or lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) community, who have done wonderful work to further the API or the API

LGBT cause.

The Pacific Bridge Awards this year will be held at the extravagant El Rey Theater on Saturday, January 13th 2001. The recipients promise to be some of the most recognizable in the community. Add some stunning performers to the mix, and you have an evening to remember...

Check your mailbox for an invite!

## GAPSN Monthly Rap

**There will be no rap this month.**

## Netherlands registered Same-sex Partnership

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) -- The Netherlands, long among the gay rights vanguard, enacted a bill converting the country's registered same-sex partnerships " into full-fledged marriages, complete with divorce guidelines and wider adoption rights for gays.

Proponents say the legislation will give Dutch gays rights beyond those offered in any other country.

Lawmakers thumped their desks in approval when the vote passed 109-33, and some of the scores of witnesses in the packed public gallery applauded and embraced.

Parliament had discussed the bill last week, when only a few small Christian parties voiced opposition during an emotional and often heated three-day debate. It gained speedy approval Tuesday.

I'm very happy. What happened today represents changes in our society," said Mark Wagenbuur, 34. He said he and his partner, who came with him to watch the vote, will now formally wed, but their immediate problem is we don't know who should ask whom."

In Norway and Sweden, gay couples can already register their partnerships and Denmark has gone a step further -- it was

the first country to allow gay marriages in 1989. Two years ago, the Netherlands enacted a law allowing same-sex couples to register as partners and to claim pensions, social security and inheritance.

But the new Dutch legislation goes farther, creating full equality for gays, activists said.

Same-sex couples will be able to marry at city hall and adopt Dutch children. They will be able to divorce through the court system, like heterosexual couples.

Boris Dittrich, a member of the centrist

*continued on page 3*

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## **GAPSN**

### **Mission Statement**

The Gay Asian Pacific Support Network is dedicated to providing supportive environments for gay and bisexual Asian/Pacific Islander men to meet, network, voice concerns, foster self-empowerment, and advocate on issues of significance to the gay API community.

## **Chair's Message**

Its already October 2000 and it seems just yesterday that this board started its tenure. GAPSN has had an outstanding year. GAPSN this year has been involved in many firsts, the least of which was our first grant from Liberty Hill. This was followed by another grant from the Asian Pacific Islander Wellness Center. GAPSN is currently in the process of creating coming out material in 7 different API languages and we are also formulating a LGBT tolerance project aimed at the mainstream API community.

Next year, the Pacific Bridge Awards (PBA) are going to be spectacular! GAPSN is going to present the PBA to Women of Color, who have been instrumental in furthering the API or API LGBT cause, the PBA will be held on Saturday, Jan 13, 2001, at the El Rey Theater. We had a record crowd last year, and this year plans to be bigger and better.

GAPSN has been around now for over 15 years and has evolved throughout its history. In the very beginning, we were known as GARP before we became GAPSN. People and organizations change, and GAPSN is not exception. As we head towards the end of this year, the board and the active membership need to engage in a conversation about the future of GAPSN and where it is headed.

In the next few weeks, all GAPSN members will receive a letter highlighting some of the issues about where GAPSN is and where GAPSN may be headed. Don't worry, we're not going away. We remain committed to serving the API LGBT community. We are seeking to actively engage our members as GAPSN metamorphasizes to better address the needs of the community.

**Until then,  
Pat and Pei**

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Democrats 66 party and a proponent of the plan, said the law acknowledges that a person's sex is not of importance for marriage." He spoke during what he called the most moving debate" of his parliamentary career.

We will be able to call it what it is and that's marriage," said Henk Krol, an activist and editor-in-chief of the Gay Krant magazine. He said the vote will be an absolute first in the world."

The law is expected to take effect early next year. Krol said he plans to convert his own partnership status to marriage as soon as it does.

