

shops, policies and curriculum recommendations that battle anti-gay bias.

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The school board of Surrey, B.C., a Vancouver municipality, banned three gay children's books April 25.

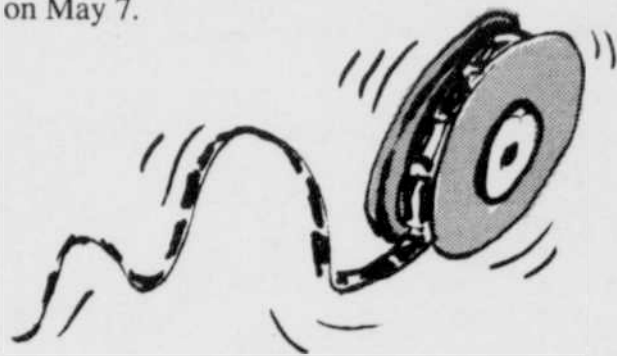
Pulled from elementary-school shelves were *Asha's Moms*, *Belinda's Bouquet* and *One Dad, Two Dads, Brown Dad, Blue Dads*.

According to UPI, the vote led to shouting and shoving matches between some audience members and school-board members.

A day later, British Columbia Premier Glen Clark denounced the board's action.

CHINA

The Chinese government refused to let director Zhang Yuan accompany his gay film *East Palace, West Palace* to the Cannes Film Festival on May 7.



Zhang's passport was confiscated in April and has not been returned.

A copy of the film—which was shot clandestinely and is banned in China—was provided to the festival by a French company that co-produced it after the footage was smuggled out of China for post production.

Named for the cruisy public toilets on either side of Tiananmen Square, the film is considered a pioneering portrayal of contemporary Chinese gay life. The plot centers on interactions between a cop and a young gay writer, whom the cop harasses and eventually arrests.

"The word 'homosexual' has hardly been uttered in China since 1949," Zhang said in a recent interview, referring to the year communist China was founded. "It's as if China didn't have gays. But wherever you have humanity, you will have homosexuals."

CYPRUS

About 120 Greek Orthodox monks, priests and their supporters picketed Cyprus' parliament May 8 in protest against plans to repeal the nation's sodomy ban.



The Council of Europe has been pressuring Cyprus to legalize homosexuality since gay men fighting the sodomy ban won a case before the European Court of Human Rights in 1993.

Parliament is expected to pass the repeal measure this month.

FRANCE

A gay man from Lyon is running for parliament.

Green Party candidate Pierre Gandonniere, founder of the Lyon Gay and Lesbian Forum, says he would defend the politics of his party and fight for gay and lesbian equality.

He hopes his candidacy will encourage other candidates to come out of the closet. At least 40 parliamentary candidates are gay, he said.

INTERNATIONAL

"Fascism and Homophobia" is the theme of the 13th Annual International Gay and Lesbian Youth Organization Conference to be held July 27 to Aug. 3 in Pisa, Italy.



According to a press announcement, there will be presentations on the situation of gay men and lesbians in World War II, an overview of the rise of right-wing movements worldwide, and skills-building workshops in campaigning and combatting fascism and homophobia. Experts from anti-fascist organizations will be invited, and special attention will be given to the work of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth groups in this field.

The conference will be conducted in English and French. A fee of \$89 (U.S.) covers everything, including food and lodging.

For an application, e-mail iglyo@intex.ie; fax 011-31-20-618-8172, or write IGLYO, Annual Conference 1997, PO Box 542, NL-1000 AM Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines has a law prohibiting gay men and lesbians from registering as a party, organization or coalition in the party-list system used in elections, Senate President Pro Tempore Blas Ople revealed May 2.

By law, 20 percent of the members of the lower house of parliament are elected not by voters but through the party-list system of registered national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations.



Groups that are allowed to participate in the process include the labor movement, peasants, fishermen, the urban poor, indigenous communities, the elderly, the handicapped, women, youth, veterans, overseas workers and professionals.

Ople believes sexual minorities may have a "genuine need" and "sufficient numbers" to pursue a seat in the 1998 elections.

Meanwhile, on April 25 Ople called on the military to drop its ban on gay men and lesbians.

"Tolerance and open-mindedness should be the policy of recruitment," Ople said. "Devotion to country and the ideals of courage and heroism are not a monopoly of heterosexuality and the traditional genders."

Ople was responding to remarks by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Arnulfo Acedera.

"We cannot have in-betweens in the military," Acedera said April 21. "What we need are men or women. From where I sit, I don't know of any gays at present in the service, but if indeed there are, they must be advised to get out."

SOUTH AFRICA

Six percent of South Africans are HIV-positive, the Health Ministry reported in April.

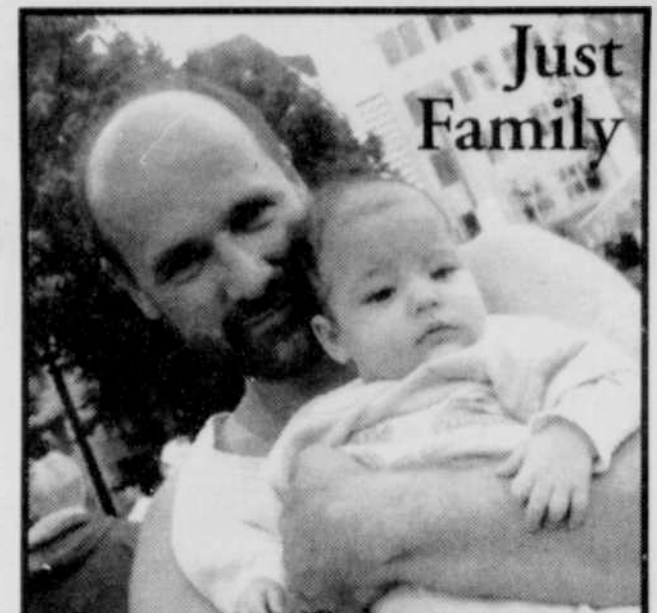
That's about 2.4 million people. The highest infection rate is in Northwest Province, near Johannesburg.

Compiled by Rex Wockner

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