

# **BAGMAL NEWSLETTER**

**April 87**

## **MESSAGE FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

Many of you have complained recently that our meetings have too much business and are too, well, boring. You came to get to know other gay Asians, not to talk about committees. We, on the other hand were anxious to make our many new members feel welcome to shape the group in its revival, so anxious in fact that we neglected to try to make the meetings interesting.

To correct that state of affairs we propose to devote our monthly meetings ( first Sunday) to brunch and discussion. No business. Since the primary purpose of this group - Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians - is to bring us together to be friends with each other, to support and to learn from each other, these meetings will be open to gay Asians only. At our next meeting (3 May) we will talk about coming out, which all of us have done to some extent. At the following meeting (7 June) the subject will be parents, which we all have. The social activities will continue, open to gay Asians and our friends, gay and non-gay, Asian and non-Asian.

And business? There is a fair amount of it - planning, phoning, mailing, corresponding. We suspect that most people, especially those new to the group, are not too interested in this aspect of things. We want to prevent alienation through overexposure, so we plan separate business meetings ( announced in advance - next one 15 May) at which we four members of the steering committee will be present. We certainly do not want to become an oligarchy, however, and welcome all gay Asians to attend and share their opinions. We will announce tentative decisions (about endorsements, for example) in the newsletter to solicit reactions. We are walking a fine line here between boring you with details of business and presuming to act on your behalf, but this compromise seems inevitable at the moment. The four of us want to hear from you. Call us if you have any questions about anything or just to talk. Let us know how we can make this group better. Coming events are listed in the calendar. Hope to see you at one soon.

Jing Achacoso (262-1997), Vickie Lew (787-4213),  
Andrew Li (623-1129), Jack Lo (782-0356)

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BAGMAL is Boston Asian Gay Men and Lesbians.

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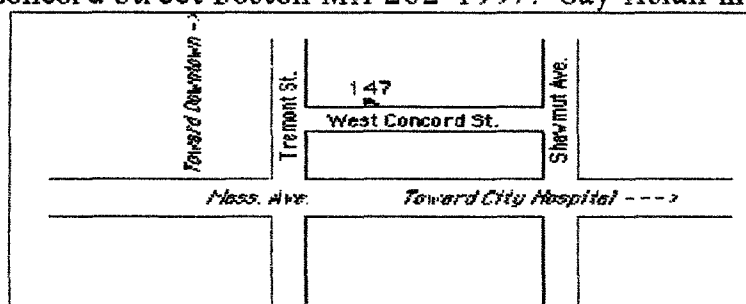
## REPORT FROM THE 4-19-87 Business Meeting

We at BAGMAL are tentatively endorsing the October 13 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. We are also planning to write a letter to Governor Dukakis to support Foster Equality in response to the Gay and Lesbian Defence Committee request.

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### BAGMAL CALENDAR

**May 3, Sunday** 1 p.m. "Coming out" Discussion and Potluck at Jing Achacosos' 147 W. Concord Street Boston MA 262-1997. Gay Asian members only, please.



**May 9, Saturday**, 8-10 p.m. Andrew will present a slide show of his 2 years in the People's Republic of China. At Henry Tate's 80 The Fenway #34 Boston (267-7127). All members and friends welcome. \$1 Social Function Fee.

### **June 13 Saturday** Mark your calendars - **Gay Pride March**

10:30 a.m. - Breakfast gathering, place to be announced

12 Noon - Meet at City Hall Plaza, the start of the march

We will most likely have a table at the rally site (Boston Common).

8:00 p.m. - Party at Jing Achacosos' (see above for address) 262-1997

Join us for the Celebration. All members and friends invited. \$1 Social Function Fee.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**DUES:** Please pay up. \$5 will keep this newsletter and other mailings coming for a year. The Steering Committee has decided that May 31 will be the deadline for payment, after which further mailings to non-paid up persons will be terminated. Send checks to our mailing address or bring money to our next function.

**ADS:** We are still accepting ads for apartments, room-mates, lovers, etc. 1 free ad for paid-up members. \$2 for others. All ads are numbered and confidential; replies are forwarded to you by the newsletter staff. Add another \$2 to cover postage for forwarding responses. All ads must be under 40 words.

