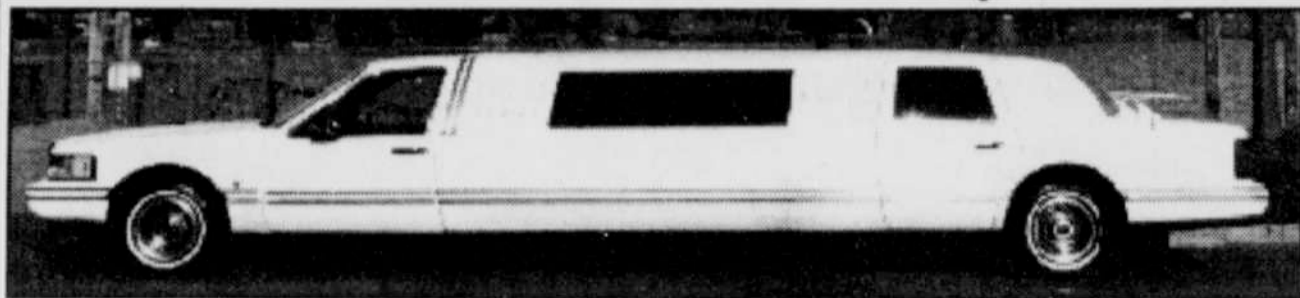


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# world briefs

## AUSTRALIA

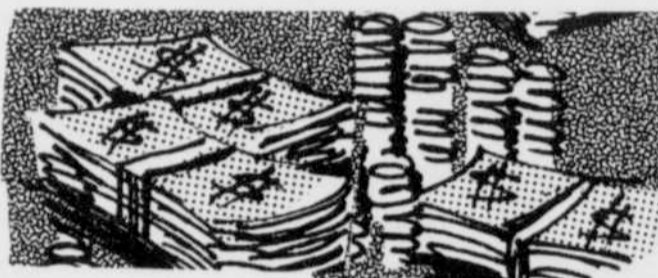
The company that publishes the gay newspapers *Melbourne Star Observer* and *Capital Q* and the national gay glossy *Outrage* has launched *Lip: The Lesbian Magazine*.

"*Lip* takes on the traditions of gay publishing and women's magazines and turns them upside down," says editor Kelly Gardiner. "From fashion spreads to the Agony Aunt, from realpolitik to relationships, *Lip* takes a new look at the possibilities of the women's magazine and laughs out loud."

*Lip* will be distributed free. For more information, phone 011-61-3-9419-9877.

## BELGIUM

The majority coalition of the Flemish regional government agreed June 9 to amend tax laws so that a surviving gay partner will pay lower inheritance taxes—but not as low as heterosexual spouses.



At present, opposite-sex spouses pay a 2 percent tax, while unrelated heirs pay up to 45 percent. Under the proposed changes, a same-gender partner would pay 10 percent.

The changes are expected to take effect Jan. 1, 1998. To qualify, a person would have to have lived with his or her partner for at least three years.

## CANADA

Both of Canada's openly gay members of Parliament won re-election June 2.

Svend Robinson, a New Democrat from British Columbia, and Réal Ménard, of the Bloc Québécois, held onto their jobs even as the right-wing Reform Party and the Conservatives picked up seats around the nation.

The Reform Party will replace the gay-friendly Bloc Québécois as the official opposition to the ruling Liberals. Robinson has represented his suburban Vancouver district for 18 years. His New Democratic Party is the most left of Canada's mainstream political parties.

British Columbia Attorney General Ujjal Dosanjh introduced legislation June 5 to recognize lesbian and gay couples as legal spouses for purposes of child custody, maintenance and access.

British Columbia previously legalized adoption for same-gender families with minimal fanfare or opposition.

Dosanjh also plans to take on in the near future "a comprehensive review of the definition of spouse and its implications for all provincial legislation."

