



*The Newsletter of*

# INTERNETIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GAY AND LESBIAN MARTIAL ARTISTS

Winter 2008

## In Memory of "Our Jim" IAGLMA Loses a Dear Friend and Founding Member

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the death of one of our founding members and former Co-President, Jim Nickoff. Jim was 44 at the time of his death. He held a third degree black belt in Hapkido, a second degree black belt in Tan Soo Do and a first degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do.

Jim first joined the IAGLMA family in the early 1990's after Gay Games III in Vancouver, the first time the martial arts were included as part of the Gay Games sports program. With fellow founding member and former Co-President, Alan Wood, Jim launched a series of judging and participant workshops in the San Francisco area at that time to outreach and provide training for local martial artists in preparation for the Gay Games in New York in 1994. Jim joined the IAGLMA Board of Directors in 1997 and served as Treasurer. He was elected to the position of Co-President and served as the IAGLMA delegate to the Federation of Gay Games from 2000 to 2002, attending the Federation meetings in Sydney, Australia (2000) and in Johannesburg, South Africa (2001) on behalf of IAGLMA.

Jim stepped down from the IAGLMA Board of Directors in 2002, but continued to support our mission by promoting multi-style martial arts seminars and tournaments and working to empower LGBT martial artists.

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## Pick Up Jim's Torch

Dear IAGLMA Friends:

Attending Jim Nickoff's memorial service yesterday, (01/26/08 appropriately held at the Hapkido USA school in San Francisco) rocked me to the core. As martial artists, we all share a special bond. Our shared love of martial arts and the gifts our training has brought into our lives, helps us understand each other in ways that other's can't. There are precious few of us gay and lesbian martial artists, let alone advanced gay and lesbian martial artists. We couldn't afford losing Jim. Part of IAGLMA's mission is empowerment through the martial arts. Each of you live that mission for yourselves, your students and IAGLMA's members. Jim too dedicated his life to making this world a better place for his friends, gays and lesbians and animals. Jim had an unspeakably horrible childhood, largely due to his coming out at a young age in the 1970s. His tireless work through the many boards he served on and kind acts he performed are

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## "Our Jim" - IAGLMA Loses a Dear Friend

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He taught numerous martial arts seminars at IAGLMA events around the U.S. and abroad, was always eager and willing to step up and serve as uke for several self-defense gold medal winners in Gay Games and IAGLMA events. His excitement and enthusiasm for the martial arts inspired each of us who trained with him over the years to work harder to improve our own martial arts, to earn his approving smile, not to mention his "witty" comments, when he found himself on the floor or in a painful hold as a result of a technique we successfully executed with his assistance – and willing participation.

Jim made his own mark in our history by earning a bronze medal in men's black belt spring in Gay Games IV in New York and in Gay Games V in Amsterdam as well as the gold medal in men's black belt sparring in IAGLMA's *Get Ready for Gay Games V* Tournament in Philadelphia. He was a fierce fighter whose technical accuracy, calm demeanor and good sportsmanship inspired competitors. As Allen Wood admirably noted, "He read me like a cheap romance novel. I can still feel the side kick that he planted on my chest for the win. He was a good, smart, and tactical fighter."

Jim was also instrumental in securing nonprofit status for IAGLMA and continually provided expert financial advice and assistance to the IAGLMA directors. He brought our organization to a new level of professionalism and best practices in finance and governance.

In his "other" life, Jim continued to serve and support LGBT causes that were dear to his heart. He was a founding member of Equality Forum California and served on many nonprofit boards. As a professional expert in nonprofit finance, Jim served as chief financial officer of Project Open Hand before taking his current position as CFO of the Pacific Business Group on Health.

Jim also continued to train at Hapkido USA in San Francisco. He loved teaching the children's classes as well as assisting students training and preparing for their first black belt test. Close friend and martial artist colleague, Atrese Martin, remembers always telling Jim not to "pull a Nickoff" before he would spar students at the black belt tests at their school, that is, leading the fight with his quick and precise kicks and expert technique. Of course, Jim always did "pull a Nickoff" because it was just his nature and his martial arts.