## EDITORIAL

### A Call to March

by S. H. Chua

Phrases often lose their impact through overuse, becoming shopworn, cliched. Gay Pride is often said glibly in the same breath as Gay Pride Week, or Gay Pride Parade so much so that we no longer stop to consider the meaning of the term. For many who have been out for a few years, enjoying the high gloss and consumer choices of Boston's gay/lesbian milieu the term Gay Pride may even seem somewhat naive, too rah-rah for the urban sophisticates they have become.

It is often instructive to think of the opposites of cliched phrases. Gay Shame or Straight Pride I think may provoke more contemplation than Gay Pride. After all the idea that gay people should be proud and stand tall was a response to the traditional understanding that gay men and lesbians are

shameful, disgusting and should stay hidden if their existence was acknowledged at all. Straight people on the other hand, do not talk of straight pride because they assume it - the natural superiority of heterosexuality, of baby pictures and anniversaries and family outings while gay men and lesbians are supposed to conceal their friends, lovers and relationships for fear of offending straight sensibilities.

Self-acceptance, self-respect, dignity - what we call Gay Pride - all had to be fought for in the face of these extreme prejudices and very often, real physical oppression. Individually we have each overcome these obstacles and seen through the lies which deny us our desires, which keep us alone, isolated, unhappy. Every year during the Gay and Lesbian Pride March we celebrate all our individual victories together as a community. At the same time we assert our newfound self-respect and dignity - our right to be public and open without

hiding who and what we are.

Gay and lesbian Asians are very much part of these celebrations. Our struggles for pride have had to deal with the prejudices of more than one cultural tradition - the macho/religion-based hatred of the West, the family-centered exclusivity of Eastern cultures and certainly the racial and cultural blindness among the gay and lesbian peoples with whom we seek community. We have much to celebrate. Let's do it together at the Lesbian and Gay Pride March on June 13. Our presence alone will give the finger to the lies and myths - gay people cannot be happy and proud, Asian people cannot be homosexual, gay Asians are passive, apathetic, unable to take the initiative. Remember there are always those on the side-lines, still closeted, still working things out. Our presence may perhaps help them make the transition - from gay shame, from Asian shame to Gay and Asian Pride.

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## A SNOW QUEEN SPEAKS: A CANDID INTERVIEW

by S.H. Chua

*Much has been said about Rice Queens, but the more elusive entity the Snow Queen, has often escaped attention probably because so few would admit to that designation. One such person did come forth in answer to my solicitation for an interview. He has chosen to remain anonymous underlining the enormous stigma still attached to that part of our community. It is hoped this interview will help promote understanding and perhaps some level of acceptance. (S. H.)*

When did you first realize you were a Snow Queen?

Well I did not start out as a Snow Queen, you understand. It's just that it's so hard to meet other Asian men. It's all this over-emphasis on age and experience in Eastern cultures you know. Look at me. It's going to be quite a few years before I look anything like a Pat Morita. Westerners on the other hand, can appreciate a cute young thing like me immediately. Their culture has a healthy obsession with youth and beauty.

So you became a Snow Queen by default then?

I wouldn't go that far. There are many things that attract me about white men of course. Their rough skin, their stout bodies and their rich cultural tradition - you know Sears, Three's Company, Championship Wrestling. And oh yes, the food - Pepsi, Mac-Donald's, Kentucky Fried. I really like their cuisine. But frankly, I really do not like to be called a Snow Queen.

You object to the term Queen?

No. Snow. Snow is so cold, frigid, often dry and flaky. The numbers I go for can really turn into red-

hot lava with the right encouragement. Of course I understand the implication - the color - as in Snow White - but we all know snow doesn't stay white very long except on the mountains.

Well where do you find Snow, if you'll pardon the term? Are there Snow Bars?

Oh you can meet snow anywhere. Parking lots, shopping malls, even in some bars and discos. It's just that they are shy and hesitant and must be approached with the right moves.

Will you share some of your techniques with our readers?

Sure. I'm not afraid of competition. First thing is you gotta speak with an Oriental accent. It doesn't matter which Oriental accent just pick one and stick to it. So what if you've lived in Brooklyn all your life. If you really can't manage an accent at least say you're from Hawaii - that's sometimes exotic enough for them. But don't get carried away. You want to sound quaint and foreign but not TOO strange. Strike a common note early. Say something like "Oh we have Three's Company where I come from too". In

your Oriental accent this will come across really quaint and cute. And of course it's not a lie if you did grow up in Brooklyn. Act a little lost, in need of assistance. Many snow are insecure - they don't feel that their rough skins and plump physiques alone are enough to attract you. They want to offer you that something extra that will make the difference. So like if you are doing a foreign student routine say that your scholarship money is late or that your visa is running out. Snow often like to play the Big, Generous American. Let them. You have nothing to lose right?

