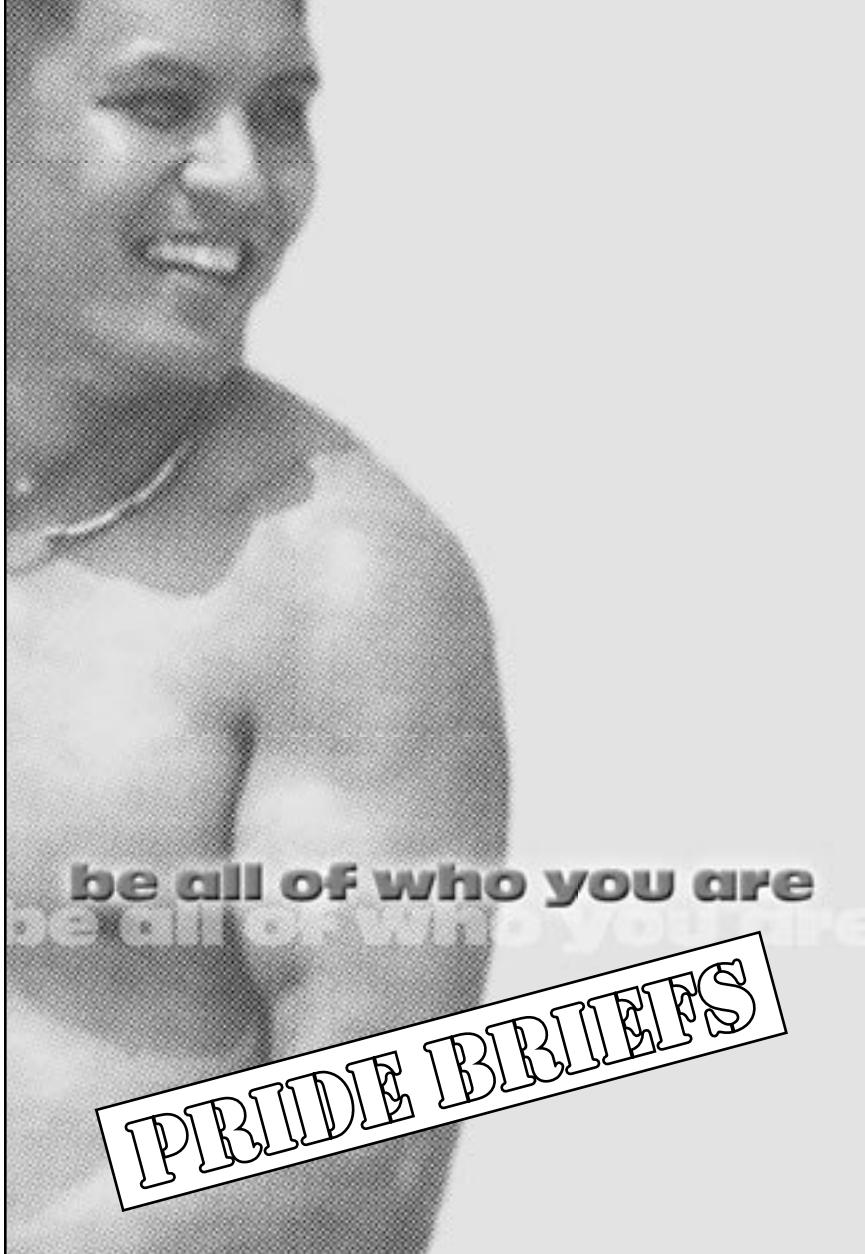


PersuAsian

June / JULY 2003 ISSUE 18



be all of who you are

PRIDE BRIEFS

Newsmagazine for the Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York



Japan (Fridae.com)

Transgendered Japanese woman wins seat in Tokyo assembly

In April local elections, Aya Kamikawa, a transgendered woman, became the first ever transsexual official in Japan. Ms. Kamikawa, a 35-year-old MTF transsexual who is currently waiting for gender reassignment surgery, won a seat in Tokyo's Setagaya Ward Assembly, reports Japan Today. She ran as an independent without any party support, and came in sixth out of 72 candidates for the 52 seats in the assembly.