Displaying unusual solidarity, all three parliamentary factions in the governing coalition -- the left-of-center Labor Party, the Liberal VVD and the smaller Democrats 66 -- backed the proposal. Even a few members of the biggest opposition party, the largely traditional Christian Democratic Alliance, or CDA, have expressed support.

The plan hasn't been recognized by the dominant Protestant or Roman Catholic

churches, but a few breakaway churches have sent encouraging letters to legislators.

The Remonstrant Brethren, which broke from the Protestant church in 1619, was one step ahead of the Dutch parliament, having accepted gay marriages in 1986. The Remonstrants and a group called the Old Catholic Church are the best-known supporters of gay rights here.

While gays will enjoy new liberties in the Netherlands, they may run into trouble when they travel in countries where homosexuality remains illegal. The Foreign Affairs Ministry has proposed offering legal assistance to Dutch citizens in such cases.

Some opponents fear the unique position of gays could isolate the Dutch and set the Netherlands apart.

The bill will create a world without foundations ... where the historical understanding of marriage is torn from its roots," said Kees van der Straaij of the Reformed Political Party.

## Taipei's Pride Festival Gets Formal Presidential Recognition

*by PlanetOut.com*

Taipei, Taiwan held its first large-scale gay and lesbian pride festival, Taipei 2000, with support from not only Mayor Ma Ying-Jiou but from President of the Republic of China Chen Shui-bian. The President held a private meeting September 4 with guest speakers Michael Bronski and Nan Hunter of the U.S. and local activists, the first time in the nation's history that a sitting president has met with gay and lesbian activists. Chen accepted gifts of a rainbow flag and a rainbow pin, and his secretary-general promised that was more than just symbolism; Chen views homosexuality as neither sin nor illness and looks to public education to help bring full equality to gays and lesbians.

Mayor Ma's message to the September 2 - 4 festival, sponsored in part by the City of Taipei, said, "Gays and lesbians should not be given special rights, but they deserve equal rights like other people." True to its mission of increasing understanding and acceptance, for the occasion the city's Bureau of Civil Affairs published pamphlets describing homosexuality as based in biology and summarizing gay history and culture. Citizens turned out by the thousands for events including a cross-dressing dance, a book fair and a September 3 International Lesbian and Gay Forum on civil rights. Design and art shows, a gay history display, vendor and information booths, and live music performances were also staged at the Warners Village Square movie center near Taipei City Hall.

But there was also notable protest. Fifteen Christian groups signed off on a letter published September 2 denouncing gays and lesbians as sinners and the festival as a source of corruption. One informal source reported that more than fifty groups had signed on to another letter of

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## STD In The News

*by Michael Lou*

### "Sex Clients Shun HIV Tests"

South China Morning Post

(www.scmp.com) (08/31/00) P. 7; So, Antoine

A survey by the Chinese University in Hong Kong interviewed 252 heterosexual men and 85 gay men ages 18 to 60 who visited prostitutes within the previous six months. The survey found that only 41 of the heterosexual men and 13 of the gay men had been tested for HIV. Nearly one-third of the men who had not yet been tested said they were afraid of receiving a positive result.

### "India's Billion Plus Population

Vulnerable to AIDS Threat: WHO"

Agence France Presse (www.afp.com) (09/05/00)

The director general of the World Health Organization (WHO), Gro Harlem Brundtland, said Tuesday that with continued growth in the base number of infections, India is increasingly vulnerable to HIV. "Although India and the South Asian region are not hit to the same extent as African countries, the curse is unfolding and millions of people are at risk," Brundtland said, emphasizing the need to use condoms. Over 3.5 million Indians have been infected with HIV, according to official Indian statistics. India's Health Minister C.P. Thakur said the government is taking preventive measures. Thakur also noted that a reduction in drug prices for AIDS would help a program to prevent vertical HIV transmission.

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protest through September 1, with more continuing to join in.

