

Newsletter of Asian/Pacific Islander Unitarian Universalists and their Allies

Volume 1 Number 2

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May/June 2005

## ***Diverse Programming Highlighted at General Assembly in Fortworth***

by Leslie Takahashi Morris (Charlottesville, VA)

Coming to General Assembly? Still trying to decide? At GA, you'll find a wealth of programming sponsored by the Asian/Pacific Islander Caucus and DRUUMM\*. Be sure to check out these GA events:

### **Transracial Adoptions, Interracial Families: Changing Faces, Changing Hearts**

*Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 12:30-1:45 PM, Location: TBA*

This program will address the needs of the growing numbers of transracially adopted youth of color in our UU congregations, focusing on how to reduce potential identity marginalization and instead, support identity development. Panelists for this program include transracial adoption activist Stephanie Cho, Beth Hall of PACT (an adoption alliance), and transracially adopted UUs Meggie Dennis and the Rev. Kristen Harper.

Following the presentation, a gathering for transracially adopted youth will be held with Stephanie Cho and her colleagues in the Identity-Based Ministries room.

### **The Tsunami Relief Banquet**

*Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 6:45-8:00 PM, Location: TBA*

The A/PIC is putting its faith into action by sponsoring a benefit for the victims of India's tsunami. Speakers will include Charlie Clements (president of the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee) and a number of people who have returned recently from India and who have experienced the devastation firsthand. Funds raised will benefit the work of UUSC.



### **The Annual A/PIC Luncheon**

*Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 12:30-2:00 PM, Identity-Based Ministry Room.*

Here's your chance to get to know other A/PIC UUs!

### **Other DRUUMM events**

- ◆ *Creating a Community for People of Color within UUism, Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2:00-3:15 PM.*
- ◆ *Young Adults of Color Gathering, Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup>, 5:00-6:00 PM.*
- ◆ *Youth and Young Adults of Color Gathering, Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup>, 6:00-6:45 PM*

### **Come See Us in the Exhibitors Hall!**

With so much happening, you will want to get the up-to-the-minute information on locations and other events. DRUUMM and A/PIC will be sharing two tables in the Exhibitors Hall open each afternoon from 1:00-6:00 PM and on Monday morning. This is a great place to learn of GA meeting updates, purchase a new A/PIC t-shirt, or just meet more of the A/PIC family.

### **Get Your New A/PIC T-Shirts!**

This year's t-shirts are "ash" with the A/PIC logo in purple and green in the front, available for \$15. The words "Building Beloved Community" are printed in purple on the back. If you are unable to come to GA but would like to buy one to support A/PIC programs, please contact KokHeong via email at kokheong@vla.com before the end of May.

\*DRUUMM stands for Diverse and Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries and is the umbrella group for people of color under which A/PIC is housed in the UUA.

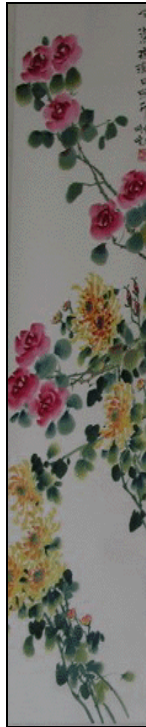
**May is A/PI Heritage Month —  
Help Your Congregation Celebrate!**

*by KokHeong McNaughton (Los Alamos, NM)*

A/PI Heritage Month began as a week declared nationally by President Jimmy Carter in 1979. In 1990, President George H. W. Bush extended the event to a month. Many organizations, particularly progressive universities, celebrate this month by holding events that encourage the study and recognition of Asian American issues, culture and history.

Here are some things you can do to lead your congregation to participate in this event:

1. Raise awareness by creating a month-long display table in a prominent area of your church. You may have to consult with your church leadership to obtain permission for the display. Suggested items for the display are books by A/PI writers, posters of Asian Pacific American History (available from [asianweek.com](http://asianweek.com)), a short write-up explaining what A/PI Heritage Month is all about, and relevant decorations. You can find a lot of material on the Internet (see “Internet Links for A/PI Americans” by Young Kim on page 3 of this issue). It is also fun to have a short quiz for people to test their knowledge.
2. Organize an art show featuring artwork by local A/PI artists and sculptors. Offer your church as a temporary art gallery for them to display and sell their artwork. Make sure that the insurance policy of your church covers loss or damage of these works of art. Set aside one Sunday at the beginning of the art show as a “Meet the Artists” Sunday and invite them to your church service to be introduced. Hold a reception during coffee hour that Sunday for them to mingle with and talk about their art with your church members.
3. Work with your minister and worship committee and encourage them to incorporate readings and music by A/PI folks or with A/PI themes. Some of these can be found in our “Singing the Living Tradi-



tion” hymnal and others can be “googled” on the Internet. Two are offered in the article “From the Heart” on page 3 of this issue.

