



# Tradewinds

July 2008

Monthly Newsletter

## GAY NEWS AT HOME AND ABROAD *Conducted by Roy Liebman, Publications Chair*

### UNITED STATES

In 1991 only forty-nine openly gay people served as elected officials nationwide. The number today: 529 public officials, most of whom were openly gay at the time of their election.

### CONGRESS

The highest-ranking military veteran in Congress, Rep. Joe Sestak (Dem-PA), has urged repeal of the widely disparaged "Don't ask, don't tell" policy which became law in the Clinton administration. Sestak, a former admiral who spent thirty-one years in the Navy, supports a repeal bill that more than 140 other congress people have also agreed to support. He said "Once you have served in war and faced danger with a gay service member, how can you say gay people should not enjoy equal rights?"

Congress recently passed an AIDS funding bill, included in it was a measure to lift the ban on people with AIDS entering the United States. This has been in effect since 1993, although it is possible to obtain a waiver

### CALIFORNIA

California counties began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples on June 17th in accordance with the California Supreme Court decision. At least two counties, Kern and Butte, home to generally conservative populations, stopped performing civil ceremonies. Because they could not legally refuse to marry gay couples they stopped performing weddings for all couples. They cited financial reasons but it is generally believed that the religious views of certain county officials was the real reason.

The California Supreme Court, by the same 4 to 3 margin by which they enabled gay marriage, swiftly rejected legal challenges to that decision by various conservative and religious groups.

One study predicts that gay marriage in California could bring a \$370 million windfall over the next three years. This could come from wedding-related expenditures, advertising increases and out-of-state visitors attending weddings or getting married themselves.

### NEW YORK

The Democratic Governor of New York State, David Paterson, has ordered state agencies to recognize the marriages of gay New York residents who were wed in states where gay marriage is legal, i.e., Massachusetts and California. This would affect such matters as health insurance where "spouse" would now be defined to include gay partners.

### WASHINGTON STATE

The Democratic Governor of Washington, Christine Gregoire, signed the Domestic Partnership Expansion bill into law. It creates more than 160 new rights (and responsibilities as well) for registered domestic partners. A 2007 law created the domestic partner registry in Washington.

## AUSTRALIA

The government of Australia has eliminated discrimination against gay couples in more than 100 federal laws, including those dealing with pension rights, taxation and welfare.

## CUBA

The government of Cuba has launched an anti-homophobia campaign. Gay rights activists were able to congregate for the first time in large numbers to support this new openness.

## EUROPEAN UNION

The European Union's highest court, the European Court of Justice, has ruled that member countries cannot discriminate against gay couples. A German man who was denied his late partner's pension filed suit and the court agreed the action was a violation of EU directives. At present there are ten EU countries that offer no legal rights for same-sex partners, most being in Eastern Europe; Ireland and Malta are also among them.

## GAMBIA

The president of the small Muslim-dominated African country of Gambia gave Lesbians and gays twenty-four hours to leave the country or face beheading. He was quoted as saying that "sinful and immoral practices such as homosexuality would not be tolerated in this country". In the past he had claimed to be able to cure AIDS with natural herbs.