"I will proudly attend the assembly as a woman," said Kamikawa although she will be listed as male in official election records. Under Japanese law, birth documents cannot be altered and Kamikawa had been listed as male.

Japan's transgender community views her victory as their own as Kamikawa, who submitted her candidacy forms with a blank space for sex, was allowed by election officials to run as a woman. She said she decided to run for office in order to raise the public awareness of transgenderism, including the humiliation faced by documents that reveal birth gender. "This is the first step. First of all, I would like to question whether it is necessary to have the gender entry in the application [when] driver's licenses do not indicate the holder's gender," she said, referring to the candidacy forms.

United States (Advocate.com)

It's official! Stage and screen star B.D. Wong comes out publicly in Advocate cover story

As part of a special issue devoted to gay parenting, the June 10th issue of *The Advocate* chose Asian American actor B.D. Wong as its cover boy, or rather cover daddy, as Wong describes the trials and tribulations of

raising a child with his partner of 15 years, Richie Jackson.

The interview represents the first time Wong is coming out publicly and introducing his young son, Jackson Foo Wong. The actor first won acclaim on Broadway in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly*, where he created the role of Song Liling, a male Beijing Opera singer specializing in female roles. Wong, whose initials stand for Bradley Darryl, won the 1988 Tony Award for that gender-bending performance. Later he portrayed Peanuts character Linus Van Pelt in the Broadway musical *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*. Making the switch to television, Wong appeared in Margaret Cho's ill-fated sitcom *All-American Girl*, and has appeared in over a dozen other programs, including *Sesame Street* and *The X-Files*. This spring he wound up a five-season stint on HBO's *Oz* as the idealistic prison priest Father Ray Mukada, but will continue to appear in the fall on *Law & Order: SVU*, in which he plays forensic psychiatrist George Huang.

When asked why he hadn't officially come out until now, Wong remarked, "There are degrees of out. I never lied to anyone. I just didn't go on the record. I was cagey...[b]ecause I went into this business knowing I faced a fairly long list of limitations. Being Asian American was one. Adding the fact that you're gay is career suicide. At least that's how it felt."

The actor has just published a book, *Following Foo*, in which he tells the often heart-rending story of his and Richie's decision to start a family. With B.D. donating sperm and Richie's sister Sue donating eggs, the couple impregnated a surrogate in California. It was later discovered that the two boys she was carrying suffered from twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome, in which only one twin receives blood from the placenta; the other gets it through his twin. In this case, the donor twin, Boaz Dov Wong, died shortly after a premature birth. Jackson, the surviving twin, who weighed less than 3 pounds at birth, was kept in intensive care for three months.

MISSION

The mission of Gay Asian & Pacific Islander Men of New York is to provide a safe space for gay, bisexual and questioning men and transgendered people of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage. Founded in 1990, GAPIMNY seeks to empower GBT APIs through a range of social, educational, cultural, and political activities, and we have welcomed the opportunity to work in coalition with other community organizations to help educate our communities (the API ethnic communities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered communities) on issues of race, sexuality, gender, and HIV/AIDS.

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Jerome Zorrilla
Administrative Weiben Wang
Financial Leonard Chung
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Membership Frankie Li
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Workshop Adrian Leung
Members-At-Large Alan Khoo
Richard Quon
Billy Wong

GAPIMNY 2003 Steering Committee

Got Rice for Pride? Welcome to PersuAsian "Hot 'n Sticky" Briefs

Hi folks! Ready for a whopping June Pride season? These days GAPIMNY is more active than ever, socially and politically, and we hope you'll join us as we plan the next phase of GAY ASIAN DOMINATION. (Buuah-ha-ha-ha-ha-ha!) Check out our updated calendar in this issue of PersuAsian Briefs—we've planned some hot events, including three different gay and Asian film fests over the next month. It's heaven for all you celluloid junkies!

Why, you ask, is this a "Briefs" issue? Well, as part of GAPIMNY's ongoing publicity campaign, we are doing a mass printing of the Briefs to distribute around the five boroughs (and NJ!) Every June Pride we try to get the word out about GAPIMNY's unique programs, in hopes of reaching out to Asian men who've never heard of us and just might be struggling with their sexuality. So by passing out free copies of an abridged PersuAsian, we're giving newcomers a quick overview of our work—"GAPIMNY in a nutshell," as it were. And share your personal copy with friends, relatives, anyone who might be curious about gay Asian life. . .

