

WORLD news BRIEFS

AUSTRALIA

Health officials have instructed medical clinics and health centers to hide the nation's official gay health guide in a cabinet and show it only to selected individuals.

The 100-page booklet was produced with Australian Health Department funds by, among others, the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. It offers descriptions of anal and oral sex, and tips on visiting tea rooms and bathhouses.

A new policy from health officials says the booklet should not be displayed in waiting rooms or community venues.



BRITAIN

An estimated 40 gay activists organized by the group OutRage! zapped 800 Anglican bishops at London's Festival Pier July 28 as the prelates boarded a boat to cruise the Thames.

The bishops were attending the Anglican Church's decennial Lambeth Conference.

The protesters castigated the bishops for supporting anti-gay discrimination and chanted, "Church of hatred, church of fear, stop crucifying queers."

Some protesters were dressed as bishops, priests or nuns. Two OutRage! "bishops" kissed each other while a gay male nun sprinkled the real bishops with "homo water...to cleanse them of the sin of homophobia," a takeoff on holy water used in the Catholic and Anglican faiths.

"Dr. Carey [Archbishop of Canterbury, head of the Church of England] and many of his bishops are acting like the leaders of the Afrikaaner Church in South Africa during apartheid," charged protester John Hunt. "They are opposing equality and endorsing discrimination."

British television stations will air a condom-promotion advertisement that shows two men kissing, hugging and undressing.

The 60-second spot, produced by the gay safer-sex group Rubberstuffers, will be permitted to air after 11 p.m., the Broadcast Advertising Clearance Centre ruled.

"We decided it was a good time to show that having protected sex can be very seductive," says Rubberstuffers spokesman Greg Page. "This advertisement certainly goes further than any other has done. But it's not gratuitous. Authorities tend to rule against overt sex if it tries to sell unrelated things, like yogurt."

CANADA

The Nelson City Council, situated in British Columbia, voted 4-3 to proclaim Gay Pride Day and support a downtown pride banner for the Sept. 5 parade.

Kootenay gay pride spokeswoman Catherine Fisher says: "I'm personally very pleased that City Council decided to go in this direction. I'm disappointed that it was a four-to-three decision, but you need time to let social change filter through."

Mayor Gary Exner voted against the proclamation, saying, "Of all the letters and phone calls I got, more than 90 percent were against it."

Nelson has an estimated population of 9,500. It is 412 miles east of Vancouver and 34 miles north of where Washington, Idaho and British Columbia intersect.

Montreal's sixth annual pride parade attracted 400,000 people to Avenue St. Denis Aug. 3, police said.

"It doubles [in size] every single year," organizer Henri Labelle told the *Montreal Gazette*. "We're a good parade, we're a colorful parade."

The first march, in 1993, attracted 5,000 people.

Vancouver's 20th pride celebration drew 100,000 people to the streets of the West End Aug. 2.

The parade down Denman Street and Beach Avenue was led by Dykes on Bikes and several queer Asian groups.

Many lesbian marchers went topless, while the queer cops and corrections officers contingent grew to 27 people this year.

Politicians who joined the parade included provincial Member of the Legislative Assembly Tim Stevenson and federal Members of Parliament Hedy Fry and Svend Robinson. Stevenson and Robinson are openly gay.

"It's a time to celebrate a sense of community—being out, being proud, being everywhere—but also remembering those who are not able to be here, in other countries," said Robinson. "I always remind people that we are a global movement, and in many countries this would be unthinkable."



Svend Robinson

A journalist for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Edmonton, Alberta, won spousal benefits for his partner in an Aug. 1 ruling by Court of Queen's Bench Justice Lionel Jones.

"It's a great victory," says Denis-Martin Chabot, who first filed an arbitration grievance over the matter in 1994.

The ruling seemingly removes any doubt that an employer can withhold same-sex partner benefits when union agreements ban discrimination based on sexual orientation, activists say.

CROATIA

Soldier Aldin Petric is suing the Croatian military, alleging he was fired because he is gay.

When word of his homosexuality got around, he says, he was forbidden to leave his barracks "to avoid problems which might arise from meetings with other soldiers."



Then, he claims, he was removed from his job at the officers' restaurant, and other enlisted men started beating him up, sometimes in front of officers who failed to come to his aid. Finally, Petric was fired.

He is seeking compensation for psychological abuse and physical pain.

FIJI

The new constitution of the South Pacific nation bans discrimination based on sexual orientation, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported in late July.

The sexual orientation clause has raised the hackles of some politicians and church leaders, who say it will increase homosexuality and permit same-sex marriages. The Methodist Church and the Fiji Council of Churches petitioned Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka to overturn the measure.

Rabuka responded by asking the attorney general to try to amend the clause out of the constitution via action in the Parliamentary Committee on Consequential Legislation.

INTERNATIONAL

The European Court of Human Rights ruled July 30 that Britain did not discriminate against two transsexuals by refusing to alter their birth certificates to reflect their new genders.

The court also said Kristina Sheffield and Rachel Horsham, both 52, do not have the right to marry men. Nations may restrict matrimony to one man and one woman "of biological origin," the court ruled.

"No one chooses to be like this," Sheffield said after the ruling. "I didn't suddenly wake up one morning and say, 'I wonder what it feels like being a girl.' I'm angry with the way I've been treated and the way transsexuals have been treated."

The European Court of Human Rights is the judicial organ of the Council of Europe, a grouping of 40 nations pledged to uphold human rights and cooperate in a variety of activities. The court enforces the 1952 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

British transgender activists say the only other Council of Europe nations that do not recognize gender switches are Albania, Andorra and Ireland.

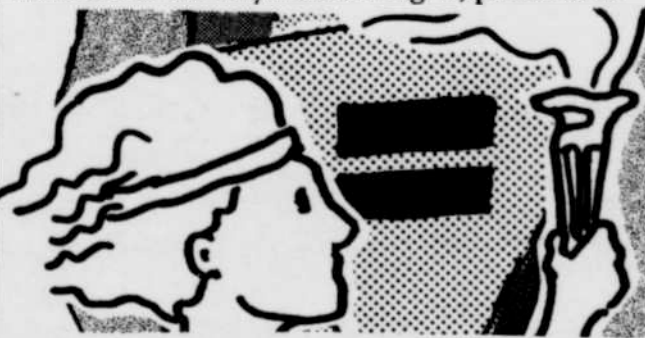
The EuroPride parade in Stockholm drew 15,000 marchers and 30,000 spectators July 25, reports correspondent Bjoern Skolander.

Motorcyclists led the three-hour procession, followed by a contingent carrying the flag of each European nation.

After the parade, the four-hour Rainbow Music Extravaganza featured various gay and lesbian artists and transsexual Israeli pop diva Dana International, winner of this year's Eurovision song contest.

NETHERLANDS

Amsterdam's third annual gay Canal Parade, held this year in conjunction with the kickoff of the Gay Games, attracted 250,000 revelers to the city center Aug. 1, police said.



More than 100 boat floats took part in the procession, which is organized by Amsterdam's Gay Business Association.

Compiled by REX WOCKNER

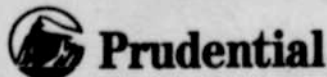


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