## GREAT BRITAIN

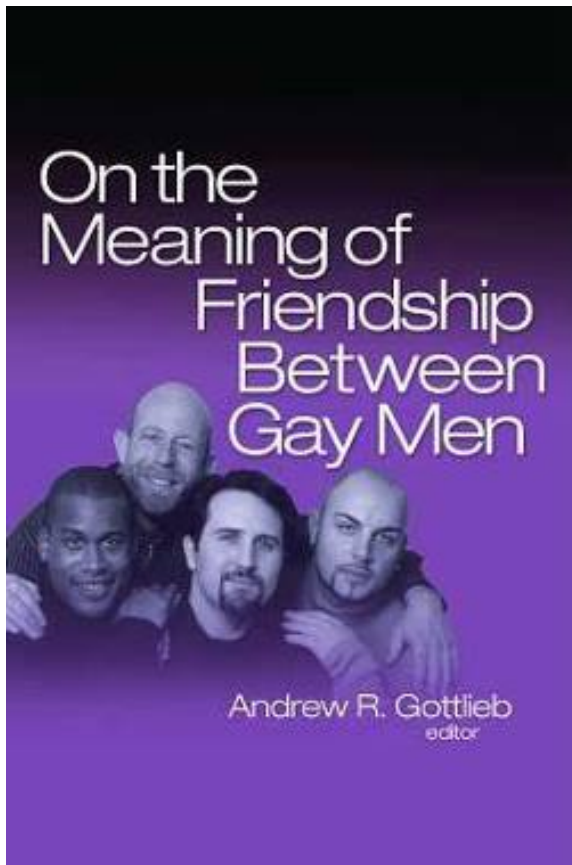
Following an international outcry, a gay Iranian teenager was granted asylum in Britain after he claimed that he might be executed if he returned to his native country. His boyfriend was hanged in Iran for "sodomy" in 2005. He had originally sought asylum in the Netherlands but was refused on the grounds that he had first entered Britain and should seek asylum there.

## GREECE

The mayor of a small Aegean Island town was charged with breach of duty after performing Greece's first same-sex marriages for two gay couples. The Greek Minister of Justice said the marriages were illegal and invalid, even though the law covering civil marriages does not specify gender.

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On the Meaning of Friendship Between Gay Men takes readers beyond the traditional exploration of sexuality and romance into the importance of friendship, providing deep insights into various dimensions, including Mentorship, Spirituality, Survival, and Partnership. Leading gay authors



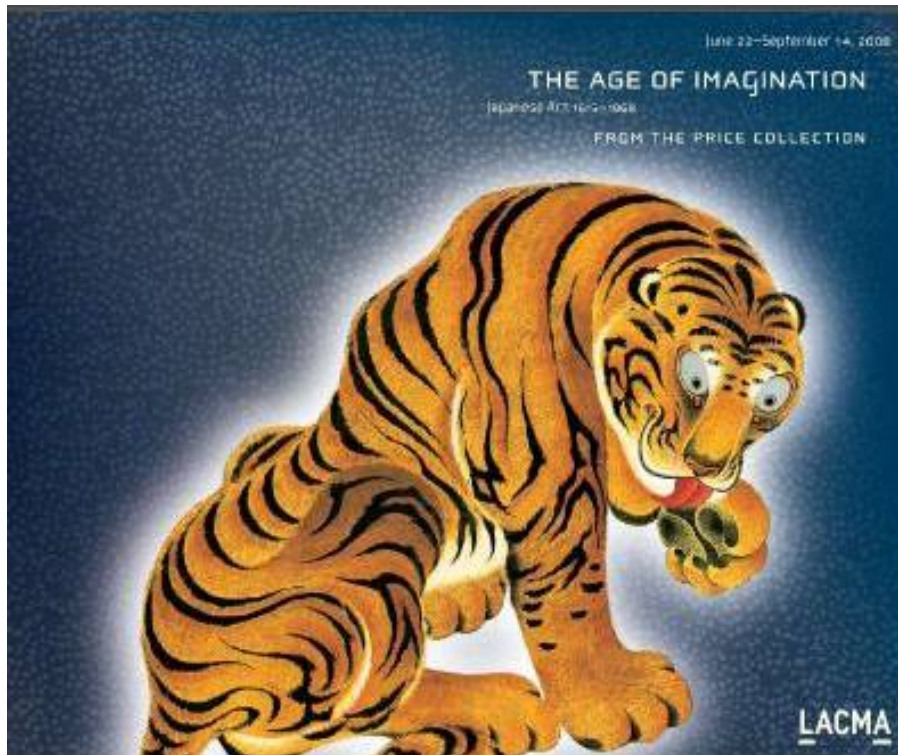
offer a wide range of perspectives in this intimate and very accessible book.

Neil Kaminsky, an A/PGF member, wrote an essay about a very special group of friends he had in San Francisco in the late 1980s.

The essay appears in a new book that has just been published. The book is entitled "On the Meaning of Friendship Between Gay Men" edited by Andrew R. Gottlieb. My essay is entitled "Larry, Me and The Family. There are 16 other essays in the book.