Gay and lesbian issues have gone largely unnoticed in Taiwan. While there are no sodomy laws, there are also no laws explicitly against discrimination; homosexuality just hadn't been in the legal code at all until the recent recognition of criminal sexual assaults by a perpetrator against a victim of the same gender. But Gender/Sexuality Rights Association secretary-general Wang Ping told the Taipei Times that, "Society as a whole still sees homosexuality as something dirty," and families are still likely to reject children they learn are lesbians or gays. Jan Jin-yen founded the Taiwan Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Association in hopes of developing momentum for collective action, but Wang Ping says that at this time most gays and lesbians are more concerned with their personal lives, particularly finding a partner when so many remain closeted.

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## Taiwan's Most Venerable Drag Show

*By Yu Sen-lun*

Taiwan's most venerable drag show and party turns six years old and @live is putting on a birthday party where the divas will be queening it over clubbers shaking in the throes of Latin fever

Gay life and drag shows may be less visible in Taiwan than in the West, but the 'scene' has long been simmering in the background. Taipei's original and largest gay party -- Paradise -- is celebrating its sixth anniversary tonight at @live discotheque. And according to organizer Victor Cheng, the queens at Paradise are just as glamorous and bitchy as those elsewhere.

The Paradise party has taken place every month at @live over the last five years, and has never failed to attract the crowds. Parties rarely bring in fewer than 800 clubbers to enjoy the night of hedonism. In effect, Paradise has become a well-established 'friendly space' for a mixed

crowd of gay and straight people to explore Taiwan's gay culture.

The theme for the party is Latin Fever featuring DJs Jimmy, Timixer and Victor spinning the disks and with a live performance on conga to compliment the music. Apart from Latin pop such as Ricky Martin, Jennifer Lopez and Christina, there will also be music from Deep House, Tribal and Techno. But the main draw is definitely the Paradise drag show, which will start around midnight. Drag queen Lulu, Amuro and Wayne will be performing Jennifer Lopez's "Let's Get Loud" and Toni Braxton's "Spanish Guitar" among others favorites.

Female impersonators have a long history in Chinese and Taiwanese performing arts such as Beijing operas and Chinese cabaret. But drag that stems from the Western gay culture has only emerged over the last 10 years. And the shows at Paradise definitely are in the western tradition. "We like more trendy stuff, shows that appeal to young people," says Cheng. In 1994, Victor Cheng organized the first gay/drag party at the now defunct club called Underground. Since then, Cheng's drag performers have come to excel at impersonating black divas of the 1970s.

Cheng says the style at Paradise is quite different from that of the Hung-ting Artists, a relatively well-known troupe specializing in drag. Hung-ting is led by variety show host and comedian Tsai Tou. In the early 1990s, the troupe was a professional song and dance ensemble with dozens of members with big audiences in Southern Taiwan and Japan. A major attraction of Hung-ting performances was their imitations of various female singers on the Chinese pop charts.

Another drag show group active in Taiwan is the Snow White Variety Show, which is a led theater graduate of the National Institute of Arts. Snow White is best known for its use of high camp and its use of earthy Taiwanese slang in its risqué comedy routines. Snow White performs regularly at gay rights events.

"But I think the attraction of drag shows is not about how good the imitations are, nor is it about how feminine the perform-

ers can be," says Cheng. He says his "queens" all have strong personalities. "They are tough, mean, bitchy and charismatic women, and this is displayed in different ways," he says. The show includes parodies of Danny and Marie Osmond's cheezy singing and of Whitney Houston's vibrato, which have had audiences rolling in the aisles. And the queens love to satirize 1970s local singers like Fung Fei-fei and Lee Pei-ching, according to Cheng.

As one of the pioneers of local gay parties and drag shows, Cheng says there is room for non-gay audience to improve their ability to appreciate drag shows. "People still notice the muscles and other male characteristics of the performers, and think these are flaws in the performance. Few of them focus on the creativity and dramatic style of the shows," he says. "So as a DJ I always ask people to leave if they think they're not open enough for such shows," he says.