And finally, a word about coming preparations for Pride Weekend—this year, we are dreaming up plans to organize a huge, scary, queer Asian "platoon" marching down Fifth Avenue. Even if you've "been there, done that," won't you consider marching with us this year, to demonstrate GAYSIAN PRIDE in the biggest way? It's high time we REALLY show what we're all about, so PLEASE join us the morning of Sunday, June 29 (details about dress code and marching location TBA).

Peace,
Conrad and Lance

PersuAsian is a forum for the ideas of individual gay men and the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GAPIMNY. If you would like to help out (i.e. write articles, take photos, etc.), have any comments or suggestions, please write us at persuasiannyc@yahoo.com
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Gay Asian and Pacific Islander Men of New York 2003 MEMBERSHIP FORM

New _____

Renewal _____

Full Membership: \$24.00

Students/Limited Income: \$12.00

This membership type is only for gay, bisexual, and questioning men and transgendered people of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage.

Benefits include newsmagazines, reduced admission fees, discounts at social events and area businesses, voting rights.

Supporter: \$18.00

This membership type is open to everyone.

Benefits include newsmagazines, discounts at social events and area businesses; but no voting privileges, no admittance to general meetings.

MEMBERSHIP IS FOR THE YEAR 2003, Prorated Bi-annually

All information is strictly confidential!

NAME: Last _____ First _____

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Please be Discreet: Yes _____ No _____

Please send Membership Form and check made payable to GAPIMNY to:

GAPIMNY
P.O. Box 1608
Old Chelsea Station
New York, NY 10113-1608

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March 21—Safer Sex workshop with APICHA peer counselors

After all the flirtatiousness of the February Dating workshop, GAPIMNY sounded a more cautionary tone in its March workshop, devoted to the topic of safer sex and the issues surrounding healthy sex practices. We welcomed special guest speakers Debanuj Dasgupta and Francis Gallego, who work as peer educators for Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA), the city's leading HIV/AIDS health agency for Asian communities. The two led an in-depth discussion of the situations where gay Asians like us make choices about our personal sexual risk and what factors influence these decisions. They also reported on data they've accumulated when "out in the field," meeting and interviewing gay Asian test subjects.

April 18—Mental health and stress management for gay Asians—April workshop

The April meeting attracted a big turnout of around 30 Asian brothas—and it was probably the night's topic that proved such a draw. Guest facilitators were Hiro Yoshikawa, an assistant professor of psychology at NYU (whose research focuses on gay Asian men), and Calvin Chin, a practicing psychotherapist. They led off a fascinating roundtable discussion which revealed how many of us have thought and worried over the stresses that impinge on our daily routine. It was especially striking how gay Asian men in the city seem to share certain factors that oppress us and can play havoc with our mental health. Dr. Yoshikawa mentioned his research finding that gay Asian men report some of the highest rates of depression of any racial subtype—the rate was equivalent to that of single women of color living in poverty.

Recurrent themes in the discussion included the pervasiveness of American racism (often subtly internalized in our psyches), the struggle to assimilate in an American culture that marginalizes us, the invisibility of Asians in a dominant white gay movement, and a general "outsider" mentality resulting from the combination of the above. The group also drew distinctions between the ways American-born and foreign-born Asians are sensitized to racist and/or assimilationist attitudes. For example, a foreign-born Asian is more likely to deal with stress relating to how he expresses himself in English, while American-born Asians may be more quick to sniff out racist attitudes that might be directed at them, since they have often known since childhood this constant struggle to "fit in" and be accepted as a bona fide American. Also, people agreed that the

gay culture of New York can sometimes prove a double-edged sword, a fact especially evident to foreign-born Asians. Although they find the city a wonderful and welcoming place to express their sexuality (in a way not possible in Asia), the freedom to be queer creates new problems for gay Asians, like the clash of gay culture with traditional Asian family values, or the marginalizing effect of the whole "Chelsea boy" cult of masculinity.

