

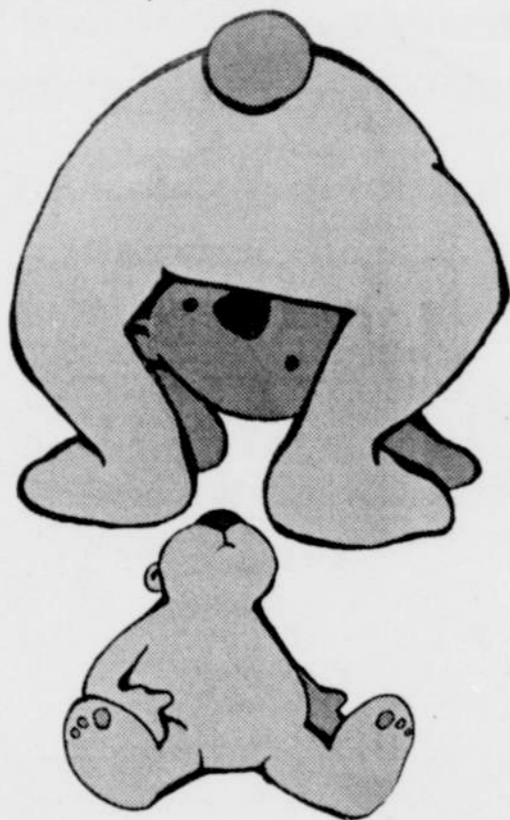
TURKEY

Organizers of the 649th Kirkpinar oil wrestling championships are outraged that the Bears of Turkey group is organizing an outing to the July 1 and 2 event near the city of Edirne.

The wrestlers—burly, mustachioed men who rub themselves with olive oil, wear leather pants and stick their hands down one another's trousers to get a better grip—want the government to forbid the bears' attendance.

"It's immoral," said Alper Yazoglu, chairman of the Traditional Sports Federation. "We are trying every way to have this stopped.... We shall pass this matter on to the interior, foreign and other ministries to ask for this disgusting business to be stopped."

The bears are advertising their outing on the Internet at www.ayilar.net.



Gay "bears" are hairy and beefy men who, in the past decade, have created bear clubs, bars and magazines that bring together men whose libidos are disinterested in the "twink," "pretty boy," and chiseled-body look often promoted by the gay media.

UNITED KINGDOM

The British gay magazine *Outcast* filed a complaint April 14 with the European Court of Human Rights in an effort to end censorship of its Internet site.

The site was shut down March 29 by *Outcast's* Internet service provider, Netbenefit, after lawyers for the gay newspaper *The Pink Paper* alleged in a letter to Netbenefit that *Outcast* might publish an article that would defame *The Pink Paper*.

Under British law, ISPs are legally responsible for content that passes through their servers.

"There was nothing defamatory on our Web site," said *Outcast* editor Chris Morris. "NetBenefit couldn't take any chances, so they shut up our site.... We are hoping to force the government to change the law of libel. [It] should apply to journalists...not to the Internet service providers."

The European Court of Human Rights is the supreme court of the Council of Europe, which counts 41 nations as members.

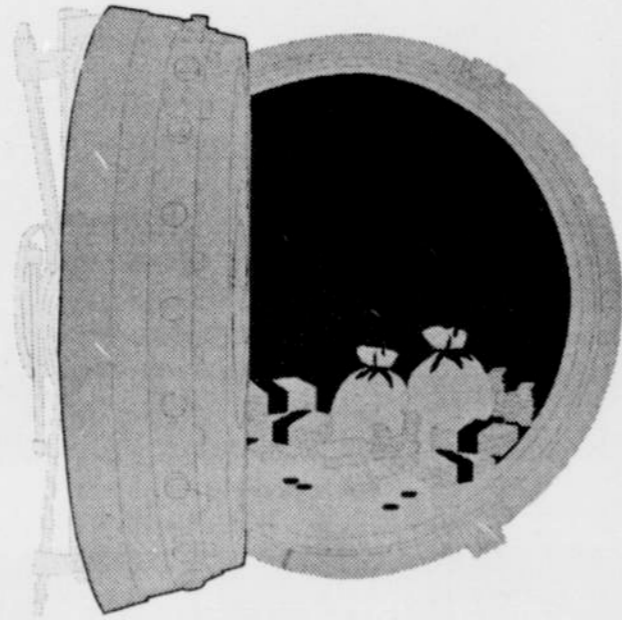
British Prime Minister Tony Blair wants to make it easier for same-sex couples to adopt children, the *Sunday Times* reported April 23.

Blair has thrown his weight behind plans for a new national adoption scheme that would require local officials to consider gay and straight couples on equal footing.

Current law allows an individual gay or lesbian person to adopt a child, but in reality very few succeed. In 1998, three of the nation's nearly 2,000 adoptions were by gay men or lesbians.

The British gay lobby group Stonewall received \$1.41 million from the National Lottery Charities Board on April 13.

The money will be used in Stonewall's Citizenship 21 program to challenge prejudice and homophobia, foster institutional change, and build links among minority communities.



Five people will be hired to run workshops on lesbian and gay issues for employers and government entities. A national lesbian and gay database will be created for use by gay groups, police, health officials and charities.

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.

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