A memorial was held for Jim at the martial arts school on January 26 and was attended by many friends, students and supporters.

In his personal life, Jim was a devoted husband and "father." He was devoted to his partner of many years, Dave Lawson, and Jim and Dave made history as the seventh couple married at San Francisco City Hall on February 12, 2004. Jim was proud of their marriage and continued to advocate for equality for all LGBT people.

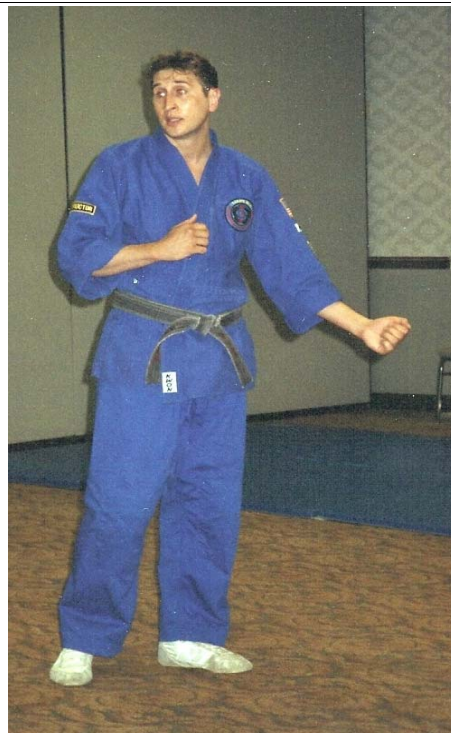
In addition to Dave, Jim leaves behind their many rescued dogs, cats, horses and peacocks who all lived together on their ranch in Woodside, California, outside of San Francisco.

In his memory, the IAGLMA Board has approved the creation of the Jim Nickoff Scholarship, with the goal to fund a martial artist to attend the 2010 Gay Games in Cologne, Germany. Information regarding the scholarship application process will be provided to members shortly. If you would like to make a donation to the Jim Nickoff Scholarship, please contact IAGLMA Treasurer Andy Maguire at [TKDUSA@AOL.com](mailto:TKDUSA@AOL.com). Some passing memories of Jim:

- proudly acknowledging he was "high maintenance"
- protesting the level of face contact in men's black belt sparring (nose shy) and then being disqualified for excessive contact
- "process queen"
- his favorite blue uniform
- his enthusiasm in teaching IAGLMA judging and participant seminars.
- his encouragement to keep trying when a technique seemed too hard.
- calling to get our "approval" to take an Aikido class because he thought it may be against his nature
- reveling in his title "prince of darkness"
- being on the receiving end of his biting wit and humor
- rescuing dogs, cats and other assorted animals whenever he could and wherever he found them
- Dave and Jim feeding their horses on the ranch and taking our photo on the new tractor
- Dogs sleeping next to him on the couch and around the bed
- living with intensity, integrity, passion

Jim will be greatly missed by all of us who knew him, sparred with him, loved him. He made us better people and better martial artists. Jim will always live in our hearts.

~ Teresa Galetti and Kathleen Webster



## Pick Up Jim's Torch

~from Page 1

and kind acts he performed are mind boggling. He worked to make the world a better, safer and more loving place so that future generations need not go through what he experienced.

Unfortunately, when all is said and done, Jim died a victim of the homophobia that he fought so tirelessly to defeat. I ask that we do not let his loss defeat us. I know that I'm preaching to the choir when I ask that we let Jim's passing reinvigorate our purpose in IAGLMA and other organizations we support. Like Jim, we must also live boldly out of the closet and pick up the torch he left for us and continue to light the way.

