

# SLANT

L A A P I S



SUPPORT/CHAT GROUP

**Join Grace and Mia for two hours of lively conversation on anything and everything. Come check us out!**

**Location:** The Gay and Lesbian Center  
1625 N. Schrader Blvd  
(Major cross streets are  
Sunset and Cahuenga) in  
Hollywood

**Date & Time:** Wednesday,  
November 13, 1996  
8 pm to 9:30 pm

(Two dollar donation requested but not required.) Please call Grace on the LAAPIS Hotline for more info (213) 969-4084.

Dear Newsletter Committee,

I wanted to register my views on the new newsletter masthead.

I'm not really comfortable with naming it SLANT. I understand the need to call it something other than LAAPIS, but there must be a better choice than a term that's always been associated with derogatory and racist images.

I also understand the need to empower API lesbians and bisexuals by embracing such a term, but not all our members are at the same level of acculturation. Some people may find the term completely offensive and I don't think it's a good time to alienate current or potential members.

Besides the mailing list includes non-API groups and is displayed at major fairs like CSW [Christopher Street West] (acting as a PR tool). There are many men and women out there (GLB or otherwise) who may knowingly or unknowingly possess racist ideals. Remember a fellow member's experience at CSW? Remember how a white gay man asked her (not too politely) to leave the dance floor because she didn't belong. This happened in 1996.

The current immigrant and minority bashing isn't a big help either. Hate crimes against Asians in Southern California have risen a startling 83%. That is scary. In this climate it's not a good idea to embrace a word which sticks out like a sore thumb.

Maybe all members and LAAPIS board should also have a say on name selection. It is to impactful of a change for one committee to decide on.

The newsletter looks good. This is not an attack on content or layout, just questioning and offering my discomfort with a new name.

Suggestions for retitling? Maybe hold a competition for renaming with a small prize, as a last resort brainstorm with board members and put a new name up for general membership vote.

Take care,

a LAAPIS member



## ***This is Our SLANT***

**T**he last issue of the LAAPIS newsletter had several members concerned. Its new title, "Slant" was controversial and caused some to raise their brows. A member states, "I personally don't have a problem with it, but others might." Another member sent a letter to the newsletter committee, addressing her concerns. Hence, in response to this feedback, a special meeting was set for October 12 at 4 p.m. at the newsletter head's house to discuss this matter and potentially decide what to do. This meeting was announced in last month's flyer and at the board and general LAAPIS meetings. When October 12 rolled around, five people showed up — four of which were on the newsletter committee who originally decided to make "Slant" the title.

We members of the newsletter committee would like to express to LAAPIS our reasons for choosing "Slant" as the title for the newsletter. We believe that our ideas and opinions are valid and should be heard.

We acknowledge that the word itself can generate controversy because of its racist imagery. Historically, the white man used derogatory statements when referring to Asian immigrants. References such as "Orientals" being the "yellow peril," "yellow skinned," and having "slanted eyes" were meant to place Asians as "the Other," sub-human, and "inferior."

Through many years of fervent efforts to debunk Orientalism, we now see changes in the way Asians are perceived. "Oriental" has been replaced with "Asian Pacific

Islander" or "Asian American." And more often than not, those insulting references can only be found in old history books and are terminologies used by the older generation. Yes, racism still exists today, but why continue to live in the oppression of the past? We can't let racism and past suppression hinder our free minds and inherent pride — they are still our own.

We chose "Slant" for not just one reason by many:

1) Slant is a term that is used in everyday speech to mean point of view, opinion, or attitude. For example, "What is your slant or take on the issue?" or "The column has a strong political slant."

2) Who says controversy is bad? The mere existence of controversy means people are thinking and something is being said or done that is different from the norm. By this definition, LAAPIS and its members claiming to be API bisexual and homosexual are controversial. "Slant" is a term that provokes thought and in turn creates dialogue. This is how ideas and attitudes are expressed and exchanged.

3) To somehow learn from the past, "slanted eyes" affected not just one Asian ethnic community but all of us. Therefore to reclaim this word is to empower us as a whole. Asian eyes come in all shapes, shades, and sizes, and that variety is what makes us beautiful.

4) There is also a humorous reason why we chose "slant." Slant means "not

straight" and that is exactly what we are.

5) "Slant" is catchy and cutting edge.

And here is some current news. There is a Korean American woman who owns and runs a successful multi-media company in Baltimore, MD. An Asian American men's performance group based in New York tours all over the East Coast with shows combatting API male stereotypes. At Columbia University, The School of International Public Affairs (SIPA) with a student body that represents nearly 75 countries, circulates a magazine with stories from around the world, "full of personal insight, political analysis, and literary merit." What do they all have in common? The business, performance group, and the magazine are all called "Slant."

As newsletter committee, we brainstormed and came up with many names. Some options were "Jade," "Blue," "Sirens," and "Unbound," to name a few. But out of all those names, none seemed to have as many layers or have as much meaning and depth as "Slant."

As a committee we contemplated, debated, and decided on this name. If you are a concerned LAAPIS member, you need to let us know. We are open to everyone's opinions. You can call the LAAPIS hotline at (213) 969-4084, email us at [laapis@aol.com](mailto:laapis@aol.com) or write to us. If need be, you will remain anonymous and what you tell us will remain confidential.

We need to hear your take on this issue, your opinion, your slant.