

AUSTRALIA

A judge who sits on Australia's top court came out last month by listing his partner of 30 years in the 1999 edition of *Who's Who in Australia*.

High Court Justice Michael Kirby made no further comment on the issue. According to the book entry, he and Johan van Vloten have been together since Feb. 11, 1969.

News reports called Kirby one of the country's most respected legal thinkers.

Rodney Croome of the Australian Council for Lesbian and Gay Rights commented: "It's unprecedented that any judge in Australia should be honest and open about his homosexuality while still in office. He's a great humanitarian, a very hard worker and respected by people from all sectors of the community."

INTERNATIONAL

Trans activists will gather in Washington, D.C., May 25 to 27 to create Gender Freedom International, the first U.S. organization dedicated to promoting international trans human rights.



The group has a specific mission: to work with other international human rights groups to leverage governmental reforms abroad by influencing U.S. foreign policy.

"Why should transgender activists in the U.S. be concerned with conditions abroad?" asks Sarah Fox, GFI's president. "By most accounts, transgendered people in the United States live terrible lives, enjoying basic human rights in only a few scattered regions. They are undoubtedly the most viciously and relentlessly persecuted minority in American society, living their lives in fear and dealing with hate crimes, denial of services, and employment discrimination on a regular and frequent basis."

Fox adds: "However, life for a trans person in the U.S. is remarkably good compared to life for many trans people abroad."

For further information, send e-mail to gfi@gender.org.

ISRAEL

More than 100 protesters picketed the Israel Prizes in Jerusalem April 21, alleging that recipient Avraham Steinberg is homophobic and racist.

According to demonstrators, Steinberg, who is head of medical ethics at Hebrew University's Hadassah School of Medicine, has written that homosexuality is criminally deviant and compared it to prostitution. Furthermore, Steinberg reportedly condemned the use of condoms and demanded that all gay people be tested for HIV.

Steinberg was honored for creative writing in the *Encyclopedia of Medical Halacha*.

NAMIBIA

Deputy Home Affairs Minister Jeremiah Nambinga is seeking to criminalize gay sex because he believes it's evil.

Nambinga made his suggestion April 19 during a budget debate in the National Assembly.

"Homosexuality is evil, homosexuality is anti-social and should not only be condemned but should also be legislated against," he urged. "Homosexuals are patients of psychological and biological deviations."

NEW ZEALAND

Police in Christchurch arrested Christopher Ian Truscott April 28 for allegedly having sex with men without revealing he is HIV-positive.

Detective Inspector John Doyle said Truscott had sexual encounters at North Hagley Park and other locations where men meet for sex.

Police have identified a second man they plan to charge with the same crime, but he has not been apprehended.

SOUTH AFRICA

On April 20, openly gay High Court Judge Edwin Cameron revealed he has AIDS.

He made the statement in an application for a seat on the nation's highest court, the Constitutional Court.

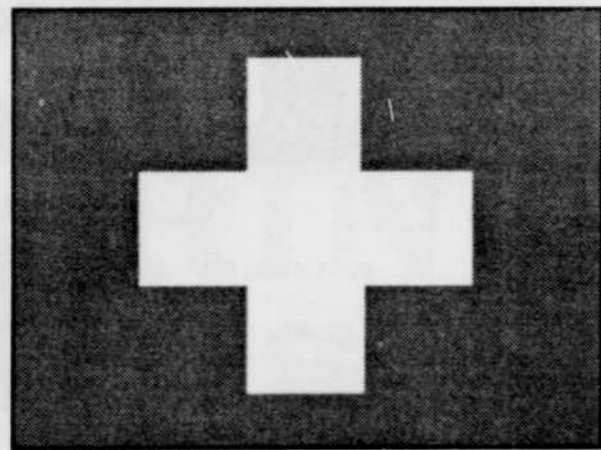
"I am living with AIDS," said the 46-year-old judge. "The choice to speak is available to me...because I have a job position that is secure; because I am surrounded by loved ones, friends and colleagues who support me; and because I have access to medical care. For millions of South Africans living with HIV or AIDS these conditions do not exist. They have no jobs, or their jobs would be at risk if they spoke about their HIV. They not only lack community support, but face grave personal danger if they do so."

SWITZERLAND

Swiss voters approved a new constitution April 18 that bans discrimination based on sexual orientation via the phrase *way of life*, reports the gay group Pink Cross.

Article 8, Paragraph 2 prohibits bias based on race, gender, age, language, social standing, way of life, religion, ideological or political conviction, or handicap.

Gay men and lesbians lobbied for inclusion of the phrase *sexual orientation*, but had to settle for *way of life* and an accompanying explanation that gay men and lesbians are included in the phrase's purview.



Other countries that ban anti-gay bias via their constitutions include Canada, Ecuador, Fiji and South Africa.

UKRAINE

The Our World Gay and Lesbian Center in Lugansk was denied registration by the national justice ministry on April 21.