Based on their experience, Dr. Yoshikawa and Dr. Chin found that the two best ways for coping with stress were (1) to have close friends or relatives who will help you talk through your problems, or (2) to seek professional therapy. They pointedly emphasized that one solution is not necessarily better than the other, and often seeking comfort through friends can be as effective as professional counseling in preventing depression. They also noted that Asian communities traditionally shy away from therapy, as if there's some stigma attached to seeking professional help.

April 26—It was a karaoke blast at GAY ASIAN IDOL...such deep talent in our ranks...

In the craze of reality TV, GAPIMNY brought you Gay Asian Idol, which showcased the talents of its members at our very own version of *American Idol*. Held at Pegasus Bar, about 40 people showed up to cheer on the contestants. Judges for the evening were Conrad, Kween Dandylyon and Jade, with hair and makeup provided by Algene. Eight contestants were narrowed down to five finalists by the judging panel which, in keeping with the original format, gave critiques of each performance. The finalists were then judged by the audience as to who would be the top prizewinners (determined by the number of first-place votes). Congratulations to the winners: 1st Place—Fitz, 2nd Place—Sammy, 3rd Place—Algene, and Honorable Mention—Adrian. Prizes ranged from cash to a \$100 toothbrush. The finalists were also given pairs of tickets to various shows courtesy of the evening's sponsor, Hugh Hysell Communications.

Thanks go to Kween Dandylyon and Pegasus' very own Empress, who gave half time performances while the audience voted. A special thank-you also goes to West Side Chef for not only a prize dinner for two but also helping with providing the finger foods for the event.

May 4—GAPIMNY visits the 24th annual Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival

It has become a May tradition for GAPIMNY

to participate in the Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival, an outdoor carnival held every year in Union Square Park. It's always a great kickoff to National Asian Pacific American Heritage month, and this year was no exception. There were hundreds of displays and booths devoted to every aspect of Asian culture under the sun, and our table proudly injected a queer Asian sensibility to the proceedings.

May 8—Boiling Rice—LGBT Asian Americans speak out at GAPIMNY's political forum celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

On May 8th, almost 100 lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender Asian Americans and other gay activists began to lay the foundations of a Gay Asian Political Agenda. GAPIMNY organized the historic event, dubbed "Boiling Rice," as part of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebrations.

GAPIMNY convened a panel of nationally-recognized LGBT Asian American leaders—including Daniel Bao from Asian Pacific Islanders for Human Rights (APIHR) in Los Angeles; Trishala Deb of the Audre Lorde Project (ALP) and South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association (SALGA); writer and journalist David Noh; and Pauline Park, of the NY Association for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA)—to discuss recent events, examine

issues that disproportionately impact LGBT Asian Pacific Americans, and deliberate on the political ramifications of invisibility.

Such a forum was long overdue. New York City has the largest Asian American population in the country—one of every ten residents in the city is Asian American. The city also has one of the most open and visible gay communities in the world. Yet even as more LGBT Asian Pacific Americans come out of the closet, they remain marginalized.

GAPIMNY political chair Ariel Herrera said, "The lack of positive images and resources for LGBT Asian Americans in the mainstream gay community is only matched by an excess of stereotypic images of LGBT Asian Americans as model minority, exotic fetish, or fresh off the boat."

While a few LGBT Asian Pacific Americans, such as National Football League veteran Esera Tuaolo and writer and journalist Helen Zia, have risen to media prominence, LGBT Asian Pacific Americans remain largely invisible, stereotyped and isolated. Said Herrera, "The time is ripe to break out of our invisibility and explode these culturally entrenched stereotypes."

