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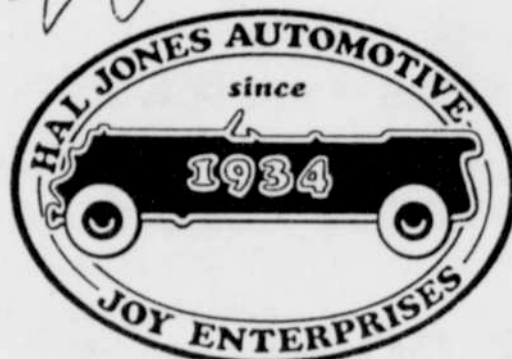
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world briefs

BRITAIN

The head of the Roman Catholic Church in Britain, Cardinal Basil Hume, said March 7 that same-sex love should be "treasured," according to Reuters news service.

"Love between two persons, whether of the same sex or of a different sex, is to be treasured and respected," Hume said in a statement issued to the media. "Nothing in the church's teaching can be said to support or sanction, even implicitly, the victimization of homosexual men and women," he continued. "Furthermore, homophobia should have no place among Catholics."

Hume did note, however, that the Vatican considers lesbian and gay sex "morally wrong."



Members of London's Lesbian Avengers invaded the offices of *The Sunday Times* recently and chained themselves to reporters' desks, reported London's Capital Gay.

They demanded the right to reply to an article, titled "Lesbian Militants Target Gay Men," that they felt was inaccurate. *The Sunday Times* did not report the zap, but the rival *News of the World* stunned the Avengers with an objective half-page story.

CANADA

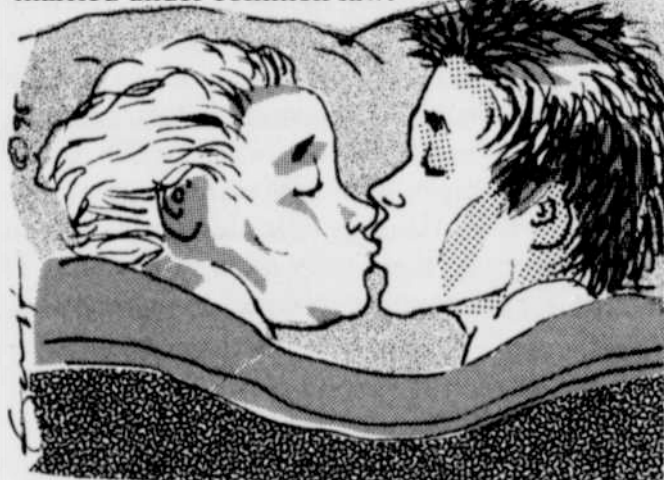
The province of British Columbia has cleared the way for gay men and lesbians to adopt children, reported the Toronto newspaper *Xtra*!

The Ministry of Social Services quietly issued a directive Feb. 6 that removed "restrictions related to marital status, the capacity to have a biological child, or the number of children in the family."

HUNGARY

The country's Constitutional Court legalized common-law same-sex marriage March 8.

Common-law and formally married couples have all the same rights. Any couple that lives together permanently and has sex is considered married under common law.



The court said a law limiting common-law marriages to "those formed between adult men and women" was unconstitutional.

The justices ordered parliament to make the changes necessary to implement common-law same-sex marriage by March 1, 1996.

Paradoxically, the court also ruled that formal, civil marriages are for heterosexual couples only.

Denmark, Norway and Sweden are the other countries where same-sex couples have the same rights as married people, under "registered partnership" laws.

JAPAN

Japan has its first English-language gay newspaper.

"*Outrageous Tokyo* is a forum to exchange ideas and opinions, learn more about what's going on in Tokyo, and work toward creating a more vibrant and cohesive gay community," said editor Anthony Fox.

The paper is also available on the Internet World Wide Web; its address is <http://shrine.cyber.ad.jp/~darrell/outr/home/outr-home.html>

NETHERLANDS

The city of Amsterdam has put up \$610,000

for its part in bringing the 1998 Gay Games to the city. It is the first time the games will be held outside of North America.

Organizers are expecting 12,000 athletes and 100,000 spectators to attend.

The budget for the games is reportedly \$8.5 million.

SOUTH AFRICA

Five hundred HIV-positive people from 82 countries gathered in Cape Town from March 6 to 10 for the seventh annual International Conference for People Living with HIV and AIDS.

It was the confab's first appearance in Africa, which has three-fourths of the world's 4.5 million AIDS cases, according to the Associated Press.

At the opening plenary session, South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki called on industrialized nations to help the rest of the world fight AIDS. The European Union's South African envoy, Erwan Fouere, responded with \$14 million for South African AIDS programs.



Famed gay British Shakespearean actor Sir Ian McKellen met with South African President Nelson Mandela during a recent visit to South Africa and said Mandela assured him he will fight to see that the sexual minority rights clause in South Africa's new interim constitution makes it into the permanent constitution.

South Africa is the only country in the world to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in its constitution. The final document will be finished in two years.

McKellen also raised \$80,000 for South African gay and lesbian groups with performances of his one-man show *A Knight Out*.

SOUTH AMERICA

Gay men and lesbians here have high hopes that the continent's first world conference of gay activists will help their cause by attracting significant media coverage.

For the first time in its 17-year history, the International Lesbian and Gay Association will hold its annual confab in South America—in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from June 18 to 25.

ILGA comprises leaders of 400 gay organizations from around the world. They will strategize, mingle and network.

The event, to be held at the Rio Palace Hotel in the famed Copacabana sector, will culminate with Rio's first gay pride march.

To attend, write: ILGA Committee, Caixa Postal 4305, 20001-970 Rio de Janeiro-RJ, Brazil; phone: 011-55-21-322-4150; fax: 011-55-21-254-6546.

THAILAND

Thirty HIV-negative heroin addicts are being injected with an experimental HIV vaccine in Thailand, reported Thai Health Minister Arthit Urairat.

The GP-120 vaccine, made by U.S.-based Genentech Inc., is given at three-month intervals for a year. If it works, the addicts will become immune to HIV.

Brazil also has expressed interest in the trial study.

ZIMBABWE

The country's president, Robert Mugabe, recently denounced gay men, reported the German wire service Deutsche Press Agentur.

"Let us have no more talk of prostitutes' rights or of homosexual rights, and recognize their activities for what they are—a threat to the morality and health of our growing nation," Mugabe said while visiting a hospital in the city of Bulawayo.

The president's remarks came amid a campaign by the group Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe to overturn the law that bans sex between men.

Compiled by Rex Wockner