

world briefs

AFRICA

Drought continues to ravage large sections of eastern and southern Africa. Millions of people are expected to be starving by August, with an estimated 30 million people already affected. Large-scale humanitarian efforts are needed to avert the worst disaster in this century.

BAHAMAS

The British cruise-line employee who faced 20 years in jail for allegedly having sex on a dark beach with a local man plea-bargained a reduced charge of gross indecency, was sentenced to six months conditional discharge, paid \$8,000 and returned home.

International Lesbian and Gay Alliance spokesman Micha Ramakers called the new law "totally monstrous considering the harmless and victimless nature of the offense."

Carnival Cruise Lines fired Chapman. Their toll-free telephone number is (800) 327-9501.

BRAZIL

Officials in Aracaju, Sergipe, renamed a street "Rua 28 de Junho" (June 28 Street) in memory of the Stonewall Revolt.

Lobbying for the move came from the 11-year-old group Dialogay.

The dedication ceremony was hosted by famed actress Elke Maravilha, leading journalist Leao Lobo, and the head of the Metal Workers Union, Brazil's largest union.

Ex-Brazilian President José Sarney and the president of the Workers Party faxed messages of congratulation.

The Town Council paid for the stage for the event.

CANADA

New Brunswick is the sixth province or territory to enact a gay-rights law, following Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec and the Yukon Territory.

The Legislature voted 34-8 May 13 to ban sexual-orientation-based discrimination and Governor General Gilbert Flinn signed the law May 21. British Columbia and Saskatchewan are expected to follow suit soon.

CHINA

Officials in Wuwei County, Anhwei province, dropped charges of "unruly behavior" against two lesbians and released them from jail after the Ministry of Public Security informed the Wuwei County Public Security Bureau that the women were not breaking any laws by living together.

The couple's distraught parents sought police assistance after failing to persuade the women to break up, according to the daily newspaper *Guizhou*.

CYPRUS

The European Commission on Human Rights unanimously ruled that Cyprus' ban on anal sex

between men violates the European Convention on Human Rights and sent the case brought by Cypriot gay activist Alexander Modinos to the European Court of Human Rights for a final determination.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The new gay movements of Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Serbia made their first international appearances in May at the International Lesbian and Gay Association's annual Regional Conference for Eastern and Southeastern Europe, held in Bratislava.

Delegates also attended from Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, former East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Russia and 11 Western nations. Among former-Communist countries, only Albania and a few republics of the ex-U.S.S.R. now lack a gay movement.

The conference was hosted by the Slovak gay group Ganymedes, one of 14 gay organizations in Czechoslovakia. Delegates staged an anti-homophobia demonstration in Bratislava's Freedom Square and a party on the banks of the Danube River.

Hot topics included gay parenting, outreach to rural gays, homosexuals and the church, networking with mainstream human-rights organizations, capitalism/commercialization, and AIDS.

All former East Bloc countries still lack quality condoms and water-based lubricant is all but unavailable.

Poland's gay-owned Softpress unveiled a *Gay Guide to Eastern Europe* and delegates from every country but Romania showed off new gay and lesbian magazines. The conference was covered on local and national TV and in seven Czechoslovakian newspapers.

"With this conference, the lesbian and gay movement in...post-Communist countries has continued its rapid development and increasing visibility," said ILGA Co-Secretary General John Clark.

ENGLAND

Members of OutRage paraded outside the Conservative Party Central Office and the House of Commons last month "promoting homosexuality and offering politicians 'a free trial sample.'"

They were protesting Section 28 of the Local Government Act which prohibits cities from "intentionally promot[ing] homosexuality" and bans teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools.

"People who were once straight told amazing stories of how they turned on to queerness and were saved from the hetero hell of marriage, children and a mortgage in suburbia."

ESTONIA

The new Criminal Code, which took effect June 1, does not contain the law that criminalized male sodomy.

A law prohibiting "encouragement to homosexuality" was also deleted.

The code also lowers the age of consent to 14 for women and 16 for men, with no distinction

between gay and heterosexual sex.

Parliament passed a motion April 21 supporting the legalization of male-male sex, with supporters saying a better climate for gays would help fight AIDS.