I just love the title of this issue dahlings...considering I spend most of my time getting into anyone and everyone's briefs! Anyhoo, I am supposed to keep this short—all puns intended—but honey, I'm a size queen and don't do anything short! I mean, let's face it, a mouth full is nice but having some extra is always nicer. Who wants a wiener when they can have a foot long? OK, OK, OK here goes...for those who missed the Gay Asian Idol, you missed a lot...where to start, where to start...I know the food was fabulous and was catered by none other than Simon from West Side Chef—as usual, finger licking good! He also provided one of the prizes. Other prizes included a \$100 toothbrush from the dentist, a cash prize and tickets to sexy shows like *Naked Boys Singing*, *Zanna Don't*, and *The Last Sunday in June*. Did my eyes deceive me when I saw our hair stylist extraordinaire working her magic on that walking nightmare Jade and the fantabulous Kween Dandylyon? I guess not, since I saw her perform not only once but twice on stage. I also saw DJ Mole try to mouth (or is that deep throat?) the mike. Not to be outdone, Kween Dandylyon also performed during the half-time festivities. Winners of the evening were: 4th Place—Adrian, 3rd Place—the hair stylist, 2nd Place—Sammy, and the Grand Prize—Fritz. Isn't he sleeping with one of the judges? Thanks to Pegasus for hosting the event...

There's more gossip, I mean truths, to be told but they will have to be spread over to a later issue.... Bye for now!

Nana Charlie Tells All

In 1994, President Clinton designated May as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month to honor and recognize the achievements and contributions of Asian Pacific Americans.

The community forum was presented by the Public Policy Department of the LGBT Community Center and GAPIMNY. It was co-sponsored by Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV & AIDS (APICHA), Mandarin Connection, Out People of Color Political Action Committee (OUTPOCPAC), ALP, NYAGRA, and SALGA.

GAPIMNY plans to follow up with future community discussions.

May 16—Things were STICKY all over at the Gay Asian Sex Workshop

Despite the weather, many showed up to learn secret Asian sex tricks at May's Sex workshop. Conrad C. once again officiated as resident sexpert, and this time he brought along special guests. First, we welcomed gay Vietnamese massage therapists Hung Nguyen and Tho Vong, who traveled from San Francisco for a convention in town on erotic spirituality and were kind enough to bring their expertise to our meeting. They are practitioners in the arts of tantric eroticism and spirituality and experts in "life coaching." Their "healing" work strives to integrate the body and mind in a very spiritual approach to eroticism, one that many find enormously soothing and profoundly soulful. In this way, sexuality becomes not merely a means of physical gratification, but a more satisfying, holistic way to recharge the body and mind simultaneously.

The two therapists led us through a demonstration of simple techniques which anyone can practice with a partner or loved one. First, we learned how to perform a truly "gourmet hug," pairing up in twos and spread out in a large circle. They took care to show how NOT to perform a hug, including some of the ways many of us routinely approach the task. Then, we learned a method of connecting intimately with a partner by placing your right hand on the other's heart and staring into your partner's eyes with love. Words can't begin to describe the effect these exercises had on some of our members!

Then we ushered in another special guest, Michi Yamaguchi, who is a gay Japanese erotic artist. Michi did a quick lecture on the history of gay erotic art through the centuries, complete with hot visual aids and artworks to pass around! Michi also invites GAPIMNY members who might be interested in posing to participate in a summer project with him. The purpose is to increase the number of fine arts images of gay Asians, a worthy goal considering how rarely we're represented.

May 18—GAPIMNY reps meet our sister organization AQUA in DC

GAPIMNY Steering Committee members Jerome Z., Danny K. and Weiben W. formed a delegation that visited our "younger sister" in the Washington area, Asian Queers United for Action (AQUA). On the invitation of the AQUA board, they spent the May 16-18 weekend schmoozing with our gay DC brothas and presenting what was called an "Empowerment Workshop." The program was designed for AQUA members to learn about GAPIMNY's mission and history, as a model of how a gay Asian social and political organization evolves over time. Our contact at AQUA, Kevin Lee, described their group as experiencing "growing pains," and we at GAPIMNY are no strangers to them! Our guys presented an overview of how we structure our committee meetings and monthly workshops, plan workshop topics and social events, and prepare community outreach campaigns. It was gratifying to "lend a hand" to a younger gay Asian group which shares many of the same objectives that we strive for, year in, year out.

Schooling Asian American Students

"Are you gay or Asian first?" asked one student. In the past few months, GAPIMNY has conducted a number of educational workshops for non-gay Asian American student groups and conferences, including the Intercollegiate Taiwanese American Student Conference, Chinese American Intercollegiate Conference, and Asian American Alliance at Columbia University. Our message, "We're both. We're proud to be Asian and proud to be gay."

