

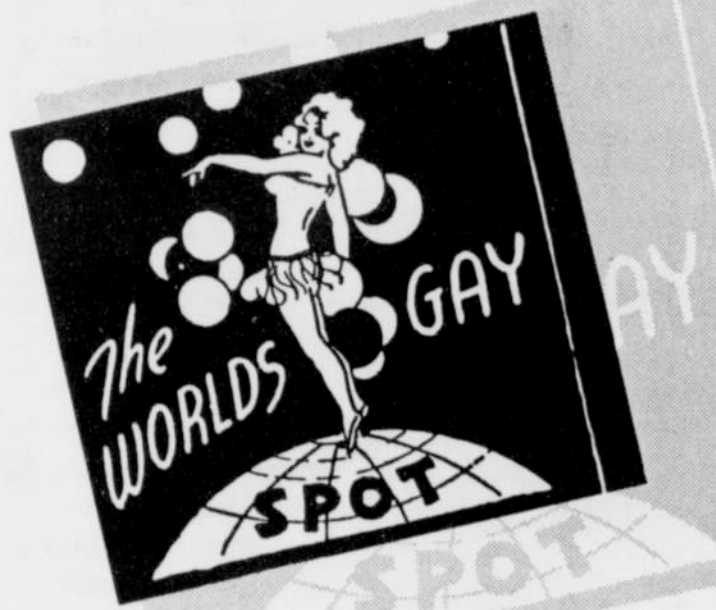
NATIONAL news

serving in the military was in violation of the 1952 European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The British government consequently agreed to abide by the ruling and suspended all current military investigations of suspected gays and lesbians.

The case heard in Strasbourg involved four former members of the Royal Armed Forces who claimed that investigations into their sexuality violated their rights to privacy.

In November, the British Defense Ministry announced that a new military code of conduct would be drawn up as soon as possible.



6. CALIFORNIA REGISTERS DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS

On Oct. 2, California Gov. Gray Davis signed into law a bill that established a domestic partnership registry for same-sex couples and unmarried elderly couples, ensured hospital visitation rights for domestic partners, and provided health benefits for the domestic partners of state employees.

7. GAY ISSUES PROMINENT IN PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN

As the 2000 presidential campaign got off to an early start over the summer, the major candidates couldn't avoid addressing gay topics.

The Democrats, in fact, seemed eager to woo gay voters, with Vice President Al Gore and former Sen. Bill Bradley giving consecutive interviews in *The Advocate*, coming out against California's anti-gay Knight initiative and speaking in favor of gay rights in the workplace.



Bradley went so far as to suggest that sexual orientation be added to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, provoking criticism from some gay leaders who fear such a move would detract from efforts to pass the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

In the Republican camp, Texas Gov. George W. Bush made conflicting statements about whether he would have openly gay people in his administration, while Arizona Sen. John

McCain met with representatives of Log Cabin Republicans.

Bush said he would not meet with the group.

8. FALWELL AND FOLLOWERS MEET WITH GAY ACTIVISTS

On Oct. 24, the Rev. Mel White and 200 other gays and lesbians traveled to Lynchburg, Va., and met with Jerry Falwell and members of his Thomas Road Baptist Church.

Falwell told the gathering that, although he would not change his view that homosexuality is sinful, he would try to tone down his anti-gay rhetoric.

No food or lemonade was served at the gathering, as had originally been planned; instead, there were only small bottles of mineral water.

Falwell had been reprimanded by some evangelicals for planning to share a meal with "sexually immoral" people.

9. CONGRESS FAILS TO PASS HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION

On Nov. 17, the Republican congressional leadership killed the Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999, with the White House making no attempt to save the measure.



Last-minute efforts to revive the measure failed as the White House agreed in negotiations with Republican leaders to let the bill die.

10. UNITED AIRLINES GIVES DOMESTIC PARTNER BENEFITS

In early August, United Airlines announced it would offer full domestic partner benefits to its gay and lesbian employees.

The announcement came after two years of court battles between the Air Transport Association, which represents the major airlines, and the city of San Francisco, which passed a law in 1997 requiring the companies with which it does business—including those that lease its airport—to offer domestic partner benefits equivalent to the benefits married spouses receive.

In May, a federal judge ordered the airlines to offer certain nonhealth benefits. The ATA asked the judge to postpone the effect of that decision pending appeal, but on July 30 the request was denied.

Soon after United's announcement that it would offer a full range of domestic partner benefits beginning in May 2000, two other major carriers, American Airlines and U.S. Airways, said they would start offering such benefits as well.

■ RAWLEY GRAU is the editor of Press Pass Q, a newsletter for people who work in the gay and lesbian press.

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