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## Queer and Asian Pacific American Writing Workshop

*by Eric Reyes*

A Queer and Asian Pacific American Writing Workshop - Short Fiction  
Whether it is the language of desire, the families we create, or the happiness we seek, what we write and read as Queer and Asian Pacific Americans reflect the central paradox of being of many worlds at once. As lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders, or gay men, we are also Asian Pacific Americans from different places with conflicting histories of colonialism, war, immigration, and transnationalism. Each one of us has a vision of this paradox of multiple marginalization and we are offering these workshops to help us share these visions with ourselves and our communities. So if you write, have written, or simply want to experience a social writing process, join us in what we hope will be a series of longer workshops focusing on different themes and writing forms. This first workshop focuses upon the short story and autobiographical/biographical writing

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forms. Participants will learn how to develop a concept into a written piece of approximately 50 pages. The workshop will not address poetry, play/screenwriting, or novel writing. We hope to cover these in future workshops. By the end of the workshop, you will have a working draft of your short fiction.

Please contact us ASAP as space is limited.

Requirements: There are no formal prerequisites. However, participants are asked to commit to attending all the sessions and submit a writing sample prior to the first meeting.

Cost: \$50 (sliding scale)

Date/Time: The first three Sundays in Nov.: Nov 5, 12, 19 from 1-5 PM

Location: The Village, Room TBA

Instructor: Chen Lin, MFA in Creative Writing, USC

Contact Person: Eric Reyes, best by email [gapsn@yahoo.com](mailto:gapsn@yahoo.com) with "writing workshop" in header, or, 323-251-3331.

Please note that GASPn reserves the right to cancel or alter the schedule of the workshops. In the event that a minimum number of participants have signed up 5 days before the first meeting, the workshop will be cancelled and all funds returned.

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## Thai Cops Raid Gay Sauna

*by PlanetOut News Staff*

Thailand's concerns about child prostitution and sex tourism led to a raid by police -- and TV camera crews -- on a gay birthday party at a men's sauna in Bangkok on the evening of August 28. Police found nothing illegal going on, however, and the British national whose birthday it was insists there was no one present under age 18.

The raid followed a tip from children's rights activist Paveena Hongsakul, a Chart Pattana party Member of Parliament, who also alerted the media. She may have been informed by a local

gay man miffed at not being invited to the lavish affair. An unnamed party guest told *The Scotsman* that, "We believe the false allegation that under aged boys were to be found on the premises was made by a man who did not receive an invitation and had a gay tantrum."

The gathering at the Colony Sauna was to celebrate the birthday of John Richard Duffy, 54, a British national working as an economic advisor in Laos who was vacationing in Thailand. Police, who arrived with Immigration Bureau and Children's Welfare Protection Division officials, said they found about 100 foreigners partying with 27 Thais ages 10 to 16 years, most naked and some engaged in "necking." Police took some of the foreigners and all of the Thais to the Thong Lor police station for questioning and then released everyone except the Colony's manager Nikorn Nianthong and Duffy. They were both arrested and later released on bail. Duffy's bail was set 10,000 pounds for a charge of organizing an "immoral sex party," although he later told reporters that others had organized the party as a surprise for him.

Duffy told *The Scotsman* that, "There were no boys there. All the Thai 'boy' guests were over 18. It was a private party between consenting adults."

Police Major Theeravut Pimpisai solemnly told the *Bangkok Post* that, "If police had gone in later than they did, many more would have been arrested for prostitution," but that as it was no one else had done anything illegal. Although prostitution and procurement are crimes in Thailand, consensual homosexual acts are not, and homosexual acts with minors are charged as molestation and physical assault.

The *Bangkok Post* noted that police had raided a gay party at a bar in Silom on August 18, arresting a French national and more than twenty young Thais. The Thai *Rath* newspaper's sensationalized coverage of the Colony raid headlined "Twisted English gentlemen set up party and gang-raped children in high society district," said that guests had been "flown in from England for a perverted feast on Thai boys" aged 10 to 18 years.

