

WORLD news BRIEFS

CANADA

On April 2, the Supreme Court ordered Alberta to protect gay men and lesbians from discrimination.

In a case brought by a man fired from a Christian college due to his sexuality, the court ruled Alberta's failure to include sexual orientation protections in its Individual Rights Protection Act violates the national Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"The exclusion sends a message to all Albertans that it is permissible, and perhaps even acceptable, to discriminate against individuals on the basis of their sexual orientation," Justice Peter Cory wrote for the court. "The effect of that message on gays and lesbians is one whose significance cannot be underestimated.... Perhaps most important is the psychological harm which may ensue from this state of affairs. Fear of discrimination will logically lead to concealment of true identity, and this must be harmful to personal confidence and self-esteem."

The 7-1 decision stipulates that Alberta's human rights statute must be interpreted as including sexual orientation, effective immediately.

The Canada Family Action Coalition denounced the decision.

COLOMBIA

On March 26, the Constitutional Court ruled private religious schools cannot ban gay and lesbian students.

The court declared: "Homosexuality is a condition of the human person that implies the choice of a life option equally as respectable and valid as any other."

JAPAN

A book that posthumously outed the famed author Yukio Mishima was recalled March 30 after his family secured an injunction from the Tokyo District Court.

The family argued the author of the book, Jiro Fukushima, violated copyright laws by publishing letters that he had personally received from Mishima—letters which confirmed Mishima's homosexuality.

The family's lawyer denied a charge from Fukushima's publisher that the injunction was not really about copyright issues but rather about concealing Mishima's gay relationships.

Fukushima claims he and Mishima were lovers for four months in 1951, when Mishima was 26, and again for five years in the early 1960s.

MEXICO



PHOTO BY REX WOCKNER

Openly lesbian Congresswoman Patria Jiménez met with Mexico City Mayor Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas March 24 to begin planning the city's first gay and lesbian community center.

"He's an incredible person and among his many plans he has promised us he'll construct the Gay-Lesbian-Transgendered Community Center—a true triumph that really fills us with pride," Jiménez said of Cárdenas.

NEW ZEALAND

In late March, a transsexual was elected to the Grey District Council on South Island.

Jacqui Grant, known as the "Tranny Granny" for fostering more than 50 children,

became the first transsexual member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in January.

Grant has lived as a woman for more than 25 years and is thought to be the only transsexual approved as a foster parent by the state Children and Young Persons Service. She also runs courses for children with behavioral problems and founded a facility for endangered animals.

New Zealand has one other openly transsexual elected official, Carterton Mayor Georgina Beyer.

POLAND

The Mr. Gay Poland contest was delayed by a bomb threat March 27 in Warsaw.

Police searched the club Tango for two hours as the 400 attendees, including Secretary of



PHOTO COURTESY OF NOWY MEN

Wienecyislaw Gasz State Barbara Labuda and several members of Parliament, waited outside in the cold. No bomb was found.

Knurow resident Wienecyislaw Gasz, 26, was selected Mr. Gay Poland 1998. The event was sponsored by *Nowy Men*, a gay magazine. All profits from the evening were sent to the newly-established Bosnian Gay Group in Sarajevo.

ROMANIA

Mariana Cetiner, the Romanian woman who spent two years in jail for "luring another woman into sexual intercourse," has issued a public thank you to those who fought for her release.

The letter, dated April 1, reads: "I would like to thank all of you for being by my side. Thank you for your letters and I am sorry that I wasn't able to reply from prison. Now, being free, I will try to keep in touch with you."

"As for me, I can tell you that, with the help of Amnesty International, the Romanian Helsinki Committee and the lawyer Monica Macovei, I intend to take my case back to court, so that the truth comes out.... It seems that being a lesbian in Romania is worse than being a criminal. The detention affected me a lot. The beatings, the treatment in prison affected me." Cetiner, who was adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience in December 1997, was released on March 18.

THAILAND

The country's transsexual beauty pageant returned in late March after a six-year hiatus, and 22-year-old Thanaporn Wongprasert of Bangkok was crowned Miss Tiffany 1998.

The event, staged in the resort city of Pattaya, coincided with the annual Miss Thailand pageant in Bangkok.

Wongprasert said she will spend the \$1,300 prize money to make herself more beautiful.

The event attracted 1,500 spectators, mainly local businessmen with their wives and small children, according to *Agence France-Presse*.

■ Compiled by REX WOCKNER

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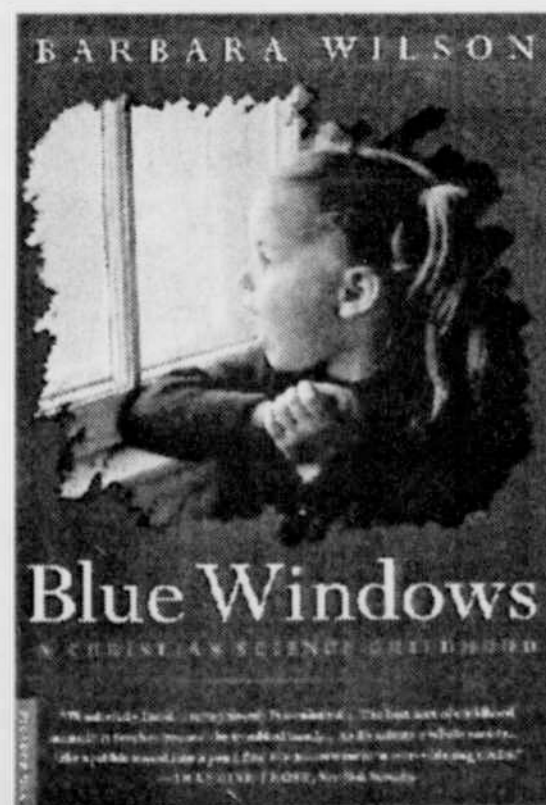
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