The former Soviet republics of Latvia and Ukraine have also decriminalized gay sex, while Lithuania and Russia confirmed this year that they still enforce their sodomy laws.

FRANCE

Fifty-five ACT UPers were arrested during April's "Day of Despair."

The day began at 7 am with Fauré's "Requiem" blasting from a sound truck at the home of the head of the agency responsible for blood transfusions. ACT UP charges the agency distributed a flyer in 1985 saying unheated hemophilia treatments were AIDS-safe when it knew otherwise. Upstairs neighbors dumped buckets of water on the protestors.

At 8 am, 50 demonstrators invaded the (departures for) Lyon Train Station with banners and megaphones while another group targeted a nearby subway stop. They set up a coffin surrounded by candles and distributed pamphlets and rubbers.

At 9:30 am, 100 protestors carrying a cross and flinging fake blood erected a mock tomb at Père Lachaise Cemetery and collapsed in a "die-in" for the TV cameras.

At 11:30 am, activists chained themselves to the Châtelet metro stop to protest the transit system's refusal to display safe-sex ads.

At 3 pm, 1,000 protestors descended on St. Lazare Train Station and set up 10 caskets. They dyed the fountains on Avenue de l'Opéra red, threw fake blood on themselves and everything else, and "died."

The day ended with a sit-in at the Louvre museum followed by a march that was supposed to end at the Deportation Memorial.

But police intercepted the protestors at Louis-Phillippe Bridge and herded 55 into wagons, charging the approved route for the protests had changed twice.

FRANCE

France Telecom is threatening to disconnect gay computer bulletin board systems over language that is "offensive to good morals."

GERMANY

Christina Schenk, the only openly gay member of the Bundestag, the national parliament, has come out as a sadomasochist.

Schenk, a 39-year-old physicist from former East Germany, also considers herself "a radical feminist-separatist," yet she is happy that east German lesbians "are less preoccupied with whether something is politically correct."

JAPAN

More than 170 lesbians from 13 countries attended the four-day Asian Lesbian Network conference in Tokyo in May.

It featured workshops, sports, concerts and films. Hot topics included lesbian literature, lesbian families and feminism.

The first ALN conference was in Bangkok in 1990.

NETHERLANDS

Police are threatening to close the highway rest area between Hoozeveen and Ommen if gays rushing to the cruisy woods don't start parking between the lines, said *De Gay Krant*.

The authorities told a local newspaper they don't care if men bonk in the bushes but errant parking habits wreak traffic havoc.

The paper dutifully urged hot-to-trot homosexuals to park properly en route to their trysts.

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua's National Assembly June 11 voted 43-39 to criminalize "sodomy" that is "practice[d] in a scandalous manner."

The confusing measure also bans "promot[ion]" and "induce[ment]" of sodomy (which is defined as "same-sex...cohabitation") as well as pro-sodomy "propagand[a]." And persons who violate the statute, "even in private," with someone over whom they have "the influence of authority or moral direction" will face additional charges of "illegitimate seduction."

To become law, the measure must be signed by Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro by July 11. She is a conservative Catholic who has spoken out against homosexuality.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast saw its second gay pride parade June 20. Marchers wound from the University of Ulster to the Botanic Gardens.

A week of activities included discos, readings, contests, dance performances and the British Film Institute's Sixth Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, "On a Queer Day You Can See Forever."

RUSSIA

The Russian Ministry of Justice reported in May that 959 men were sent to labor camps in the past two years for having male-male anal sex, a violation of Penal Code Article 121.1.

Gay activist Valery Klimov, who is in contact with 150 such prisoners, says the men report they are regularly beaten and raped.

An official draft of Russia's proposed new Penal Code eliminates Article 121.1. It is unknown when the new code may be enacted.

SWITZERLAND

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's International Secretariat in Geneva is working with the International Lesbian and Gay Association and others to get the human rights of gay men, lesbians and bisexuals included in the '93 World Conference on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission, which will meet in August. Right now, the work is in the informal planning stages. WILPF is seeking ideas, contacts, information, etc. in Geneva or elsewhere.

Information should be directed to: Alison Marks, Human Rights Intern, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, International Secretariat, 1, rue de Varembe, C.P. 28, 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland.

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"Getting involved is very rewarding for me ... everyone can do something."



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