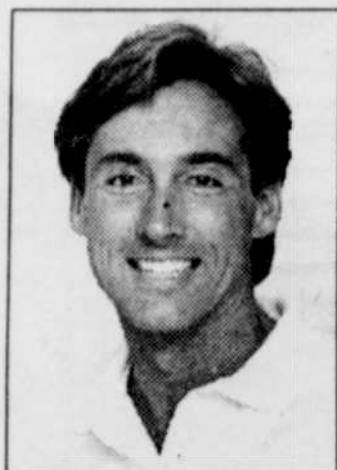


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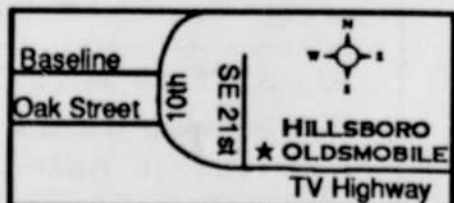
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world briefs

AUSTRALIA

According to a report funded by the government, 20 percent of gay men and 11 percent of lesbians surveyed in Australia have been victims of homophobic violence. In addition, the study conducted by the Australian Institute of Criminology found that out of those, 12 percent of lesbians and 18 percent of gay men reported they had been assaulted by police. Despite these statistics, gay men and lesbians have won many protections in Australia. Last year the government lifted its ban on openly gay men and lesbians in the military and all but one state, Tasmania, have repealed sodomy laws. And New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, adopted a gay civil rights law.

BELGIUM

A non-discrimination policy proposal for the European Commission which bars bias based on gender has been amended by the European Parliament to include sexual orientation. The new policy governs only employees of the Commission. Many believe that the parliament's support will pave the way for a non-discrimination policy to be enacted for the European Community during 1994. The European Court of Human Rights has already declared sodomy laws a violation of the 1988 Convention of Human Rights and a potential block to admission to the European Community. Commissioner Pdraig Flynn commented, "The Commission will continue to work towards the most open policy possible."

CUBA

A gay-themed film opened Cuba's prestigious annual film festival in early December. *Fresa y Chocolate* ("Strawberries and Chocolate") a Cuban-Mexican film, was said to be part of the government's attempt to show greater openness toward gay men and lesbians and to compensate for its history of intolerance. The film, based on a short story by Cuban writer Sense Paz, details the story of a well-educated man unable to find work because he is gay. Other moves toward openness to gay men and lesbians has been Cuba's positive vote to grant United Nations observer status to the International Gay and Lesbian Association.

FRANCE

The French government announced that it will sell condoms to young people at a fraction of the original retail price. In an effort to promote a safer sex campaign aimed at young people, Health Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy said that condoms will be sold to youngsters 18 and under for about 17 cents each.

GREAT BRITAIN

A survey of 2,000 British lesbians and gay men was conducted by the group Stonewall. The survey found that 50 percent of those questioned suffered harassment at work and eight percent said they had been fired because of their sexual orientation. Eleven percent revealed that they were completely out at work while 19 percent reported being totally closeted, the majority of the latter being teachers. Only 10 percent of those identified as teachers reported being out to co-workers. Anya Palmer of Stonewall commented, "The survey shows that discrimination against

lesbians and gay men at work is a widespread evil which effects all occupations." On a positive note, four out of five gay men and lesbians said their employers had an equal opportunity policy.

SOUTH AFRICA

An Interim Constitution, scheduled to be voted upon by the South African parliament, includes civil rights protections for lesbian and gay men. If ratified, it will become the first constitution in the world to specifically ban discrimination against gay men and lesbians. After a successful lobbying effort by the Equality Foundation, a group of gay and lesbian lawyers, the protections were included in the Constitution's proposed Bill of Rights.

The proposed bill states that, "No person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and, without derogating in any way from the generality of this provision, on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, creed, culture, or language." The Interim Constitution also extends prisoner visitation rights to unmarried "partners."

The inclusion of the sexual orientation clause survived two rounds of negotiations with the parliament. In the final round charges were brought up by the Minister of Justice claiming that the term "sexual orientation" was too general and included bestiality and pedophilia. The Foundation responded with a second successful lobbying campaign to argue that the term applied solely to homosexuality, heterosexuality and bisexuality.

The Interim Constitution will govern South Africa while the transitional government is in place which may serve for a period of up to five years. That government will be drafting the country's final constitution.

UNITED NATIONS

An agreement between 167 of the world's nations to conserve and preserve the planet's animals, plants and micro-organisms has recently become an international law. The agreement, the Convention on Biological Diversity, requires countries to create national strategies toward conserving habitats within their borders that sustain plants, animals and micro-organisms. It also commits countries to pass legislation that protects endangered species, expand protected areas and restore damaged ones. Finally, the law mandates countries to promote public awareness on the importance of conservation and the efficient use of biological resources.

Political principles lay the foundation of the workings of the law. They hold that rich countries have an obligation to help poorer nations abide the law by offering "new and additional" financial aid and technology. Additionally, each nation carries its own right to exploit its own resources, under its own environmental policies and that countries rich in organism species but cash-poor should share in the profits from products made from their biological resources. The United States is among those nations already signed, although ratification by a two-thirds vote of the Senate is needed.

Compiled by Lee Norwood

just out

has recently changed its publication schedule to the 1st and 3rd Friday of each month. Calendar entry deadline is the Thursday before the 1st and 3rd Friday for the next issue. Classified and display ad deadlines are the Monday after the 1st and 3rd Friday for the next issue.

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