

# L A A P I S

VOLUME ONE NUMBER EIGHT • MAY 1994

## Violence in API Lesbian Relationships?

by Unhei Kang

In March, 1994, Los Angeles Asian and Pacific Islander Sisters (LAAPIS) was asked to host a workshop for the Center for the Pacific-Asian Family (CPAF), a shelter for Asian and Pacific Islander (API) women and their children. The request was to have an API lesbian and bisexual women's sensitivity panel, as well as to provide education about violence in API lesbian relationships. LAAPIS was specifically called upon because CPAF had been receiving phone calls from API lesbian in violent relationships who were seeking assistance.

According to Barry Levy, abusive relationships usually consist of: "Verbal and emotional abuse... with or without physical or sexual violence. The abuse is alternated with devotion, love, and often passionate sex. The abuser controls his or her partner with jealousy, obsessiveness and suicide threats as well as with physical and verbal violence."

This is also true within lesbian relationships. Though the lesbian community has denied the existence of violence in the community for years, the fact remains that lesbians do batter other lesbians emotionally and physically. Only in recent years has this been recognized and some services been offered to lesbians and bisexual women in same-sex female relationships.

Denial existed in the community for a variety of reasons. First, there is a desire to keep up the image of lesbian communities as being egalitarian and violent-free as these images have been used in the past to hold up same-sex female relationships as being positive. Second, because role models are often lacking, there is a feeling of confusion on what a healthy lesbian relationship should be like, therefore if violence occurs in the relationship, this may be considered part of the norm. Third, lesbians may be lacking in support systems, for example, if they are still "in the closet", therefore unable to seek help and disclose their status.

However, women can and do batter

other women. It can be a five feet woman battering her taller partner, it can be a "femme" battering her "butch" lover. Battering is not limited by gender, physical appearance, or any other attributes. If a woman is abusing her partner emotionally and/or physically, it is considered battering.

Though it may be hard to leave a violent relationship, it is important for women to recognize it and seek help. It is also important for the lesbian and bisexual women community-at-large to recognize it, accept that women do batter other women, and provide assistance.

In June, 1994 a tentative schedule has been set for Julie Lee, a Rape Education Outreach Worker from CPAF to come and discuss domestic violence in the API community, as well as to provide resources. I hope you will all be able to attend, be educated and let it be recognized that violent relationships within the API lesbian and bisexual women do exist.

To contact the Center for Pacific Asian Family call (213) 653-4045 or for more information, contact Unhei at (213) 353-6014. ▼

### References

Levy, Barry (Ed.) (1991). *Dating Violence: Young Women in Danger*. Seattle: The Seal Press.

## Lesbian Visibility Week

Lesbian Visibility Week is scheduled for Sunday, July 17 through Saturday, July 23. LAAPIS is planning a workshop to be held on Saturday, July 23 from 6 to 8 pm at West Hollywood's Plummer Park in the Multipurpose Room. The workshop is titled "LAAPIS: Building a Sisterhood". Speakers are needed for this workshop. If you are interested in speaking on the panel or if you have any ideas/issues for the panel to address, please contact Shella Aguilar at (213) 483-8638 before May 8. We welcome any ideas you would like to share.

## Asian Rap Groups

at the LA Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center

The LA Gay and Lesbian Community Services Center Community Outreach and Education Department (COED) are in the process of starting an Asian and Pacific Islander rap group. The raps are intended to provide a "safe API space" for lesbian and bisexual APIs to discuss issues. Currently, there is one API woman willing to facilitate the groups. However, more facilitators are needed to keep the process growing. The rap groups are tentatively planned to begin sometime in June. For more information about the raps and other services available at COED, contact Angela Allen at (213) 993-7433.