Officials at the Lugansk Regional Department of Justice declared: "A purpose of the public organization's activity—assistance for improvement of the social and psychological state of people of homosexual orientation and simultaneous reduction of the social tension towards this group of people in Ukrainian society—does not meet the requirements of the law currently in force" regarding citizens' associations.

The law states a "public organization is an association of citizens for satisfaction and protection of their lawful social, economic, creative, age-related, national, cultural, sport and other common interests."

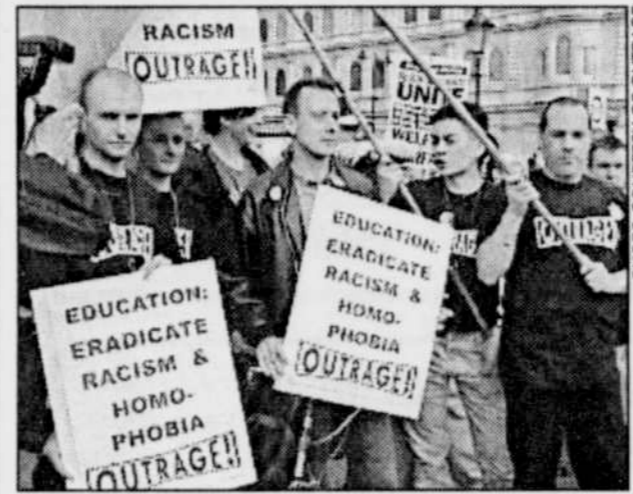
Our World has filed an appeal of the denial with a local court.

UNITED KINGDOM

More than 2,000 people gathered in London's Soho Square May 2 to remember the three people killed in the April 30 bombing at the Admiral Duncan gay bar.

Seventy people were injured in the blast, many seriously.

"Nobody is going to bomb us back into the closet," said Angela Mason, director of the gay and lesbian lobby group Stonewall.



A series of demonstrations followed the bombing of a gay bar in London

Peter Tatchell of the gay direct action group OutRage called on the government to pass legislation specially penalizing homophobic prejudice.

On May 3, Prince Charles visited the blast site and ate breakfast in a nearby gay cafe.

"The British never get put down by these things," he said. "I wanted to come along and show a bit of concern and solidarity with the community struck by this. A lot of help is being given and we owe the police a great deal of gratitude."

A neo-Nazi organization called White Wolves claimed responsibility for the blast in a phone call to the British Broadcasting Corp. The group is believed to be an offshoot of the fascist organization Combat 18.

The White Wolves also claimed responsibility for recent bombings that targeted blacks and Bengalis and injured 46 people.

On May 2, however, police arrested David Copeland, a 22-year-old engineer, and said he is solely responsible for all three explosions and is not a member of any group. Copeland was taken into custody at his home in Cove, southwest of London, and charged with murder.

YUGOSLAVIA

The Campaign Against Homophobia will continue its work despite the NATO bombings and Serbia's war on Kosovo, say group members.

In a media statement, Dusan Maljkovic, deputy executive coordinator, wrote that it's important "to create a balance to the current extreme national homogenization and growth of discrimination of everyone who thinks/acts not according to patriarchal stereotypes and macho consciousness."



CAH is in the final stages of publishing an anthology to showcase "lesbigay creativity in the fields of science, fine arts and philosophy."

Compiled by REX WOCKNER

What Makes Sense?

In the parable of the prodigal son, the turning point of the story comes when the profligate young man, having squandered his inheritance and starving, realizes he must return home and throw himself on the mercy of his father. No amount of effort on his own part will bring him life. Jesus introduces this moment of truth for him by saying, "When he he came to his senses..."

This story teaches that, "when we come to our senses," no matter what our life choices have been, we can always trust in God's love. But what if, unlike the prodigal son, we go astray not by choice but by circumstance?

Growing up gay we learned to think of ourselves as flawed. Not fitting the cultural norm for maleness, we faked it as best we could. No matter that we may have succeeded in convincing others of our worth, we never fully believed it ourselves. In a very real way we failed to fully claim the inheritance of our created worth as gay boys. The consequences for us are devastating and lifelong. Like the prodigal son, we sometimes search in vain for happiness only to find ourselves starving spiritually.

In the parable, both the son and his jealous brother are shocked at the loving reception given by the joyful father. Some straight Christians, not unlike the brother in the story, are scandalized at the notion of God's full blessing extending to us. More importantly, many of us, like the son, harbor a deep-seated disbelief that we are worthy of God's love. It matters little what platitudes we proclaim about God's love; it's what we believe in our hearts that determines our fate.

The spiritual journey is primarily a journey of the heart, and prayer is the heart's true communication with God. When we come to our senses as gay men and turn with our hearts to the God who created and blessed us to be gay, we find the love that heals our deepest wound.

A message from the Anawim Community