This all seems rather dishonest and manipulative.

Well you gotta be flexible to succeed. Like some snow really turn on to the word "houseboy". You can always sense this after a few minutes of chit-chat. So tell him you were a "houseboy" at a previous job, or in a previous life. (Some of these numbers really take this Karma shit seriously; they think people in the East re-incarnate on demand.) Others really like to hear you condemn American Imperialism - you know the lefty ones. So act real angry and throw in an analysis of racism

against Asian-Americans for good measure. Play it by ear. Use your creativity. Watch out though for those tell-tale signs that might give you away. Once I was doing this Chinatown waiter routine and I let slip the word Asian in my spiel. You know, instead of Oriental. Boy did this number turn off. And he was a real hot ticket too.

Don't you feel that you are perpetuating all these stereotypes of Asians?

Look honey it's an imperfect world. Sure we all want to change the stereotypes. But meanwhile

we gotta have our meat and eat it too if you know what I

Do you know many other Snow Queens? Is it true what we hear - that Snow Queens often get together and exchange partners?

Well it's not as blatant as that. Many of the Snow Queens I know are in - what do they call it nowadays - life partnerships. But of course we have our outside interests. We're not beneath doing a little horse trading every now and then. The most important thing is to make it look like it's the snow number's idea. They like to think they're the ones playing the field.

They're supposed to be the active ones right. You don't want them to know they're being passed around the Meat Circuit. Jesus, I know at least two queans who are going to kill me for letting this little trade secret out.

Do you have any other words of advice for aspiring Snow Queens among our readers?

Well just that there's lots of snow out there. In all seasons. There's enough for everyone. And when you get a bit closer to Pat Morita vintage there's all that rice around sniffing out age and wisdom.

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## WHAT SOME SAY OF SNOW QUEENS

*We polled some of our readers about what they thought of Snow Queens. Here is a sampling.*

I think they are disgusting. Always going from one piece of white trash to the next. They should stick to their own kind.

I think the term is de-meaning to white people. There are more to us than the whiteness of our skin and I wish Asian men will learn to look inside us for other qualities.

It's inevitable, this phenomenon. With the rising yen, and the U.S. becoming a debtor nation I think you will begin to see more and more Snow Queens coming into the country to use and abuse our white men. I hear there are already these new specialty snow porn in Japan - unemployed steel workers, bankrupt Midwestern farmers - they're all shucking their overalls for any Asian tourist with a Nikon. It's a sign of the times.

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Editor's Note: For those who are interested *CelebrAsian* Spring/Summer Issue No.10 has a companion piece on Rice Queens. *CelebrAsian* is the publication of the Gay Asians of Toronto : Box 752, Station F, Toronto Ontario M4Y.2N6, Canada.

## BAGMAL RESOURCE LIST

Here is a partial list of gay Asian organizations with which we are in touch. Magazines and newsletters from these groups are available at Business Meetings for general perusal.

Asian/Pacific Lesbians and Gays  
Box 443 7985 Santa Monica Blvd. West Hollywood Ca 90046

Association of Lesbian and Gay Asians  
Box 97 55 Sutter St. San Francisco Ca 94104

Asian Lesbians of the East Coast  
P.O. Box 850 Knickerbocker Sta New York NY 10002

