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WORLDnews

AUSTRALIA

The Australian Psychological Society came out last month against therapies that attempt to turn gays straight.

The Australian Council for Lesbian and Gay Rights said the statement will be helpful in deterring mainstream churches from supporting so-called reparative therapy.

"The threat posed by groups advocating for therapies to change sexuality is significantly magnified when they dupe mainstream church groups into supporting their damaging and fruitless programs," said council spokesman Rodney Croome.

BRAZIL

The government of Brazil issued a decree June 8 granting same-sex couples spousal rights in the areas of pensions, social security benefits and income taxation.

"This decision is historic and unprecedented [in] all of Latin America," said Toni Reis, director of the gay group Dignidade.

Meanwhile, a gay "civil partnership" bill remains stalled in Congress. The bill's sponsor, Congresswoman Marta Suplicy, said the decree "increases the chances that my bill can be approved after the [October] elections."

Brazil is both more and less gay-friendly than other nations in the region. On the one hand, 77 municipalities ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and 54 percent of the population supports the idea of a gay partnership law. But the nation also has the highest recorded rate of anti-gay murders in Latin America.

CANADA

The British Columbia Supreme Court ruled June 7 that Vancouver Rape Relief can be sued under the provincial Human Rights Code for refusing to accept a transsexual volunteer because she used to be a man.

Rape Relief tried to have Kimberley Nixon's complaint quashed by arguing that the Human Rights Code does not protect trans people from discrimination, but the court said "gender identity" protections are implied in the law.

The case will be heard by a tribunal in December.

CHINA

The Hong Kong gay group Horizons is suing the Inland Revenue Department over its refusal to grant the group tax-exempt charity status.

The department said it doubted Horizons' activities meet requirements such as promoting the mental and moral improvement of the community, training the mind, raising the artistic taste of the city, and improving the sum of communicable knowledge.

Horizons runs a phone line that gets more than 1,000 calls per year, publishes a newsletter, and promotes gay equality through various public functions.

ICELAND

Iceland's parliament, the Althingi, expanded the nation's gay partnership law last month.

Registered gay couples already had 99 percent of the rights and obligations of matrimony. Now gay spouses will be permitted to adopt each other's biological children as well.

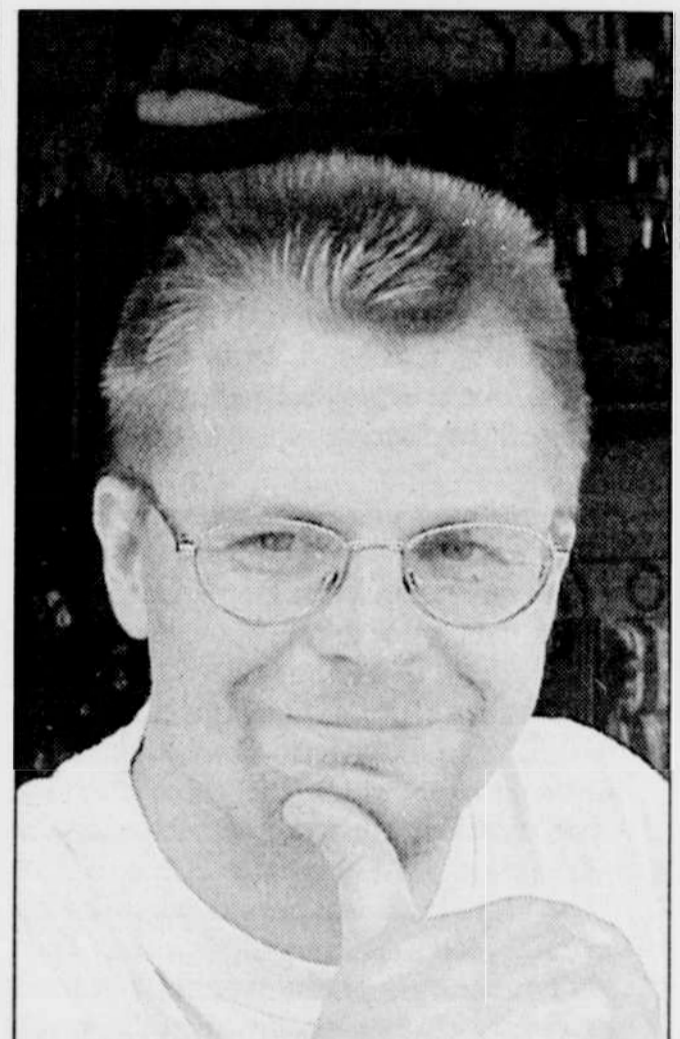
Legislators also extended the partnership law to cover Danes, Swedes and Norwegians who live in Iceland, since those nations have partner laws nearly identical to Iceland's. Other foreigners may enter a registered partnership after they have

lived in Iceland for two years. The adoption measure was opposed by some religious activists, who collected 1,050 signatures against it. (Iceland has a population of nearly 280,000.)

Icelandic Gay and Lesbian Association spokesman Thorvaldur Kristinsson commented: "The determination and acuity of the small movement of lesbians and gays in Iceland has led to a miracle in the last two decades. A recent Gallup poll shows that two-thirds of Icelanders find nothing wrong in lesbians and gays taking responsibility for adopting children. This is a nation that only 20 years ago was so prejudiced that homosexuals were forced to emigrate abroad. But our society is small and messages travel fast. Through cogent arguments we have reached the people of this country."

INTERNATIONAL

The Third World Conference on Gay & Lesbian Culture, scheduled for July 9 through 16 in Warsaw, Poland, will feature Canadian gay filmmaker Bruce LaBruce, U.S. porn star Chris Steele and famed European erotic filmmaker Jean Daniel Cadinot.



Polish gay leader Slawek Starosta

There also will be "countless workshops, concerts, exhibitions, plays, movies and parties," said spokesman Slawek Starosta.

Full information is available on the Internet at www.gay.pl/gay_pride/angiel.htm.

- Austria: Under the slogan "Vienna goes the other way," about 50,000 people marched the wrong way around Vienna's one-way ring road in the city's June 17 pride parade.

- Brazil: Police said 120,000 people converged on São Paulo's main financial avenue June 25 for the city's fourth pride parade. Banners called for an end to hate crimes and prejudice.

- Canada: Thousands walked in Toronto's dyke march June 24 to the tune of Annie Lennox's "Sisters Are Doing It for Themselves." The same day, roughly 500 people marched in downtown Halifax, Nova Scotia.

About 1,000 people attended Edmonton, Alberta's pride parade June 10. In Calgary a day later, nearly 1,000 people walked, danced, skated or rode on floats in the pride parade, *The Calgary Sun* reported.

The first pride parade in the Canadian province of New Brunswick attracted about 100



PHOTO BY REX WICKNER