4. Hire local A/PI musicians to provide ethnic music for your church services and extend an invitation to their friends and family members to the services and coffee hour to mingle and socialize with your church members.
5. Volunteer and visit the children’s RE classes to talk to them about A/PI history.
6. Celebrate A/PI culinary arts by offering a fund-raising dinner or teaching a cooking class in your favorite A/PI cuisine. Combine the two so that students in your cooking class will produce the dinner under your tutorage!
7. Show a movie or a documentary by an A/PI director or with an A/PI theme.
8. Combine 6 and 7 above and make it into a “Dinner and a Movie” event!
9. Be proactive in engaging people in conversation about A/PI Heritage Month during coffee hour.

All the ideas above require that we, as A/PI UUs, take the lead to make them happen. We could enlist the help of other A/PI folks and white allies in our congregations. Ultimately, if the issue is important enough to us, we’ll overcome inertia to make them happen.



**From the Heart****Creative Writing by A/PI UUs****Making Awkward Space**

by Joseph Santos-Lyons (Westhill UU Congregation, Portland, OR)

I can pass for white, if I choose  
Press the flesh as a black haired,  
dark skinned European  
Swarthy they used to call it

But that was a long time ago  
Playing in rural fields of Oregon  
Where there were no Asians

The layers of my rebellion are thick  
I have claimed and reclaimed, identified  
and grounded myself  
Rejected societies' desires to define me,  
segregate me, assimilate me

I enter space with whites and it is always  
awkward  
I cannot go back, to denying, defying,  
demeaning my heritage  
With pride I use my voice to tell the  
history, resistance, call for justice

Awkward space is all around me  
It is rich with crisis: danger and  
opportunity  
All attention is on being in authentic  
relationship

**Water**

By KokHeong McNaughton (Unitarian Church, Los Alamos, NM)

I am but a drop of water.  
Alone, I would disappear,  
Dried up by the scorching sun  
Or sucked up by the dry, thirsty earth.  
But together we can wear out stones,  
Carve out the Grand Canyon,  
Make streams and rivers,  
And find our way to the sea.

**Internet Links for Asian/Pacific Islander Americans**

by Young Kim (Wauwatosa, WI)

The internet has a wealth of knowledge for A/PIA people. But where do you start? One good launching point is Yahoo's Asian-American Culture directory: [http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/United\\_States/Society\\_and\\_Culture/Cultures\\_and\\_Groups/Cultures/American\\_\\_United\\_States\\_/Asian\\_American/](http://dir.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/United_States/Society_and_Culture/Cultures_and_Groups/Cultures/American__United_States_/Asian_American/)

Here are a few that have proven useful to some APIUU members:

- ◆ **Angry Asian Man:** a weblog maintained by an "Angry Asian Man" in the SF Bay Area. A good way to keep up with what's happening on the A/PI civil rights front — <http://www.angryasianman.com>
- ◆ **AsianAthlete.com:** a website tracking A/PI and A/PIA professional athletes — <http://www.asianathlete.com>
- ◆ **Asian American Foundation of New York:** — <http://www.aafny.org/default.asp>
- ◆ **Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund** — <http://www.aaldef.org/>
- ◆ **Asian American Women Artists** — <http://www.aawaa.org>
- ◆ **Asian Law Caucus** — <http://www.asianlawcaucus.org/>
- ◆ **Asian Nation:** a resource and overview of historical, political, and cultural issues involving the A/PI community — <http://www.asian-nation.org>
- ◆ **Asian Week:** an online news organization based in the San Francisco Bay Area, with coverage of national A/PI issues — <http://www.asianweek.com>
- ◆ **API Legal Outreach** — <http://www.apilegaloutreach.org/>
- ◆ **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (New York City)** — <http://www.cacf.org/directories/local/>
- ◆ **Human Services for A/PIs in NYC** — <http://www.aafny.org/directory/search.asp?cmd=list>
- ◆ **Mavin:** a national organization that celebrates and advocates for mixed race people and families — <http://www.mavinmag.com/>
- ◆ **ModelMinority.com:** a "guide to Asian American empowerment" — <http://modelminority.com/>
- ◆ **National Asian American Telecommunications Association (NAATA):** a nonprofit organization that funds, produces and distributes films and videos that convey the richness and diversity of the Asian Pacific American experience — <http://www.naatanet.org>
- ◆ **Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program:** an effort to integrate Asian Pacific American contributions to US culture, history, art, and society through Smithsonian collections, research, exhibitions and programs — <http://www.apa.si.edu/> (continued on page 4)

## A/PIC Online Covenant Groups

by KokHeong McNaughton (Los Alamos, NM)

Given that many of us are isolated in locations without a large A/PI population, online covenant groups make a lot of sense as a way to build community. In August of 2004, A/PIC began its first online covenant group for A/PI UUs and Allies through the use of a closed email list with yahoogroups. We have come to the point in our covenant for splitting into two groups: one for A/PI UUs only, and the other for A/PI UUs and their allies.

