

world briefs

AUSTRALIA

Gay flight attendants have taken airlines to state anti-discrimination boards demanding spousal travel benefits for their lovers.

Actions were launched in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria.

Australian Airlines quickly gave in, announcing that gay employees' lovers are eligible for 95-percent-off tickets.

BAHAMAS

An employee of a British cruise line who allegedly had sex on a dark beach with a Bahamian man faces a possible 20 years in prison.

Malcolm Chapman is the first person charged under Article 16.2 of the 1991 Sexual Offenses and Domestic Violence Act, which states, "Any adult male who has sexual intercourse in a public place with another male is guilty of a sexual offense and liable to imprisonment for 20 years."

Bail was set at \$15,000 for him and \$10,000 for the Bahamian man. Chapman's relatives were unable to make the bail and he was sent to Fox Hill Prison to await a May 4 court appearance. ILGA said "conditions are notoriously bad" at Fox Hill.

The Bahamas, population 251,000, are located in the Atlantic Ocean east of Florida. The country is an "independent commonwealth." It has a prime minister, Lynden Oscar Pindling, and a governor general, Henry Taylor, who represents the British queen.

CANADA

A man who twice bashed gays in Toronto has been banned by a judge from entering the city.

COSTA RICA

The Fénix University Gay Collective has formed at the University of Costa Rica to combat "the stigmatization that produces low self-esteem in the gay community, which has been condemned to silence imposed over the centuries by the male heterosexual power system."

DENMARK

Gay, lesbian and AIDS groups came together in February for the first annual Friendship Fair, reported *Confidential*. The groups set up stands to distribute literature, rubbers and sell arts and crafts produced by gays and lesbians.

"I'm speechless," said one woman. "We are taking off. We are strong. If we are capable of this [fair] we can do anything." "I never thought something like this would occur in Costa Rica," said José Díaz. "Something good and historic is afoot in this country."

DENMARK

The world's only gay-marriage country has un-banned a safe-sex TV ad that shows two men kissing. The "Remember Your Condom" spot was axed by the state Advertising Commission in late 1989 because the gay kiss was "unseemly." The National Association of Gays and Lesbians (LBL), which produced the ad, appealed to the Minister of Communications who finally lifted the ban last month.

During the censorship battle, the ad was shown many times on news programs. "The best thing that can happen [is] to get your ad banned. Then everyone sees it," noted LBL Secretariat Bent Hansen.

Pan Bladet

ENGLAND

Chris Smith, the only openly gay member of Parliament, won re-election in April by a margin of 10,652 votes, up from 805 in the previous election.

ESTONIA

Thirteen members of the direct-action group OutRage dropped their pants outside the House of Commons last month and displayed the phrase, "EQUALITY NOW!" printed letter-by-letter on their underwear. The demonstration targeted the gay male age of consent, which is 21, compared with 16 for heterosexuals.

The protest caused a "stir" among tourists in Parliament Square, said *Capital Gay*.

FINLAND

Parliament passed a motion April 21 supporting legalization of male-male sex, reported the newspaper *Rahva Hääl* in Tallinn, the capital.

Parliament also passed a measure authorizing installation of condom machines in major cities.

Following the lead of the Estonian Lesbian Union, gay men have formed the Estonian Gay Association (Eesti Gayliit). The two groups may merge at a later date.

GHANA

Finland is the latest country to consider legalizing an equivalent of marriage for gays and lesbians. Netherlands, Norway and Sweden are expected to follow this year or next. A Finnish Parliamentary committee endorsed "registered partnership" for gays in a report to Justice Minister Hannele Pokka.

Pokka responded that "the attitudes" of the Finnish people will determine whether the law is enacted.

Reporter

HOLLAND

The Afro Lesbian and Gay Club has applied for membership in the International Lesbian and Gay Association (ILGA). ILGA Information Secretary Micha Ramakers said the club "is very discreetly trying to establish links between all gays and lesbians to improve awareness of AIDS, and is seeking the release of all those imprisoned for being gay."

Gay sex is illegal in Ghana.

LITHUANIA

A new Dutch government study of 102 HIV positive gays found that four insisted they'd only had oral sex (sucking). It was not determined if the four ingested semen or merely pre-cum.

A few other recent studies have suggested that sucking is not as safe as Canadian and European safe-sex educators previously suggested.

However, further explanation of many of the cases revealed that the danger often emerges when orally receptive men (suckers) have chronic gum/dental problems and/or have sucked off thousands of men.

Still, a consensus is emerging that sucking poses a small risk of HIV transmission because all people routinely have small abrasions in or around their mouths, providing a door for HIV to enter the bloodstream.

MEXICO

Four years ago the European Court of Human Rights told Ireland to repeal its male sodomy law, but the country has not done so.