**We Need  
Facilitators!  
Volunteers  
Please Call:  
(213) 993-7433**



# HIV SEROPREVALENCE AND RISK BEHAVIORS AMONG LESBIANS AND BISEXUAL WOMEN: 1993 SAN FRANCISCO/BERKELEY WOMEN'S SURVEY

This summary presents the findings of a survey of 498 lesbians and bisexual women 17 years of age and older who were randomly sampled at 25 locations in San Francisco and Berkeley, CA during 1993. The survey was conducted by the San Francisco Department of Public Health AIDS Office Surveillance Branch, in collaboration with the Berkeley Department of Health and Human Services and the Division of HIV/AIDS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The objectives of the Women's Survey were 1) to estimate the prevalence of HIV infection, and markers for hepatitis B virus and syphilis among women who have sex with women or with men and women, who frequent venues in San Francisco and Berkeley, CA, and who reside in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, 2) to estimate the level of risk behaviors in this population, and 3) to measure the association between HIV infection and various factors including sexual and drug histories, HIV antibody testing history, medical history, and demographic characteristics.

The study found that 1.2% of lesbians and bisexual women were infected with HIV, 5.4% had markers for hepatitis B, and 0.4% had markers indicating a history of syphilis. The prevalence of HIV infection did not differ significantly by age, race/ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

The prevalence of HIV infection in this population was more than three-fold higher than that estimated for all adult or adolescent women in San Francisco (0.35%; based on household and street-based surveys, surveys of childbearing women, clinic-based surveys, and screening of blood donors and military recruits).

Lesbians and bisexual women in this survey reported very high levels of injection drug use and unsafe sexual behaviors with male and female partners. A substantial proportion of women reported injection drug use since 1978 (10.4%), and 3.8% reported injecting drugs in the past three years. Among those reporting a history of injection drug use since 1978, 71% reported a history of sharing needles, and 31% reported sharing needles with gay/bisexual men.

Among the 405 women who reported a history of sex with men, many reported unprotected oral (56.3%) vaginal (39%) or anal (10.9%) sex with men during the past three years. Of particular concern, these women reported a high rate of unprotected oral, vaginal or anal sex with gay/bisexual men (14.6%, 9.6%, 3.2%, respectively) or with male injection drug users (6.4%, 5.2%, 1.7%, respectively) during the past three years.

Among those reporting a history of sex with women, 91.9% reported a history of unprotected oral sex, 28.8% reported unprotected sharing of "sex toys" and 25.2% reported unprotected vaginal fisting during the past three years.

Sixty-eight percent of the women reported that they had been previously tested for HIV antibody. Among the 492 HIV seronegative participants, 32.3% had not previously been tested for HIV, whereas five of the six HIV-infected women had been tested before and were aware of their infection.

The study found no clear evidence of woman-to-woman transmission among the six HIV-infected women in the survey. All of these women reported either a history of injection drug use or a history of anal or vaginal sex with men. Despite the lack of clear evidence of woman-to-woman transmission in this survey, the high rates of injection drug use and unsafe sexual behaviors with male and female partners suggests a potential for continued transmission of HIV in this population.

Previous studies released by the Department of Public Health have shown that focused prevention campaigns have been very successful in San Francisco where targeted to populations at high risk through comprehensive community-based prevention efforts. Although the rates of HIV infection among lesbian and bisexual women are currently low, these rates may rise given the high levels of risk behaviors in this population. These studies suggest that targeted prevention programs should be expanded to address the needs of lesbians and bisexual women. ▼



**AMY HILL**

*Reunion, May 5-7 8:30pm (\$10)*

Premiering the completed version, Amy transforms herself into her mother and tells the story of her arrival in Deadwood, South Dakota as a Japanese American warbride. Hill weaves into the tale the stories and myths of women through the ages who have visited our collective consciousness. Through humor and simplicity, she explores the ties that bind and celebrates the choices we make as we follow the journey life provides us.

## SUNDAY SERIES

*Purple Moon Dance Project, May 15  
7:30pm (\$10)*

San Francisco's Purple Moon Dance Project will premiere a new dance piece.

## SACRED NAKED NATURE GIRLS

*May 13, 14\* 8:30pm (\$10)*

These girls aren't naked just for fun. Join the collective of five artists on a trip through body memory, fantasy and naked space. They investigate the construction and appropriation of desire, sexuality and body image. Clothing optional.

\*LAAPIS members who are interested in going on May 14, RSVP to Teri at (310) 930-0545.



