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world briefs

AUSTRALIA

About 70 percent of employees in the Australian state of New South Wales (where Sydney is) will have the right to take off work to care for a sick domestic partner under a deal hammered out April 17 between employers, unions and the state government, reported the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The newspaper said the new definition of "family" is "broader" than any previous definition in Australia.

The agreement was reached prior to the start of hearings of the Industrial Relations Commission, where the issue is up for debate.

A gay man in the state of Tasmania plans to open a sperm bank for lesbians, reported the Reuters news service.

Lesbians are often denied access to regular sperm banks.

Richard X, whose last name was withheld, said he will collect semen in glass jars and inseminate women with syringes.

A spokesman for the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group, Rodney Croome, expressed support for the project.

"It's much safer than what exists now, where lesbians have to have casual sex," Croome said. The Reuters dispatch did not say if Richard plans to screen the semen for viruses.

Political extremists forced the Australian National Gaymes, held over Easter weekend in Adelaide, to move the swimming events by dyeing the pool water purple with a toxic substance, reported local sexual minority newspapers *Brother Sister* and *Adelaide GT*.



The right-wing group National Action took credit for the attack in calls to news agencies.

About a dozen National Action members also later heckled and jeered lesbians and gay men arriving at the relocated swimming events.

Hundreds of athletes participated in the Gaymes, which also included volleyball, bowling, softball, netball and soccer.

BRAZIL

Latin America's first gay resort opened on Easter weekend, 42 miles off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, said the daily newspaper *O Globo*, ac-

ording to *The Washington Blade*.

The Maria Ruca Beach Hotel will be able to accommodate 100 people when it gets up to speed in about six months, the report said.

BRITAIN

The Village Book Shop, a Manchester, England, gay bookstore, was torched and destroyed in the early hours of April 3, reported London's *Capital Gay*.

Police believe an incendiary device was thrown through a ground-floor window.

There are no known witnesses. Police have not yet classified the arson as a hate crime.

BBC-TV has commissioned its first show targeted exclusively at gay men and lesbians, reported London's *The Daily Telegraph*.

The company said the "glossy magazine-style" program, which debuts on BBC2 in June, will be "camp, frothy and fun."

The production and editorial teams will be mostly gay, the network noted.

CANADA

Four hundred mostly gay and lesbian protesters prevented radio evangelist Bob Larson of Denver, Colo., from speaking at the University of Winnipeg in Manitoba on April 21, reported the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Sun*.

The demonstrators shouted, blew whistles and stamped their feet for two hours and then rushed the stage when Larson finally appeared. Larson quickly fled, saying he feared for his life.

"Never in 25 years have I been prevented from speaking by a violent mob," he told reporters later. "They were threatening my life."

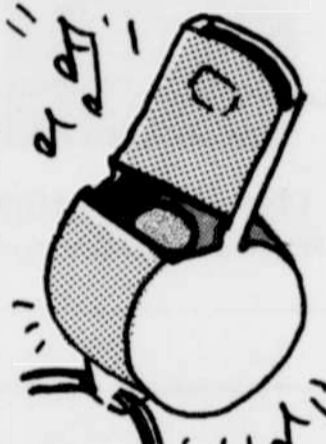
Larson preaches that homosexuals are possessed by demons.

Shareholders jeered a gay employee on April 19 at the annual meeting of Imperial Oil Ltd. in Toronto, reported *The Globe and Mail*.

David Mitges, a chemical engineer at the company for 15 years, tried to make a presentation on the extension of benefits to domestic partners, but he was drowned out by boos.

The company recently announced that it will not extend such benefits, even though its competitors—Shell Canada, Dow Chemical Canada, and Nova Corp.—have done so.

Mitges plans to take his case to the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

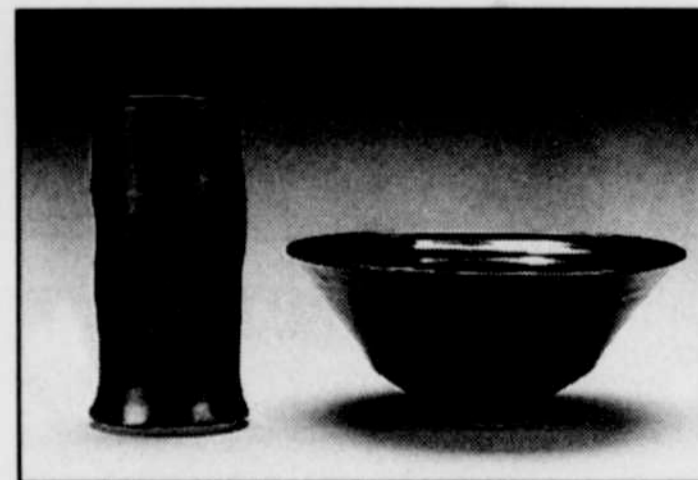


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