For more information and to order this book, click [here.](#)

## Of Community Interest



The Age of Imagination: Japanese Art, 1615–1868, from the Price Collection

Now thru September 14, 2008 | Pavilion for Japanese Art and Hammer Building

The Etsuko and Joe Price Collection is world-renowned for its collection of Japanese paintings of the Edo Period (1615–1868) featuring screens, hanging scrolls, and fan-format paintings. The Price Collection reflects the eclectic diversity of a remarkably creative span in Japan's history of visual art and is highlighted by some of the finest examples of the distinctive and compelling renderings of animal life by Ito Jakuchu (1716–1800), an artist who caught Joe Price's eye five decades ago, when the artist was fairly unknown. The collection also features Kansai-region artists such as Maruyama Okyo, Nagasawa Rosetsu, and Mori Sosen, and artists of the Edo Rimpa school including Sakai Hoitsu and Suzuki Kiitsu. The exhibition has been on a four-city tour in Japan with enormous success; it was the highest-attended exhibition in the world in 2006.

This exhibition was organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It was made possible in part by LACMA's Wallis Annenberg Director's Endowment Fund.

Click here to visit their [website](#)

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## MSMs account for 30% of new HIV infection cases in Hong Kong

Of the 89 new HIV cases reported from January to March this year, 28 acquired the infection via homosexual or bisexual contact.

Homosexual or bisexual transmission has been cited as the major route of new HIV infection cases from January to March this year, a diseases prevention official told a press conference on Tuesday.

Dr Wong Ka-hing, Consultant (Special Preventive Program) of Center for Health Protection reported that of the 89 new cases, among whom 70 were men, have raised the cumulative reported HIV infections to 3,701 in Hong Kong since 1984.

Of the 89, 27 acquired the infection via heterosexual contact, 25 via homosexual, 3 via bisexual contact and 10 via intravenous drug use. The routes of transmission of the remaining 24 cases were undetermined due to insufficient data.

Dr Wong further highlighted that the number of new HIV cases infected through homosexual or bisexual transmission was on the up trend in the territory and most of them were infected locally.

Meanwhile, 17 new AIDS cases were reported in the first quarter, raising the confirmed AIDS cases to 951 since 1985.

Dr Wong called on the public who had a history of unprotected sex to go for an HIV test while stressing the importance of using condoms and practicing safe sex in reducing the risk of HIV infection.

Anyone wishing to have a free, anonymous and confidential HIV test can call (852) 2117 1069 (Monday to Friday 9 AM to 6 PM, except public holidays). It is a designated hotline for men who have sex with men. The service provides a one to one, face-to-face interview with pre-test risk behavioral assessment, counseling and blood collection for laboratory test. Referral resources will be provided when required. Telephone conversation is treated in strict confidence.



Four Hong Kong celebrities including actor Daniel Wu (above) and politician Alan Leong appeared in a HIV/AIDS anti-discrimination campaign in November last year. They personalities were individually featured in posters that appeared in the media and on buses and trains.

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## Just for laughs.....The day of the GAY wedding

- On the day of a gay wedding, it's bad luck for the two grooms to see each other at the gym.
- Superstition suggests that, for good luck, the couple should have Something new, something old, something trashy, & something bold.
- It's customary, at gay and lesbian nuptials, for the parents to have an open bar during the entire ceremony.
- Gay wedding tradition dictates that both grooms refrain from eating any of the wedding cake because it's all carbs and sugar.
- It's considered bad luck for either of the grooms to have slept with the priest.
- During the first dance, it's considered unlucky to use glow sticks, flags, whistles or hand held lasers.
- For good luck at the union of a drag queen, the bouquet is always thrown in the face of a hated rival.
- The reception hall must have a disco ball and at least one go-go dancer.
- The wedding singer is not allowed to play/sing Let's Hear It For the Boy, It's Raining Men, or I Will Survive.
- The father of the Bottom has to pay for everything!

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Check our Event Calendar on our website [www.apgf.org](http://www.apgf.org) for complete details on any of our events

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