I love you, my IAGLMA brothers and sisters and cherish the many memories, laughs, fights (verbal and physical) and collaborations we've had. I look forward to many more memories with you.

Your friend,

Allen Wood



## Dallas Martial Arts 2007

The annual IAGLMA event for 2007 took place on the weekend of October 12 in Dallas, Texas. Board member, Jeff McKissack, graciously coordinated the entire weekend of fun filled events. The weekend got off to a great start with the special showing of "the Sensei" starring D. Lee Insonato and Joey O'Lasky (3 Ninjas). Both were on hand for the screening which was held at the Cathedral of Hope.

Ms. Insonato is the writer, director, producer and co-star of "The Sensei". Born Diana "Lee" Inosanto, she is the daughter of martial arts legend Dan Inosanto, and named after her Honorary Uncle, the late Bruce Lee.

The story takes place in a small, conservative town during the rise of HIV and the AIDS panic it stirred in communities in the 1980's and early 90's. Set in 1985, O'Lasky portrays a gay teen that is constantly harassed and ostracized in his provincial town. When O'Lasky's character is hospitalized after a near fatal beating by three local teens, who are then released on bail, his mother asks Karen (D. Lee Insonato) to secretly teach her son to defend himself.

The event was free-of-charge and open to the general public. In addition to IAGLMA members, many local martial artists showed up for the viewing as well. Afterwards, cast and crew members answered questions from the audience.

During the Q&A we learned about some of the difficulties in making this project a reality. After initially agreeing to use a Colorado school as a locale for shooting, the school board reversed its position after finding out about the subject matter. Ms. Insonato's passion for the film and its message carried her past this obstacle however and now the film has been picked up for distribution for sometime in 2008.

You can learn more about the movie, view photos and see cast and crew credits by visiting the website [thesensei-movie.com](http://thesensei-movie.com).

The following day was set aside for martial art seminars. Board members, Darl Schaff and Andy Maguire, lent their expertise in two separate 45 minute self defense strategy session and kicking drills.



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**Dallas Martial Arts 2007** *continued p.3*

The highlight of the day came after lunch when honored guest, Ron Balicki, husband to D. Lee Insonato and renowned martial artist) led a 3 hour plus workshop on everything ranging from filipino kali stick fighting to intensive jeet kun do and thai boxing focus pad drills.

Afterwards, Mr. Balicki and Ms. Insonato joined the group for drinks at a nearby Texas saloon followed by a post seminar dinner. It was a real treat to spend personal time with both of these compassionate and caring individuals. Not only are they supportive of IAGLMA's mission of diversity and inclusion but some of the genuinely nicest people you would ever want to meet.



The weekend concluded on the following day with free self defense seminars offered to the general public outdoors in a municipal park. These seminars are a long standing IAGLMA tradition whenever it holds an event. IAGLMA also offers these seminars during each of the Gay Games it has been in existence.



If you are interested in hosting a weekend event of martial art activities for IAGLMA members in the future, please contact us at [www.iaglma.org](http://www.iaglma.org).

-Andy Maguire



**Up Coming Pink Power 2008  
Martial Arts Seminars**

**Cologne, Germany**

The Tae Kwon Do section of SC Janus e.V. cordially invites you to another PINK-POWER in Cologne.

Date: 19 to 21 September 2008

Organiser: SC Janus e.V. SC Janus Sports Clubs

Sponsor: Horangi – Martial Arts Tae Kwon Do

Location: Cologne, Germany

With more than 1000 members, SC Janus is one of the biggest European gay and lesbian sport associations and the host of Gay Games VIII in 2010.

Pink – Power was established in 1999 by Bushido Munich e.V. a gay and lesbian Karate association.

In cooperation with the International Association of Gay and Lesbian Martial Artists (IAGLMA) and Bushido Munich, Pink Power Cologne will again be an international martial arts event offering the opportunity to meet old and new friends, as well as to become acquainted with new styles. Workshops in Karate, Tae Kwon Do, Self Defense, and Jui Jitsu will be offered.