Last month, Dublin's Gay and Lesbian Equality Network lodged a new complaint charging that failure to implement the ruling is a further violation of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Ireland is one of the last countries in Europe to

criminalize gay sex. Others include Cyprus, Romania, all former Soviet republics except Latvia and Ukraine, and Britain's Gibraltar.

ITALY

An open gay was elected to Parliament in April, according to *Rome Gay News*. Niki Vendola of the Rifondazione Comunista party will represent an area "in the South" of Italy, the magazine said.

Meanwhile, *RGN* reported that a pro-gay candidate elected in Rome, Bruno Landi, promised to introduce legislation establishing a Gay Community Affairs Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs.

KENYA

The Know AIDS Society has applied for membership in the International Lesbian and Gay Association. The group, founded in 1990 in Nairobi, operates a phone line and an AIDS-advice and counseling center. Spokesman Joe Muninki told ILGA, "We wish to exchange information, empowerment, knowledge, love and travel."

LATVIA

By a unanimous vote, the Latvian Parliament abolished the male sodomy law, Penal Code Paragraph 124.1, on March 1. Members of the Latvian Association for Sexual Equality had lobbied extensively for the repeal.

The vote was announced in the official government newspaper, *Diena*, merely by the number of the repealed paragraph, which was likely unknown to most readers. Parliament set the age of consent for gay sex at 18.

Elmars Borins, LASE President, said the group will lobby to lower the age to 16. Encouraged by its success, LASE also is launching a campaign for a Danish-style registered-partnership law.

Another former Soviet republic, Ukraine, also repealed its sodomy law late last year.

And the latest official draft of Russia's proposed new Legal Code does not contain the infamous Article 121.1, the male sodomy law under which hundreds of gays have been imprisoned yearly.

SCOTLAND

Independent Lithuania continues to jail gays for the crime of making love. Arunas Dainauskas, head of the Lithuanian Gay and Lesbian Information Bureau, says prosecutors sometimes obtain convictions by granting immunity to one defendant in exchange for testimony against the other, who is then charged with homosexual rape.

Meanwhile, LGLIB says the government is spying on the group. Public meetings of homosexuals are considered "incitement of illegal behavior," Dainauskas said.

Gays and lesbians also are under assault from the Catholic Church, which has repeatedly invoked "morality" and "Biblical injunctions" to thwart government action in support of homosexuals.

SINGAPORE

Under pressure from the Baja California State Attorney's Office for Human Rights, Tijuana Mayor Carlos Montejó Favela has launched an investigation of November's gay-bar raids. Seventy persons were arrested in Los Equipales and El Ranchero for allegedly engaging in acts against public morals.

Gay activists and the Human Rights Office say the police lied. If so, the persons responsible for the arrests will be punished under the Law of

Civil Responsibility for Public Officials. Tijuana's Gay Community Defense Committee called the investigation "the greatest achievement in favor of different lifestyles in Tijuana." "There are profound changes in the individual and collective spirit of the city's gay community," said spokesman Max Mejía.

NICARAGUA

Latin American gays and lesbians met in Managua last month to begin organizing the First Congress of Latina Lesbians and Homosexual Men from the American Continent and the Caribbean, which is set for November 1993 in Managua.

The gathering will be staged by The Lesbian/Homosexual Network of Latinas and Latinos from America and the Caribbean, which was formed at the 1991 International Lesbian and Gay Association conference in México.

According to a press release, the network hopes to "organize continental solidarity and political action to guarantee the human and civil rights of lesbians and gay men throughout Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Latino enclaves in the United States and Canada."

The next planning meeting for the '93 conference will be in Brazil in November.

PUERTO RICO

Activists have begun to push for repeal of the island's sodomy law. Members of Friends of Human Rights testified before the Senate Special Commission on Criminality, which held hearings on sweeping changes proposed for the the penal code.

RUSSIA

U.S. Sprint is the first American telephone company to offer direct dialing to all locations in the former U.S.S.R.

The development was applauded by the Americans who network with the mushrooming gay movement in the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Baltic national—and by the producers of this news roundup.

SCOTLAND

More than 500 anti-gay attacks have been reported to the Glasgow gay hotline since September. The victims were beaten, mugged or threatened. "We believe the same people are carrying out the attacks," said a Glasgow City Liaison Group spokesman.

SINGAPORE

Undercover police arrested four men for "outraging modesty" after they allegedly sought sex with the cops in separate incidents at Marina East, the gay beach, reported Singapore's *New Paper*. The cruisers face up to two years in jail, a fine, caning, or a combination of two of the three penalties.

Undercover officers walked the beach carrying mineral water in their right hands and wearing knapsacks to indicate they were seeking sex, *New Paper's* front-page story revealed. The newspaper said this is a well-known code among local gays.

"We will continue conducting ambushes until the problem is eradicated," promised Chan Soo Wah of Geylang Police Division Headquarters.

Compiled by Rex Wockner, copyrighted Outlines



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