## DENMARK

The parliament of Denmark, the first country to legalize same-gender marriage, has banned lesbians from obtaining artificial insemination in state-run or private clinics.

Starting Oct. 1, the procedure will be available only to women who are married or in a marriage-like heterosexual partnership.

The law does not ban lesbian insemination that takes place outside a medical setting.

The same-gender marriage laws in effect in Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden originally granted every right of matrimony except access to church weddings, adoption and state-funded artificial-conception services.

Denmark's state Lutheran church is soon expected to begin offering a same-gender marriage ceremony even as the restriction on lesbian insemination is extended to the private sector.

## NAMIBIA

Attacks from President Sam Nujoma have spurred gay organizing in Namibia.

The Rainbow Project is speaking out in the media and working to repeal the nation's sodomy law.

The group also has set up legal, cultural, counseling and sports committees. Some members hope to attend the Gay Games in Amsterdam next year.

"We have been very active in the last few months after many decades of hiding in the closet and suffering in silence," says spokesman Niko Kisting.

"The response from the wider society has been very positive and supportive and even the [governing] Swapo [party] politicians have softened their tone somewhat, although they still seem to deem it necessary to now and then denounce us publicly," he adds.

In getting organized, the group has made one startling discovery: Namibia's Labor Code already explicitly prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in the workplace.

In April, Nujoma said gays "should not tamper or disturb our civil society by coming outdoors to do their business."

## PAKISTAN

The World Organization Against Torture is targeting Pakistan over the recent whipping of two males allegedly caught having sex in a public lavatory.

Mohammad Zaman, 38, a mosque worker, and Fahimullah, a 14-year-old student, were lashed publicly May 17 in Bara Bazar in Pakistan's western Khyber Agency, an area administered by local Afridi tribespeople.

The two allegedly confessed to sodomy before the head of Tanzeem Ittehad-e-Ulema-e-Qabail, the local Islamic ruling party, and to Afridi elders.

WOAT urges protest letters to Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari, Office of the President, Islamabad, Pakistan (fax: 011-92-51-811-390); and to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Office of the Prime Minister, Islamabad, Pakistan (fax: 011-92-51-821-835).

## RUSSIA

Russia recorded 1,300 AIDS cases in the first four months of 1997, matching the number reported for all of 1996.



The figure also represents 31 percent of all recorded cases since 1987.

## SINGAPORE

The Singapore gay group People Like Us has been denied registration with the government's Registrar of Societies and thus cannot operate legally.

The group says via its World Wide Web site that it has tried to learn the reason for the denial, with no luck, and has complained to the minister for Home Affairs.

Under Singapore law, any unregistered organization "shall be deemed to be an unlawful society."

Those involved in such a group may face a fine up to \$3,000, imprisonment up to three years or both.

Compiled by Rex Wockner

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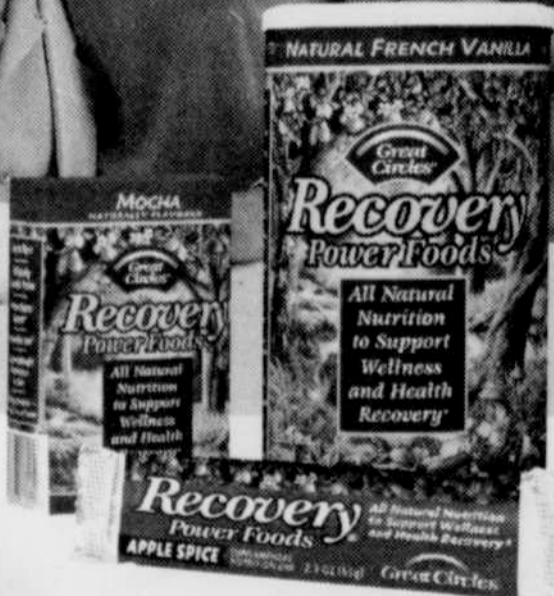
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