Asians and Friends, Chicago  
P.O. Box 11313 Chicago IL 60611

Gay Asians Toronto  
Box 752 Station F Toronto Ontario M4Y 2N6 Canada

Men of All Colors Together  
Box 1518 Ansonia Station New York NY 10023

Washington Bridge  
P.O. Box 4406 Washington DC 20017

Trikon (Gay and Lesbian South Asians)  
Box 60536 Palo Alto Ca 94306

## REPORT OF BAGMAL EVENTS, March & April 1987

### Forum on U.S. Immigration Law and Gay People, co-sponsored by GLAD and BAGMAL

The featured speakers were Richard Iandoli, an attorney in private practice specialising in immigration law and Iris Gomez and Regina Lee who are with Boston Legal Services. Regina Lee led off explaining the categories of immigrant applicants recognised by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the priorities for granting permanent residency status afforded each category. Richard Iandoli elaborated on the steps for applying for permanent residency through sponsorship by an employer and through sponsorship by a spouse who is a U.S. citizen. This latter topic generated much discussion about INS scrutiny of so-called "marriages of convenience". The next speaker Iris Gomez went through provisions of the recent Immigration Reform Act which has now put the onus on the employer to ensure that all employ-

ees have legal immigration status. These requirements of course bring along with them concerns of possible discrimination by employers based on race. Iris cautioned the audience to monitor the hiring process at their workplaces and to report abuses to concerned agencies including Boston Legal Services and the National Lawyers Guild. Richard Iandoli finally elaborated on two precedent setting cases whereby gay men were excluded by the INS based on the claim that homosexuality was a sign of so-called "psychopathic personality". The event was attended by about 30 people who were actively engaged in the forum throughout asking questions and citing personal experiences. Those interested in further consultation may find the following referral list given out at the Forum useful:

1. GLAD - Gay & Lesbian Advocates and Defenders. (617-426-1350)

2. National Lawyers Guild Referral Service weekdays 1 - 5 p.m. (617-227-7008) or call Staff Person, Larry Goldsmith (617-227-7335) if require particular gay/lesbian referrals.
3. Richard Iandoli, 59 Temple Place Boston (617-482-1010)
4. Greater Boston Legal Services 68 Essex Street Boston (617-357-5757)\*
5. Legal Services Center, 3529 Washington St. Jamaica Plain (617-522-3003)\*

\* Low Income Guidelines apply.

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### Minutes of Business Meeting April 5, Sunday

chaired by Vickie Lew, held at S. H. Chua's, recorded by S.H. Chua

#### 1. Membership

It was decided to continue to keep business/discussion meetings restricted to gay and lesbian Asian members. Gay non-Asians and straight Asians interested in BAGMAL are encouraged to attend all other functions. It was thought that a safe and

supportive space where Asian gay men and lesbians feel confident to express their views and opinions, is still needed and should be maintained. However there was also concern that this segregation of Asian and non-Asian should not be arbitrary and should not extend to social functions.

## 2. Potluck/discussion meetings

It was felt that discussion meetings should be short and restricted to one topic.

## 3. Gay Pride Events

Efforts to sponsor the Chinese movie *Nie Zi* during Gay Pride Week are underway. There was also talk of starting a Gay Pride Committee to oversee BAGMAL activities during Gay Pride Week and to encourage participation by BAGMALites in the March. BAGMAL has been invited to submit a proposal for a speaker but it was decided to decline the invitation this year.

4. Outreach. Steps to formalize the announcement of meetings in the

gay media were discussed. Jack agreed to try to get a free listing for BAGMAL in the *Boston Phoenix*. May 31 is still to be the deadline for members interested in receiving the mailing and newsletter to pay up.

5. Discussion: What does Gay Pride mean to me?

Some saw the March as a confrontation, a claiming of our right to be open about who we are in a public space even if only for one day a year. Also some saw the day as one where one would not have to divide the different components of one's identity - gay, lesbian, Asian - it would instead be a time to integrate these different facets and to celebrate with others as whole people. Other than Gay Pride Week and the Gay Pride March there was also a discussion of Gay Pride as that which makes us feel good about being gay. Views differed on this - there was the opinion that life was basically a vale of tears anyway and that Gay Pride simply meant

that the source of one's dissatisfactions was not solely the fact of one's gayness. Others sought a more positive interpretation in the strength, confidence and ability to see through hypocrisy and social ills arising from being different and being able to overcome the hurt and prejudice suffered through that difference. A related discussion suggested was on "Our Asian roots" or "Asian Pride" - what do we feel is good about being Asian.

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## **Thai New Year Party**

On the sunny spring afternoon of April 12, our Thai New Year party hosted by Timmy Pham was attended by about 20 people who brought food, drink and good cheer to share. Attending were a few who had never been to BAGMAL events including a few of Timmy's apartment mates. Unfortunately none of our Thai members could make the event. We still wish them Happy New Year which fell on April 13, the day following our party.