The structure and format of an online covenant group is not much different from those of a real-life covenant group. Instead of having a real-life meeting once a month, an online group runs in cycles. Our first A/PIC covenant group runs in cycles of one-month, with each member taking a turn to facilitate each cycle. A group can begin as soon as there are 8 people who are interested in participating but should not be larger than 12 people.

There should be one person in each group who is in charge of starting an email list and making sure that everyone is subscribed to it and able to post and receive messages. This person is responsible for the administrative part of the group including list management.

Prior to the start of the cycle, the group needs to do some organizational and administrative work:

1. The group leader creates an email list and subscribes everyone to it.
2. Send out a test email and request response from everyone.
3. Send out contact information (phone number, email addresses and snail mail addresses) to everyone.
4. Each person posts a short introduction to the list.
5. The group creates a Group Covenantal Statement (see sample below) by consensus.
6. Group leader randomly decides on the order of facilitators but allows for flexibility should members decide to trade their cycle.

Here's what each cycle would typically look like:

- Day one: Post Opening Words and Group Covenant (see sample below)
- Week one: check in (everyone must do a check in without fail)
- End of week one: the facilitator will pick a topic of discussion and open the discussion.
- Week 2 and 3: discussion – everyone agrees to participate by sending emails to the group. No lurking\* is allowed. If one is too busy during a cycle, posting a short note to the group stating so would be very helpful.
- Beginning of Week 4: Closing Words.
- The rest of the month: make a report to the larger community of any significant ideas or insights that the group wishes to share (this is the closest to the "service" portion of a real-life covenant group.)

## Sample Group Covenant

We covenant together to give one another support as we each work on our own spiritual growth. We strive for compassionate and non-judgmental listening through sharing our feelings, experiences and ideas in an intentionally-created safe environment. To this end, we promise one another to participate without lurking\*, to speak with honesty from our own experiences, to keep our sharing confidential, to stay in community through disagreement, and to assume good intention from all. We empower the facilitator of each cycle to remind us of our covenant and to remind us of our commitment to participate.

## Other Nuts and Bolts

- There are only TWO ground-rules: each member must use a personal email address not shared with other members of the family (unless both are in the same covenant group); **there shall be no lurking**.
- Each group shall contain at least 8 and not more than 12 people.
- Each group promises to stay together for the duration of at least 8 months and not more than 1 year.
- Each person in the group takes turn to facilitate each cycle of the covenanting period (to last one month).
- At the end of the covenantal period, the group shall split into two groups through choice. Each group will select its leader. At this point, members can decide whether or not to continue participating in covenant groups.
- Additional members are then recruited from the apiuu-general list.
- Should one of the two resulting groups decide to continue using the original email list, the list manager **must** delete all archived materials before adding new people to the list and deleting old ones in order to begin with a fresh slate.

\*To eavesdrop on a chat room or conference. In most online areas, lurking is perfectly acceptable behavior and is, in fact, encouraged so that you get the feel of the area before posting your own comments. However, some online areas, particularly ones where participants are discussing personal issues, frown on lurking.

(continued from page 3)

- ◆ **National Foundation of Indian-American Associations:** promotes and fosters goodwill between the people of the United States and the people of India— <http://www.nfia.org>
- ◆ **South Asian Lesbian Gay Association:** a social, political and support group for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people of South Asian descent — <http://www.salganyc.org>
- ◆ **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender South Asians:** celebrating ethnicity and affirming sexuality— <http://www.trikone.org>

## Milestone

- ◆ **Aimee Santos-Lyons** graduates from Columbia University Public Health School with a Masters Degree in Public Health on May 18th. Congratulations!



- ◆ Congratulations to **Leslie Takahashi Morris** who will be receiving her preliminary fellowship at General Assembly this year at the same time that her husband **David** will be receiving his final fellowship

- ◆ A/PIC Chair **Manish Mishra** has just accepted his first post-seminary ministry as Interim Associate Minister at the Unitarian Church in Westport, CT.



Manish is excited about joining this large, 650+ member church, which has a very active social justice and urban ministry. While there, he will be working most closely with the church's worship, lifespan faith development, small group ministry, and pastoral care programs. Manish hopes to move on to a called ministry of his own after his one year assignment with Westport. Anyone passing through the Metro NYC area next fall/spring is invited to come visit the West-

port church for worship and see one of our own A/PIC ministers in action! Manish will also receive his preliminary fellowship at our General Assembly in June.

## Among Ourselves



- ◆ **Joseph Santos-Lyons** and **Gabriel Santos** are visiting the UU Church of the Philippines and Korean Adoptee friends in Seoul April 23-May 9. Wish them safe travels.

- ◆ **Linda Hsieh** wrote from China that she was fired from her teaching job because she stood up for one of her colleagues, a Kenyan teacher, who was treated badly by the administration. She considers her firing to be a badge of honor which she will wear proudly even as she is running out of money. Please keep her in your thoughts.
- ◆ We continue to keep **Asha Philar** in our thoughts as she undergoes treatment in Ottawa, Canada.

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