

world briefs

BRITAIN

A gay man or lesbian living in British public housing with his or her lover soon will be able to keep the apartment if the lover dies, London's *Daily Telegraph* reported April 25.

Britain's housing minister has instructed local authorities to offer long-term gay couples joint tenancy like married couples receive.

CANADA

Following the January ruling that Canadian Customs discriminated against the Vancouver gay bookstore Little Sister's by singling it out for seizures of "obscene" material, the Supreme Court of British Columbia has now granted the store damages and slapped an injunction on the Customs agency, reported *Xtra! West*.

The bookstore will get around \$170,000 for lawyers' fees and \$110,000 to cover expert-witness expenses. The injunction restrains Customs from maintaining a "lookout" for material headed to the store.

Little Sister's is appealing a part of the January ruling that upheld Canadian Customs' general right to impound "obscene" matter. The store claims such seizures are unconstitutional.

The appeal will go to the British Columbia Court of Appeal and then probably to the Supreme Court of Canada.



Gay MP Svend Robinson introduced a bill April 16 to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation under the Canadian Human Rights Act.

Robinson's move was designed to embarrass the ruling Liberal government, which has procrastinated on pledges to amend the act for several years.

"I'm trying to keep the heat on," Robinson said.

On March 20, federal Human Rights Commissioner Max Yalden blasted the Liberals for breaking their promises to gay men and lesbians.

The next day, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien pledged to add the protections before next year's general elections.



The premier (governor) of British Columbia said "yes" when the Vancouver gay newspaper *Xtra! West* asked him if gay men and lesbians should be allowed to marry.

"I've never made any secret of it [my support]," said Premier Glen Clark. "I'm surprised actually that the legislation is taking as long to catch up to that. In fact, there are gays and lesbians who are married now. So this has reached [the stage of a] technical question."

CUBA

The director of the gay film *Strawberry and Chocolate*, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, died April 16 of lung cancer. He was 69.

Gutiérrez was Cuba's most famous director and a central figure in the Latin American cinema. Among his best known films are *Memories of Underdevelopment*, *Death of a Bureaucrat* and *The Twelve Chairs*.

Strawberry and Chocolate swept prizes at the 1993 Havana film festival and in 1995 received an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film in the United States.

HUNGARY

The International Lesbian and Gay Youth Organization is staging its first Eastern European conference, to be held July 5-12 in Budapest.

"The aims of the conference are to gather together young lesbians and gay men [up to age 27] who are involved in or wish to be involved in the establishment of local youth organizations catering for the needs of young lesbians and gay men," says the conference announcement.

The event will have four tracks: human rights,

youth-group structures, international issues and HIV/AIDS.

Food, lodging and all fees are 60 German marks for participants from Eastern Europe and 100 German marks for those from elsewhere.

For registration forms, write ILGYO, Postbus 542, NL 1000 Am Amsterdam, The Netherlands; fax: 011-31-20-618-8172; e-mail: iglyo@intex.ie.

THE NETHERLANDS

By a vote of 81-60, the House of Representatives passed a resolution in April urging the government to legalize same-sex marriage.

The government was asked to submit draft legislation to parliament by Aug. 1, 1997.

"There is no objective justification for the ban on marriage of couples of the same sex," the resolution stated.

A second motion, which passed 83-58, endorsed equal adoption rights for homosexuals and single people, and instructed the government to look into the matter.

Denmark, Greenland, Norway and Sweden allow gay men and lesbians to form "registered partnerships" that grant every right of marriage except access to church weddings, adoption and artificial-conception services.

PORTUGAL

In a first for a Portuguese gay group, ILGA-Portugal achieved official government registration April 18.

The group continues its fight to amend Article 13 of the Portuguese constitution to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation.

"After three months of some successful meetings with high figures of Parliament, we have started to get some skepticism from members of the Commission on Constitutional Revision," said ILGA Chair Goncalo Diniz.

SOUTH AFRICA

Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu, writing the foreword to a new U.S. book of "gay liturgies," by Marilyn Bennett Alexander, says rejecting homosexuals is "nearly the ultimate blasphemy."

Tutu, the famed anti-apartheid campaigner, writing in *We Were Baptized Too: Claiming God's Grace for Lesbians and Gays*, says: "We reject them [gays], treat them as pariahs, and push them outside our church communities, and thereby we negate the consequences of their baptism and ours. We make them doubt that they are the children of God, and this must be nearly the ultimate blasphemy. We blame them for something that is becoming increasingly clear they can do little about."

"Someone has said," Tutu continues, "that if this sexual orientation were indeed a matter of personal choice, the homosexual persons must be the craziest coots around to choose a way of life that exposes them to so much hostility, discrimination, loss and suffering."

The book includes a "celebration of coming out" liturgy, which states, "We are no longer a people of the closet but a people of parades, rainbows and quilts, called to lead your church in a march for liberation."

In February, Tutu became the highest-ranking Anglican to call for the ordination of noncelibate gays, a move which sparked controversy in England, where the Anglican Church is based. In the United States, Anglicans are known as Episcopalians.

Compiled by Rex Wockner



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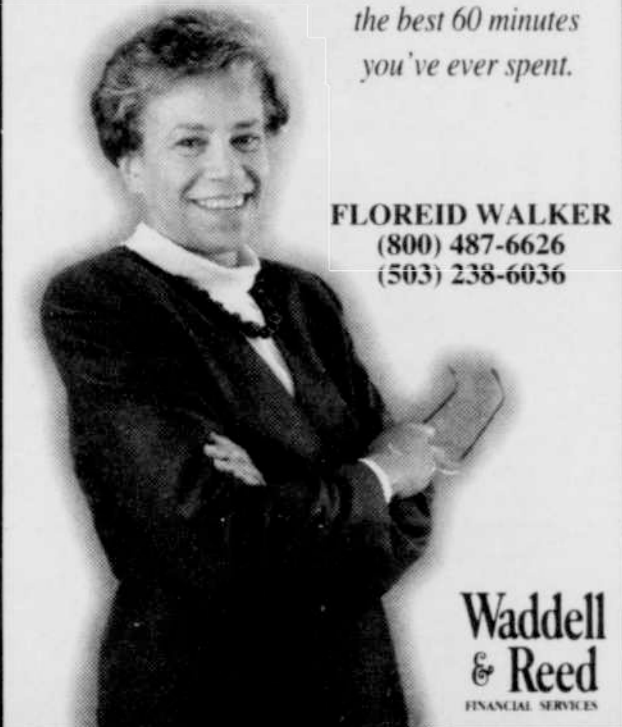
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