GAPIMNY Launches Postering Campaign

GAPIMNY launched a postering campaign called "Be All of Who You Are" to educate the community about being gay and Asian (SEE COVER). Designed by resident graphic arts wiz Lance C.-H., we hope these posters will spark community dialogue and discussion. Look out for the flyer in your neighborhood laundromat, community center, or library.

Regional Queer Asian American Conference set for Spring 2004

GAPIMNY is spearheading efforts to coordinate a regional conference to network, organize, agitate, educate, and build capacity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender Asian Americans. To help plan the conference, contact Glenn M., GAPIMNY Co-Chair at gapimny@gapimny.org.

the RICE calendar

JUNE 2003

11 Jun The New Festival presents Hong Kong queer film WU YEN 10:15PM
New School University, Tishman Auditorium, 66 West 12th St. (between 5th/6th Aves.) Tickets \$10; to purchase online or for more info, go to: www.newsfestival.org. A gender-bending and cross-dressing farce based on a famous feudal legend, Wu Yen tells the story of an unlikely love triangle between an Emperor, a female outlaw, and a mischievous transgendered fairy—all played by women. (co-sponsored by GAPIMNY)

20 Jun General Meeting @ The Center 8PM to 10PM: Gay Asian History
208 West 13th Street (between 7th and 8th Aves.) Call 212-802-RICE for updated information. \$5 General admission, \$2 members/students/limited income, free for new attendees. Join us during our Pride month workshop for a look back through time. We will learn about the history of homosexuality in the Asian countries, and thereby honor our past by celebrating the queer Asians who came before us.

21 Jun Asian Cinevision presents queer director Cui Zi-en's film Enter the Clowns 8:30PM
Asia Society and Museum, 725 Park Avenue at 70th St. Tickets \$10; for more info, go to: www.asiancinevision.org. Sexual satisfaction, sex changes, and parents. Director Cui Zi'en's film challenges what we think we know about sexual identity and gender orientation. (co-sponsored by GAPIMNY)

22 Jun Asian Cinevision presents Kasya (part of I'm Just a Girl shorts) 5:15PM
Asia Society and Museum, 725 Park Avenue at 70th St. A glimpse into a Filipina transvestite's life in New York City. Directed by Jean Josen. (co-sponsored by GAPIMNY)

27 Jun Gay Asian Pride RECEPTION & Gay Asian Film GRAND FINALE @ The Center 6PM
208 West 13th Street (between 7th and 8th Aves.) Free and open to all. Presented by GAPIMNY, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS (APICHA) and South Asian Lesbian and Gay Association (SALGA). With a gala reception to close this month of Asian pride, we will screen a series of queer Asian films exploring the intersection of identity, culture, gender, and sexuality. Food and beverages will be served. No tickets are required for the Closing Finale and Gay Asian Pride Reception, but RSVP is encouraged. E-mail gapimny@gapimny.org or call 212-802-RICE.

29 Jun The Pride March 11AM-???
Line-up location TBA. For info e-mail Publicity Chair Danny Katz at danielmorito@yahoo.com or call and leave message at 212-802-RICE. Come line up with GAPIMNY early Sunday morning. Bring sunscreen, water, sensible shoes, and slutty gear. Let's make a big gay Asian impression this year!

JULY 2003

4 July GAPIMNY's Fourth of July Party @ Charles' Place 6PM
170 2nd Ave., between 10th and 11th Street, Buzzer 16. \$10 General admission, \$5 members/students/limited income. Our dear friend and supporter, Dr. Charles, is graciously hosting us again in his lovely East Village apartment. Come party with the GAPIMNY boys on the wrap-around balcony with skyline views of the fireworks. This is NOT a potluck; food and drink will be provided by GAPIMNY. Don't worry, we're butch enough to grill hamburgers and hot dogs, sweetie!

11 July GAPIMNY Steering Committee Meeting @ The Center 8PM to 10PM
208 West 13th Street (between 7th and 8th Avenues). Call 212-802-RICE for updated information. All members invited to attend the planning meeting.