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**world briefs**

**AUSTRALIA**

An Australian lesbian was ordered Feb. 2 to pay her former lover a \$113,000 lump sum for support of two children the couple conceived via artificial insemination.

The women lived together from 1986 to 1994, and the children were born in 1989 and 1992.

"It is unconscionable for the defendant now to seek to make no contribution whatsoever to the upbringing of these children," ruled New South Wales Supreme Court Judge David Hodgson, noting that the woman had led her partner to believe they would raise the children together.

The women's names were not released.



Paul O'Grady, the only openly gay person in any Australian parliament, announced in January that he is sick and will resign his seat in the New South Wales Legislative Council, reported the lesbian and gay newspapers *Brother Sister* and *Capital Q*.

O'Grady, a left-ist Labor Party stalwart, entered the state parliament in 1988 at age 27. In 1992, he made history by demanding that his lover, Murray Ward, receive the same travel benefits as the spouses of heterosexual MPs.



The Australian Defense Force has OK'd plans by the lesbian and gay military group G-Force to enter a tasteful float in Sydney's lesbian and gay Mardi Gras parade next month, reported *Capital Q* and the *Melbourne Star Observer*.

"It's world history in the making," said G-Force President David Mitchell. "The aim is to thrust our group into the spotlight to offer support and show gay and lesbian people in the forces that there are others."

Australia's military does not discriminate based on sexual orientation.

**CANADA**

The Supreme Court of British Columbia upheld on Jan. 19 the right of Canada Customs to impound "obscene" matter at the border.

The case was brought by Vancouver's Little Sister's Book and Art Emporium, which has been besieged by Customs seizures for years.

But the court also handed Little Sister's an important victory, saying that Customs has discriminated against gays—in violation of the freedom-of-expression and equality provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms—by singling out gay material for confiscation.

Little Sister's called that part of the ruling a major civil-liberties victory, and said it will appeal the finding that Customs is allowed to declare material obscene and impound it.

**COSTA RICA**

In the latest example of the power of Internet activism, Costa Rica's homophobic *Radioperiodico Reloj* news network acknowledged on Jan. 15 that it has been inundated with faxes from angry gay men and lesbians "around the world."

"Our trash baskets are overflowing," the radio network said in an editorial that went on to bash gays more harshly than before.

The deluge was the result of Costa Rican gay men and lesbians simply getting on the 'Net and asking for help.

**GERMANY**

Germany observed its first official remembrance day for victims of the Nazis on Jan. 27, but lesbians and gay men were not very happy about it.

"Fifty-one years after the end of the Nazi tyranny, gay people persecuted by the Nazis are still not officially recognized as such by compensation laws,"

the German Gay Federation charged in a press release.

Gay member of Parliament Volker Beck accused the government of waging a "shameful...petty bureaucratic war" against gays and some other groups that were targeted by Hitler.

**ISRAEL**

The country's leading gay organization, the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights, will run full-page newspaper ads to respond to an anti-gay hate campaign.

The ads will carry signatures of some 200 intellectuals, artists, professors, community leaders and civil-rights activists.

Problems began in December, after a rabbi who is a member of the Knesset said that homosexuals deserve death. Since then, several SPPR activists and gay-friendly Knesset members have received death threats, and the homes of two SPPR members have been ransacked.

The written threats promise "strange and unusual deaths" and praise Yigal Amir, the man who shot Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

**NETHERLANDS**

Dutch lesbians could win the right to adopt a lover's biological children if a legal battle launched by the new group Test Case Duo-Motherhood is successful.

The women promise to fight all the way to the European Court of Justice if necessary.

"We're not talking about an outrageous demand by a handful of urban dykes who want to become mommies," said spokeswoman Isabel Hoving. "It is a legitimate family arrangement that is becoming ever more widespread."

At present, if their biological mother dies, children can be removed from a lesbian household by relatives.



The Dutch government announced plans Jan. 26 to fund queer groups in developing nations, saying gay and lesbian rights are human rights.

Dutch embassies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean will be asked by the Ministry of Development Cooperation to identify organizations in need of assistance.

**SWEDEN**

Sweden's top female rock star, Eva Dahlgren, married her girlfriend, Efva Attling, on Jan. 25 at a fisherman's cabin on Tynningsoe Island off Stockholm.

Local newspapers devoted several pages to the wedding. The press was flung into a frenzy a day earlier, when Dahlgren outed herself by applying for the marriage license.

"Rumors about Dahlgren's homosexuality...circulated in the Swedish gay and lesbian community, but up to now she...avoided all discussions of this side of her personal life," said Stockholm activist Bjoern Skolander.

The Swedish gay and lesbian newspaper *QX* responded to the wedding with a call for Jan. 25 to become Sweden's annual coming-out day, in remembrance of the major impact of Dahlgren's actions.

Sweden is one of three nations where gay men and lesbians can marry under registered-partnership laws that grant all the rights of marriage except access to church weddings, adoption, artificial insemination and in-vitro fertilization. Denmark and Norway have identical laws.

**ZIMBABWE**

London's respected *Gay Times* newsmagazine has been banned by Zimbabwe's Department of Customs and Excise as "pornographic."

The move follows months of anti-gay rhetoric in Zimbabwe, spearheaded by President Robert Mugabe.

*Compiled by Rex Wockner*