**CINDY S. LEE**

*Attorney at Law*

Is willing to work  
pro bono  
for LAAPIS members.  
For more information  
call (818) 304-2990



# 1994 Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

The celebration of the diverse Asian Pacific American community continues to evolve and flourish 16 years after Jimmy Carter first established Asian Pacific American Heritage Week. With his proclamation in 1978, President Carter nationally recognized the contributions and achievements of Asian Pacific Americans. In 1990, President George Bush extended this week long celebration by declaring the month of May as National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. The mission of Asian Pacific Heritage Month is to bring together the diverse Asian and Pacific Islander communities through a collective celebration, and to build bridges with our friends and neighbors.

The first Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Heritage Committee (LAAPAHC) was appointed in 1978 by Mayor Tom Bradley to plan activities in Los Angeles that would promote greater understanding and appreciation of the Asian Pacific American experience. With that goal in mind, the committee comprised of active community leaders, developed wide-ranging programs to reflect the richness of our heritage. That tradition continues today as current committee members plan the largest Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebration in the nation. Committee members are volunteers who donate their time and resources to support the month's activities, some of which include:

## KICK-OFF EVENT

*Family Day, Pershing Square  
Downtown Los Angeles.  
Saturday, May 7 10am to 4 pm*

This free event focuses on this year's Heritage theme, "Celebrating the Family: The Foundation of Our Future" and offers a day-long array of traditional and contemporary entertainment including song, dance, storytelling and theater.

The Los Angeles Asian and Pacific Islander Sister (LAAPIS) and the Gay Asian Support Network (GAPSN) are staffing an outreach booth during this event.

## ESSAY AND POSTER CONTEST

Students (kindergarten through high school) from school districts in the greater

Los Angeles area are encouraged to participate by submitting art work and composition illustrating this year's Heritage theme, "Celebrating the Family: The Foundation of Our Future". Winners will receive scholarships and their entries displayed at various venues throughout May. Last year, more than 200 entries were submitted representing 25 school districts in Los Angeles and Neighboring area.

## QUEER API HERITAGE: A FAMILY OF PRIDE

*Sunday, May 15 2pm to 5pm*

To celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM), the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Islander Sisters and the Gay Asian Pacific Support Network are jointly presenting a panel discussing, "Queer API Heritage: A Family of Pride". Focussing on this year's APAHM theme of "The Family", the panel of speakers will address and examine issues of culture and family as defined by lesbian, gay and bisexual Asian and Pacific Islanders (API), including gay parenting, being parents of lesbian/gay/bisexual children, coming out, the adolescent perspective, familial rejections, bisexuality, interracial relationships and community organizing and politics.

The panel presentation and discussion will be held on Sunday, May 15, 1994 from 2pm - 5pm at the Chinatown Service Center Annex located at 300 West Sunset Boulevard on the Southeast corner of Sunset and Broadway. Parking is in the fenced lot adjacent to the Annex. The event is free and open to the public.

## 16TH ANNUAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE DINNER

*Tuesday, May 24*

Mayor Richard Riordan hosts a special night culminating the month-long celebration by honoring and recognizing individuals and organizational contributions to the Asian Pacific American community. LAAPIS and GAPSN will receive an award during the dinner. Mayor Riordan will present the award to LAAPIS and GAPSN.

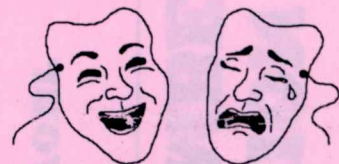
The LAAPAHM Dinner Committee is making a significant statement by

recognizing that gay and lesbian API's are part of the API community and that households headed by same-sex couples, and other gay and lesbian family substitutes can also be legitimate family units. In many cases, such family substitutes become even more vital for the emotional well-being and support of gay and lesbian API's since they frequently do not enjoy the acceptance and support of their biological families in light of the stigma and denial in Asian cultures associated with living a homosexual lifestyle.

Tickets are \$50, a special \$35 rate for honorees are pending. If anyone is interested in attending the dinner, please contact Unhei at (213) 353-6014 or Shella at (213) 483-8638 before May 10. Make check payable to SSG/LAAPAHC (Special Service for Groups' Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Heritage Committee).

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

An exciting lineup of dance, music, theater, art exhibits and more will be presented by Asian Pacific American community groups throughout the month of May. The Committee's Community Calendar publicizes many of these events, and is distributed all over the greater Los Angeles area.