## GAPSNite Does Chicago Marathon

*by Michael Lou*



Wow! Time sure flies! Before we know it, October is already here and 2001 is almost around the corner. For me, October is a time to catch those beautiful orange leaves, a time for self-reflection, and for: another marathon? I had a great time running last year's D.C. Marathon, but I have to admit that it also took a lot out of me. I decided to take a little break this year (did only one: the L.A. Marathon), and was able to regain my social and night life back.

One of my co-workers joined the AIDS Marathon Program earlier this year, and unfortunately she decided to drop out. She asked me if I could take her place and run the Chicago Marathon. This is one of those proposals in life that I just can't resist. I agreed and ta-da! That's where I will be heading during the weekend of the weekend of October 20th-22nd. I am very excited about this, but at the same time, I am quite nervous, since I recently injured my left foot (yes, it hurts!). Any good (and cute) masseurs you'd recommend? Well, let me know soon! And just in case I don't make it back alive, I just want to thank my friends and those who have been supportive of me along this journey.

Again, I am dedicating this run to those men, women, and children affected HIV/AIDS. Peace.

## Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund 2000 FALL INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), founded in 1974, protects and promotes the civil rights of Asian Americans through litigation, legal advocacy, and community education. Our current program areas include immigration, workers' rights, employment discrimination, anti-Asian violence and police misconduct, voting rights and civic participation, census, language rights, and affirmative action. AALDEF counsels low-income and immigrant Asian Americans at free legal clinics, provides support and legal training workshops for community workers, and conducts community education and outreach. Our ten person staff includes six attorneys, who are assisted by many volunteer attorneys, student interns and community workers. AALDEF is seeking undergraduate, graduate and law school interns for the following projects:

### DEMOCRACY PROJECT

#### Presidential Exit Poll

For the past eleven years, AALDEF has coordinated exit polls in every major election to discern vital political characteristics and voting patterns about the Asian American community, in a time when major voter news services and politicians routinely overlook Asian Americans. We seek an intern to coordinate volunteers and other logistics to execute the East Coast's largest exit poll of Asian Americans. For more information, contact Glenn Magpantay at [gmagpantay@aaldef.org](mailto:gmagpantay@aaldef.org).

#### Monitoring Elections

AALDEF regularly monitors elections to ensure Asian Americans are treated fairly at the polls, document instances of anti-Asian voter discrimination, and ensure compliance with Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, which mandates the availability of bilingual ballots and voting materials. We seek an intern to coordinate Election Day monitoring and compile a summary of problems in this year's elections. For more information, contact [gmagpantay@aaldef.org](mailto:gmagpantay@aaldef.org).

#### Legal Research and Writing in Voting Rights Law

New York has the second largest Asian American population in the nation, yet none have ever been elected to City Council, State Legislature or Congress, notwithstanding a population over 800,000. AALDEF is preparing for next year when the local and state legislatures across the country redraw the boundaries of voting districts. Research is needed on the political and legal history of Asian American voter discrimination, political disenfranchisement, and the Voting Rights Act. For more information, contact [gmagpantay@aaldef.org](mailto:gmagpantay@aaldef.org).

### SOUTH ASIAN WORKERS' RIGHTS PROJECT

The South Asian Workers' Rights Project (SAWRP) provides legal assistance and conducts community education on workers' rights for the Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities.

#### Construction Worker Outreach

This project seeks to improve the conditions of South Asian construction workers in Richmond Hills, Queens, many of whom are Sikhs. We seek interns who speak and/or write Punjabi to assist in going to construction sites to speak to construction workers, organize meetings and house visits to workers' homes, develop and translate educational materials, coordinate legal rights workshops in the Sikh community and serve as translators for our clients. For more information, contact Chaumtoli Huq at [chuq@aaldef.org](mailto:chuq@aaldef.org).