This event will also offer a workshop in preparation for Gay Games martial arts events in Cologne in 2010.

**Benefits:**

- ★ 3 days of mixed training
- ★ Refreshing drinks and fruits
- ★ Saturday: Asian lunch
- ★ Sunday: farewell brunch
- ★ Small "gay info package" for Cologne

**Accommodation:**

We will organize private accommodations/hosted housing Please include your hosted housing request with your application. To apply please send your name, gender, date of birth, style, grade/rank and association along with your hosted housing needs. Please send your application to Sabom Andrea Lowe at the email address below.

Fee: EUR 40

Contact for more information:

Andrea Lowe

[sabom@kampfkunsttaeknowdo.de](mailto:sabom@kampfkunsttaeknowdo.de)

## Ishigaki Ju-Jitsu Club

### LATEST NEWS

#### December 2007 - 5 New Black Belts!

With years of training, and months of special preparation under their belts (the old yucky brown ones) our boys and girl put on the performance of their lives to sail through their black belt gradings last Sunday (9th December).

The jubilant (and tired) five with their proud instructors. From left to right Sandy Mackay, Tony Wilburn, Angus Swann, Quentin Parker, Ade Oyeniyi, Hannah Schafer and Simon Powell. Every single one of them put on a really solid performance to prove that they already deserved their black belts at heart. The only thing they hadn't done was get to show the judges they could demonstrate their stuff. And demonstrate they did..for well over an hour they punched and kicked, flipped and threw - fighting for their belts - every sweaty step of the way.

Once again Ishigaki held its head up high. Not only did we have the largest number of people grading from any other club, we also had, by far, the oldest group with ages spanning 37 to 46 (average 41). Our team had a good 10 years more life experience than most of the others who were grading. Their maturity by no means blunted their abilities, with all of them scoring consistently high marks.



Pride of the day must go to Hannah. Our only woman grading, our first female black belt for the Brighton Club and, at 44 years old, Hannah was the only black belt at this level to grade with a credit. Judges from across the board acknowledged her fine technique and energetic attitude. Hannah is our first woman to get a credit at a black belt grading and she really did herself and Ishigaki Proud. Those of you who decide to train in Brighton will be very lucky to have her teaching you. Look out for Hannah's Instructor Biog in the near future.



**Our very own Superwoman!**

### ParisTIP2008\_MartialArts

#### Martial Arts in Paris

May 9-12 2008

Tournoi International de Paris/Paris International Tournament (TIP) take place in 2008, from 9th to 12th of May. Registrations will begin January the 1st, on <http://www.paris-tournament.org>.

The Martial arts event will take place in the same sports center as last year, with the same kata (forms) tournament on Saturday 10 May in the morning. The tournament will be followed by workshops on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning.

Please contact Chrsitian Lemesle if you wish to organize a workshop. Please check out the brand new web site: <http://niji-kan.fr>.

Do not hesitate to contact Marie Bouard [bouard93@wanadoo.fr](mailto:bouard93@wanadoo.fr) or Christian Lemesle [chlemele@yahoo.fr](mailto:chlemele@yahoo.fr), if you need more martial arts information.

Tournoi International de Paris

- organized by the FSGL
- the premier French LGBT sports organization
- [www.paris-tournament.org](http://www.paris-tournament.org)

Fri 9 May EVENING Registration evening (everyone present, FGG/GC table)

Sat 10 May DAY Sports all day

Sun 11 May DAY Sports all day (for some sports)

Sun 11 May EVENING Dance party/Show (the money maker for the event)

Mon 12 May DAY Brunch, guided tour

Sat evening may be free, but is usually devoted to bars, clubs... or rest for the serious athletes.

### Mark Your Calendars

Upcoming events:

#### ParisTIP2008\_MartialArts

#### Martial Arts in Paris

May 9-12 2008

<http://niji-kan.fr>.

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