All financial support for the Los Angeles Asian American Pacific Heritage Month activities are provided by corporate and private donations. This year's major corporate sponsors include AT&T and Kaiser-Permanente. All contributions are used to support committee sponsored events and are tax deductible. For more information on LA Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, please contact Naomi Kageyama at (213) 353-6050.





# ATTENTION LAAPIS MEMBERS!

**Show off your  
PRIDE  
&  
VISIBILITY.**

**Let's march together in the  
CSW Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Parade  
on Sunday, June 12, 1994.**

**For more information,  
call Unhei at (213) 353-6014.**

**To participate in pride march plans, it is important  
that you attend the May 1, LAAPIS meeting to discuss:**

- Possible parade march rehearsals
- Theme suggestion for march
- Drummer needed for march
- Discussion on staffing the festival booth for Sat. & Sun.  
We need approximately 12-24 volunteers.

**Our goal is to have 30 or more LAAPIS  
members march in the parade.  
Let's stand up and be counted.**

*1994 Los Angeles Asian Pacific  
American Heritage Month  
presents  
"Queer Asian Pacific Islander Heritage"*



*What does it mean to be a queer Asian and Pacific Islander?  
How are issues of culture and family  
defined by lesbians, gay, bisexuals and transgenders?  
A panel of speakers will discuss:  
gay parenting, having gay children,  
coming out, queer politics, and inter-racial relationships.*

*Date: May 15, 1994 Time: 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.  
Venue: Chinatown Annex, 300 W. Sunset (& Broadway), Chinatown*

*For more information, please call:  
Shella Aguilar at (213) 483-8638 or (310) 353-2944*

**PLEASE JOIN US. ALL ARE WELCOME!**

*This event is co-sponsored by:  
Los Angeles Asian Pacific Islander Sisters (LAAPIS)  
and Gay Asian Pacific Support Network (GAPSN)*



# Marriage Rights Symposium



The Lawyers for Human rights and the Lesbian and Gay Bar Association of Los Angeles presents "Marriage Rights Symposium, Legalization of Lesbian & Gay Marriages". This symposium will explore broad-based constitutional, political and economic implications of legalized lesbian and gay marriages as well as specific issues related to Baehr v. Lewin, where the Hawaii Supreme Court opened the door to potential legalization of lesbian and gay marriages in Hawaii and beyond.

Event speakers include Lorri Jean, Executive Director of the Los Angeles

Gay and Lesbian Center, Evan Wolfson, staff attorney at the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund and Co-Council in Baehr vs. Lewin, Grace Blumberg, professor at UCLA School of Law, and Diane Goodman, attorney in family law. The symposium will be held on Saturday, May 14, 1:00 p.m. at the Hyatt on Sunset, 8401 Sunset Blvd, West Hollywood. Admission is \$10 for the general public, \$35 for attorneys who desire two MCLE hours with course materials, and \$40 after April 29. For reservations and more information, contact Clarice Liu at (818) 568-4680 (ext. 627). ▼

## LAAPIS

Newsletter is published monthly.  
If you have any submissions or would like to be included in our mailing list, please write to:

LAAPIS  
P.O. Box 86484  
Los Angeles, CA 90086-0484  
Attn: Teri Osato

We do respectfully request that all subscribers pay an annual fee of \$20 to assist with all our printing and mailing costs

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LAAPIS seeks to provide an environment of support and affirmation for API women who identify as lesbian, queer, bisexual, women loving women, or gay. LAAPIS recognizes the ethnic and sexual diversity within the API communities and the co-existent need to form common bonds. LAAPIS also serves as a resource for the community-at-large. We promote non-racist, non-judgmental, non-ageist, non-sexist attitudes.

## Would You Spare Us A Moment, Please? LAAPIS Survey

Are you a slightly older API lesbian or bisexual?  
Are you bilingual or limited English Speaking?

LAAPIS would like to hear from you! We've observed some under representation of LAAPIS members from the over 35 age group, as well as those API's whose primary language may not be English. LAAPIS wants to be as welcoming and inclusive as possible for API's and B's of all ages and linguistic backgrounds. Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions, and send your appreciated responses back to us. LAAPIS can only be as good as each member makes it!