#### Workers' Rights Clinic

The Workers' Right Clinic, a community based legal clinic, provides legal information and advice on employment-related matters. This free legal clinic is held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 5 pm to 7 pm. We seek interns to assist with client intake and conduct community education and outreach to South Asians in Elmhurst, Norwood, Coney Island, Astoria, and Jackson Heights neighborhoods in Queens. Training will be provided. For more information, contact [chuq@aaldef.org](mailto:chuq@aaldef.org).

### OFFICE ASSISTANTS

Responsibilities include answering phones, doing mailings, data entry, and performing general clerical duties. Other responsibilities include providing support for community education projects and acting as interpreter/translator. We seek to hire 2 work-study students, with one position requiring bilingual ability in English/Chinese. For more information, contact Lillian Ling at [liling@aaldef.org](mailto:liling@aaldef.org). The Fall Internship Program begins on September. Bilingual ability and community experience are desirable but not required. Students with work study or those eligible for academic credit are urged to apply. These internships are not paid positions. For more information, contact the email address listed after each project. Interested applicants should send a resume and cover letter as soon as possible to:

#### Internship Program

Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund  
99 Hudson Street, 12th floor  
New York, New York 10013  
fax: 212.966.4303  
email: [info@aaldef.org](mailto:info@aaldef.org)

Glenn D. Magpantay  
[gmagpantay@aaldef.org](mailto:gmagpantay@aaldef.org)

# PRESS OFFICE

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Contact: Nancy Singer (202) 205-6740

Release Number: 00-84

Internet Address: [www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html](http://www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html)

## SBA EXPANDS OUTREACH, CREATES CHINESE, JAPANESE WEB SITE OFFERING SMALL BUSINESS TOOLS TO ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICANS

WASHINGTON - Asian-Pacific Americans may now get business counseling in Chinese and Japanese from the Online Women's Business Center, a free interactive Web site offering useful tools to women who want to start or grow a business, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) announced today.

"The SBA works to give full access to its programs and services to all Americans, especially minorities and women," SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez said. "One of our goals is to give these small businesses access to state-of-the-art tools that respond to their specific needs. Today Chinese and Japanese women will gain access to powerful information at the click of a mouse."

The Online Women's Business Center - at [www.onlinewbc.org](http://www.onlinewbc.org) provides information about business principles and practices, management techniques, networking, industry news, market research, technology training, and information about SBA programs and services. Its special features include interactive mentoring, individual counseling, topic forums, and newsgroups. It is also available in Spanish and Russian.

Asian-Pacific American entrepreneurs will also discover the SBA's programs and services through the signing of outreach agreements today between the SBA and five national Asian-Pacific American organizations.

"SBA's partnership with these five organizations - each representing an important sector of the Asian-Pacific American community - is an important show of commitment on the part of the agency," Administrator Alvarez said. "In line with the goals of the Clinton-Gore Administration, we want to do our part in helping to ensure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from a strong U.S. economy."

The agreements address a Presidential Executive Order to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through more involvement in federal programs. They are aimed at increasing the participation of Asian-Pacific American small businesses in SBA's financial, procurement, technical assistance programs, and programs targeted to women entrepreneurs.

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In the effort to bring awareness about its programs and services to Asian-Pacific Americans and to boost outreach efforts to this community, the SBA signed agreements with the following organizations:

- National Coalition of Asian-Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD)
- Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA)
- National Korean American Grocers Foundation (National KAGRO)
- National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA)
- Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)

As a group, Asian-Pacific Americans have shown strong growth among the ranks of SBA customers. Since FY 1992, SBA-backed loans under the 7(a) and 504 loan programs to Asian-Pacific Americans have nearly quadrupled, from \$568.5 million in FY 1992 to more than \$2.13 billion in FY 1999.

In FY 1992, loans to Asian-Pacific Americans represented 6 percent of the loans made by the SBA, and 9 percent of the total value of those loans. In FY 1999, SBA-backed loans to Asian-Pacific Americans represented 11 percent of the loans made and a full 18 percent of the total dollars lent.

