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world briefs

BRAZIL

An openly gay transvestite has been elected to the City Council of Colonia do Piauí in the Brazilian state of Piauí, reported Denver's *Rocky Mountain News*.

The state, Brazil's poorest, is in the country's northeastern region.

Katia Nogueira Tapeti, 42, campaigned on foot and by bicycle "and became the most popular politician in the state's history," the *News* said.

Residents described her as a pragmatist who assists in childbirth, extracts teeth, takes care of children at the local day care center and gives public talks on the dangers of AIDS.



She lives openly with her gay "husband," 28-year-old farmer Benervaldo Francisco de Assis.

Gay activists in Rio de Janeiro hailed Tapeti's election as a big victory for gay rights, the *News* said.

BRITAIN

BBC Radio 5 Live's gay and lesbian news program *Out This Week*, has won the Sony Radio Awards Gold Award for best British magazine program for its live broadcasts from Stonewall 25 last year in New York City.

The judges called *Out This Week* "an original, lively program, combining historical background with intelligent interviews with people of great interest in their own right."

London gay men and lesbians invaded a prestigious school of psychotherapy April 29 and halted a speech by controversial U.S. psychiatrist Charles Socarides, according to a press release.

About 20 protesters calling themselves "Dykes and Fags Gone Mad" stormed the podium at Regents Park College and sprayed Socarides with luminous sticky pink foam while blowing whistles and fog horns. Socarides was led away by guards; after 10 minutes, police removed the demonstrators. There were no arrests.

Socarides, a professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York, is a leading proponent of therapies designed to turn homosexuals straight. He testified as a medical expert when the U.S. Congress held hearings on lesbians and gay men in the military.

Dykes and Fags Gone Mad spokesman Fernando Guasch told the audience of psychotherapists that Socarides' lecture could not be seen as a mere academic exchange of ideas.

"For 35 years this man has fought against equal rights for lesbians and gay men," Guasch said. "He has damaged untold numbers of people. This man's work is part of a political war against the gay community. For this man to be invited to speak by prestigious British psychotherapeutic institutions is an insult to lesbian and gay people."

Socarides was originally scheduled to give the annual lecture to the National Health Service's Association for Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy but he was replaced after protests from APP members.

Socarides' son Richard, a member of President Clinton's White House staff, is openly gay, the press release stated.

GERMANY

Germany's Green Party demanded on May 4 that the government apologize to gay men arrested between 1935 and 1969 under a Nazi-era law that banned homosexuality.

The party also insisted that compensation be paid to gay men who were placed in concentration camps.

Gay Green Member of Parliament Volker Beck said, "The 50th anniversary of the liberation from fascism should be an occasion to have homosexual victims of National Socialism finally get justice."

During the 34-year period, about 50,000 gay men were prosecuted, according to Reuters news service. More than 5,000 homosexual men were sent to Nazi concentration camps, where an estimated 3,000 of them died wearing the pink triangle, Reuters said.

MEXICO

One of Mexico's leading gay and AIDS activists, Jorge Romero Mendoza, died in late April of AIDS complications in Guadalajara, his home city.

Romero attended many world conferences of the International Lesbian and Gay Association as well as the International Conferences on AIDS. He co-organized the 1991 ILGA conference in Mexico.

Romero's ashes will be spread around the Homomonument in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, his favorite place.

He is survived by his lover of 10 years, Arturo Leal Lopez, and his best friend, Pedro Preciado Negrete.

NETHERLANDS

The 1998 Gay Games organizers in Amsterdam have gone on-line and are seeking help in cyberspace to construct their World Wide Web page. E-mail elich@gaygames.nl.

Bucking national law, an Amsterdam court last week let a single woman adopt a 7-year-old Brazilian girl who has lived with her for six years, reports correspondent Bert Schuur.

The move violated a 1986 Dutch Supreme Court ruling that only married heterosexual couples could adopt.

"Single parents also can provide a stable home," the Amsterdam court decided. "Developments in society demand change in this area."

The state is not expected to appeal.

POLAND

The decision by the committee drafting Poland's new constitution to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation has provoked heated opposition, reports *The Warsaw Voice*.

"Does this mean that intercourse with animals or a corpse will also be protected?" asked President Lech Walesa's representative on the parliamentary committee, Wladyslaw Kulesza.

Catholic Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek called the plan "an example leading toward extremes which cannot be accepted by any normal society."

Gay activists seemingly have embraced the old notion that there's no such thing as bad press.

"This is a real psychological breakthrough," said Piotr Brodacki, president of Lambda Warsaw. "We want people to see that we do exist."

The constitutional committee voted 16 to 6 with 7 abstentions to protect lesbians and gay men from discrimination. The final document must be approved by both houses of parliament and a vote of the citizenry.

SPAIN

Spain's parliament in April banned discrimination based on sexual orientation, according to a sketchy report posted on the Internet by the Barcelona gay group Coordinador Gai-Lesbiana.

"We don't have the final version of the law, but the important thing is that for the first time in Spanish history we will have a law which will punish discrimination against lesbians and gays," the e-mail posting said.

Reported by Rex Wockner. Translators for this column are Guido Gaietta, Mario Inchiosa and John Styber.

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