1. What is your age group?

☐ under 30

☐ 30-34

☐ 35-40

☐ 40-45

☐ over 50

2. Is your primary language English?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If no, what is your primary language? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What types of social/political/recreational events are you more likely to attend?

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4. What issues or topics are you most interested in hearing about?

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5. If LAAPIS had subcommittees that specifically outreached to older API's or limited English speaking members, would you be interested in serving on them?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If Yes, please give us your name and telephone number:

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Please mail survey back to:  
LAAPIS, P.O. Box 86484, Los Angeles, CA 90086-0484  
THANK YOU!



# What's Hot

## PARTY! PARTY! PARTY!

In celebration of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, LAAPIS and our "brother's" GAPSN (Gay Asian Pacific Support Network) are having a party! No, not just any party ... its a board game party. Yes, fun for everyone of all ages and backgrounds! Bring all your friends, your favorite board games, and food. This is a potluck event. We ask that you bring enough for at least 5 people. So, if your last name begins with:



A through C, bring rice

D through F, bring cups, plates, utensils and napkins

G through L, bring a main dish (vegetarian or meat).

M through O, bring a salad

P through R, bring drinks

S through U, bring desert

V through Z, bring an appetite

If you have extra "fold up" tables, please bring them. Anyone planning to take left overs home, please bring tupperware and/or aluminum foil/saran wrap. The party will happen on Saturday, May 14, 8:00pm, at the Studio Village Recreation Room, 11800 Moorpark Street. Between Laurel Canyon and Colfax. For more information and directions, contact the LAAPIS Social Committee at (213) 483-8638.

## LAAPIS SELF DEFENSE FOR WOMEN

Due to popular demand, LAAPIS' is holding another self defense workshop for women. Kelly, LAAPIS' own skilled martial artist, will instruct the class again. If you missed it the first time, don't let this chance pass you by. The workshop will be held June 5, Saturday, from 4 pm to 6 pm at 2516 Wilshire Blvd, Santa Monica. Dress comfortably, bring lots of friends, and be prepared to go out for a bite to eat after. A \$5 donation is requested but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Space is limited. Call (213) 483-8638 for more info. and to reserve a spot.

## GLAAD'S PEOPLE OF COLOR COMMITTEE

The next Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) people of color committee will be held on April 11, 7:00pm at the GLAAD office, 8455 Beverly Blvd., Suite 305 (near the Beverly Center, across the street from Taco Bell). For more information, contact Shawn Griffin at (213) 953-7074 or (213) 654-2749.

## CALLING ALL WRITERS!

Sensual Delights: An Asian American Erotic Feast, is an anthology which will be edited by Geraldine Kudaka, to be published Spring, 1995 by Anchor/Doubleday. Questions & submission guidelines, call (213) 483-8638

## HOUSING NEEDED

An APL from washington D.C. is going to be visiting L.A. from May 16-20, and wishes to stay in a LAAPIS member's home for these days. If you are willing and able to house her, give her a call ASAP. Her name is Ann Mary (301) 585-1564

## THE 11TH INTERNATIONAL AIDS CANDLELIGHT MEMORIAL AND MOBILIZATION

MARCH AND RALLY: A CALL FOR ACTION  
CURE AIDS NOW!

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 1994

7:00pm : Gather at Hollywood United Methodist Church  
6817 Franklin Avenue, Hollywood

7:30pm : March through Hollywood

8:00pm : Rally at L.A. Gay & Lesbian Community Services  
Center, 1625 N. Hudson Avenue, Hollywood.  
(between Sunset & Hollywood)

For more information, please contact Chris  
(213) 993-7415



LAAPIS  
May Potluck/Meeting  
Sunday, May 1 at Noon

At Kim's Pad  
771 South Plymouth, Hancock Park  
(north of Koreatown)

Directions please ...

Take the newly-repaired 10 east or west (depending on where you are), exit Crenshaw Blvd, turn north: left (if you were on the 10 East) or right (if you were on the 10 West). Pass Olympic and take a left on 8th Street. Go 3 blocks and take a left or a right (it doesn't matter) on Plymouth Blvd. Park immediately. It's the light blue townhouse on the corner of 8th and Plymouth.

Questions? Call Shella at (213) 483-8638