Since the start of 1993, the SBA has backed more than 33,100 loans worth more than \$11 billion in loans to Asian-Pacific American businesses.

This set of signings follows SBA's initiative earlier this year when agreements with five other Asian-Pacific American organizations were signed.

Additional information about SBA's programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov/> or by calling the SBA's Answer Desk at 1-800 U ASK SBA. Subscribe Online and get SBA News Releases by e-mail! Visit

[www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html](http://www.sba.gov/news/indexheadline.html)

# 'MY LIFE HAS BEEN SAD'

by *Asiaweek.com*

PEECO - AS HE is known to the whole of Japan - is a leading television commentator on fashion and film. The 53-year-old also writes on society and music. He talked with Asiaweek Contributor Suvendrini Kakuchi about being a homosexual in a convention-bound society like Japan.

What made you decide to openly declare your homosexuality?

I decided to reveal myself about 20 years ago, just when I was slowly becoming known as a fashion commentator on television and on the radio. I have a twin brother who is also gay and involved in the fashion scene, and we were known as a pair with talent and promise. You know, everyone kind of already guessed we were homosexual because he and I spoke like Japanese women do - using words and phrases and mannerisms that are reserved for the fair sex. So I thought, yes, why not be open about myself. There is nothing to hide.

My coming out was an important landmark in the gay world because up to then the image of gay men was as transvestites - beautiful men in beautiful clothes. Now, for the first time, here was a very ordinary-looking man telling the

Japanese people he is really a man who loves other men. But things changed for me after that. For the first time I faced direct discrimination. I was hurt deeply when I was not asked to do commercials or become a host on television programs. When I asked why, directors told me sponsoring companies didn't want a gay person associated with their products as the image of homosexuals is ugly. Mainstream newspapers also shunned me.

What is your personal life like these days?

I live alone and sometimes I am very lonely. Being gay is not easy in any society, I think. The men I have fallen in love with have been straight and, of course, the affairs - if you can call them that - have been platonic. This is not to say that I have not experienced sex. But life has been very sad. The man I am in love with now is 20 years younger than me and is straight. He has just got married. So again I must accept that. We meet sometimes and, because I am richer than he is, I take him to nice restaurants or buy him clothes. He calls me often and that gives me a lot of pleasure. But that is all. I lost my left eye to cancer seven years ago, and that experience has affected me deeply. I am happy with the small things in life now. I do not crave for money, clothes or fame any more. I have learnt that life is about being happy with your soul.

## GAPSN Message Boards

GAPSN's message boards are now open. If you have something (or someone) to sell, or if you would like to make an announcement to GAPSN membership, GAPSN will have new message boards open starting next month in our monthly newsletter. Just e-mail your messages to Gordon at [ghara@asianhome.net](mailto:ghara@asianhome.net) or mail them to our mailbox. All senders are kept in confidence unless noted otherwise.

InformAsian is a monthly newsletter for the members and 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 (U.S. funds, no cash) to be made payable to GAPSN. Send to:

### GAPSN Membership

P.O. Box 461104  
Los Angeles, CA 90046  
(213) 368-6488  
[gapsn@yahoo.com](mailto:gapsn@yahoo.com)

## Upcoming Events

**October 15, Sunday**  
AIDS Walk Los Angeles  
Paramount Pictures  
5555 Melrose Ave  
Los Angeles, CA 90038  
(323) 466-WALK

**January 13, 2001, Saturday**  
Pacific Bridge Awards (PBA)  
El Rey Theater  
5515 Wilshire Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90036

## Queer Fiction Reading Group

by *Eric Reyes*

Anyone interested in meeting on a regular basis to reread and discuss Queer Fiction? The short stories and novels would be GAM focused, but not necessarily exclusive. We can discuss a range of texts that we will read and discuss. Contact Eric at [gapsn@yahoo.com](mailto:gapsn@yahoo.com), by email with "reading group" as a subject.