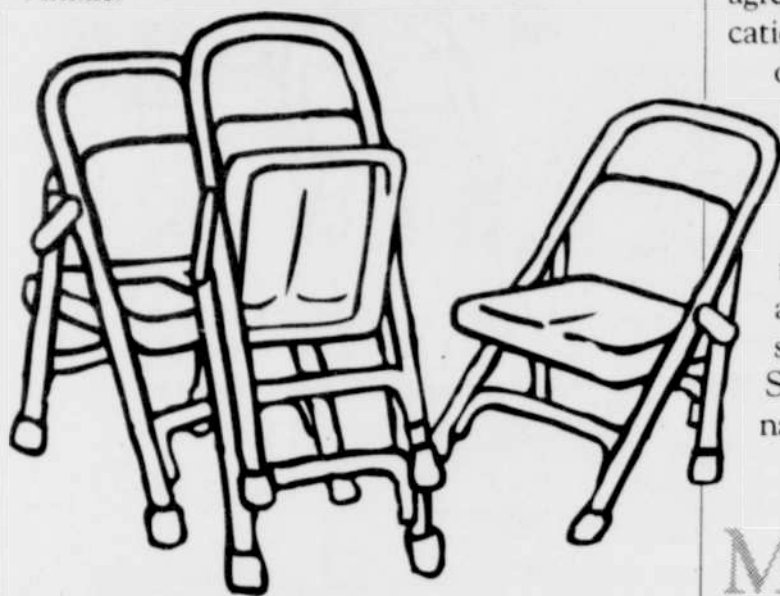


TAIWAN

Taipei's first gay forum, sponsored by the city government, has been scheduled for Sept. 3, *China Times* reported.

The event will feature "noted homosexuals" from Taiwan and around the world, including American activists Michael Bronski and Nan Hunter, according to the city's Bureau of Civil Affairs.



In preparation for the Taipei Homosexuality Forum, the agency has printed pamphlets for the general public explaining gay history and culture and that homosexuality is biologically based. It also has published a comprehensive guide to the island's gay groups and meeting places.

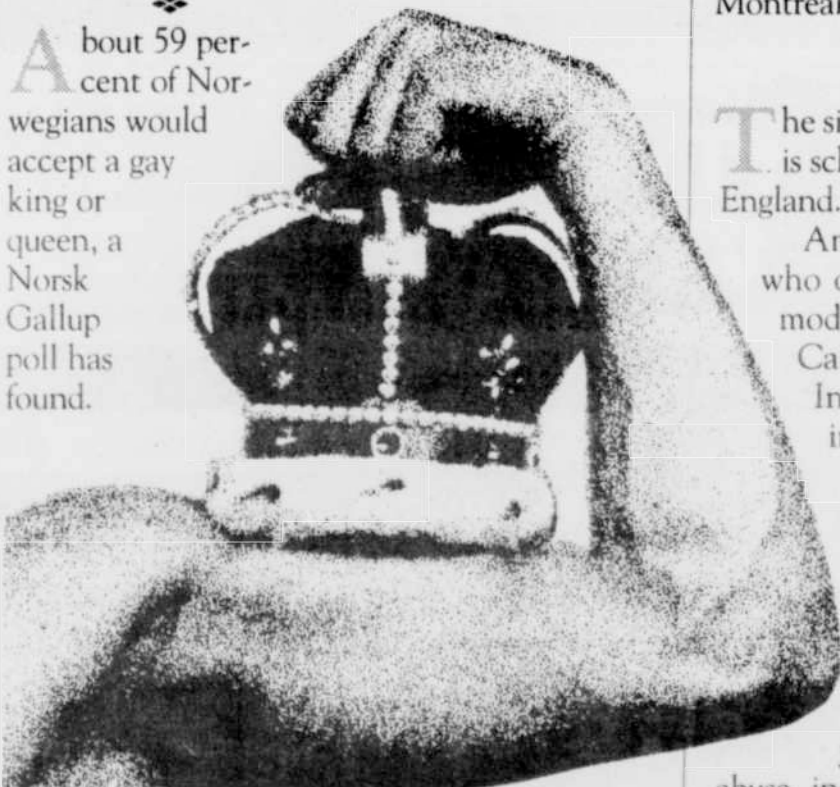
The bureau also will sponsor a gala, a design show and art shows at Warners Village Square near City Hall in conjunction with the forum.

NORWAY

Trond Giske, Norway's minister of churches and education, has upheld the hiring of the nation's first openly noncelibate gay preacher by the Oslo Bishops Council of the state Lutheran church.

He said Jens Torstein Olsen was the "best qualified" person for the job. Bishops who disagreed with the hiring had appealed to Giske, the formal employer of state church clergy, saying the appointment violated a 1997 decision by the church's national convention that preachers with same-sex lovers could not hold "consecrated" positions.

About 59 percent of Norwegians would accept a gay king or queen, a Norsk Gallup poll has found.



Two-thirds would have no problem with a gay bishop in the state Lutheran church. Three-fourths wouldn't mind if the prime minister were gay.

Telephone pollsters questioned 993 people in early May.

CANADA

A gay couple in British Columbia have filed a complaint against the provincial government with the Human Rights Commission because they can't get married.

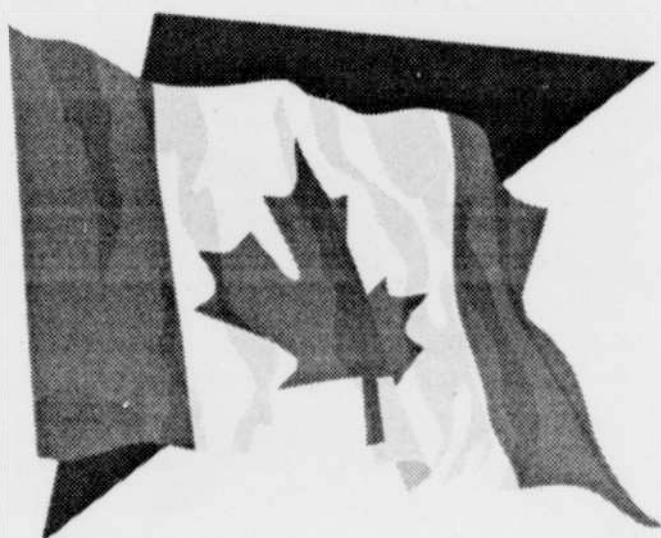
Murray Warren and Peter Cook, who have lived together for 29 years, say Canadian law has no prohibition against same-sex marriage. "Our rights to be treated equally as citizens in a democratic country and as a couple in a long-term, loving relationship are being denied because of our sexual orientation," Cook told reporters.

Provincial Attorney General Andrew Petter agrees. "In a modern society, there is no justification for denying same-sex couples the same option to form marital bonds as are afforded to opposite-sex couples," he said.

On July 20, Petter filed a petition with the British Columbia Supreme Court requesting a determination on whether the federal common law that defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman is constitutional in light of a recent federal Supreme Court ruling that banned discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Montreal's gay pride celebration, Divers/Cité, which attracted 500,000 people last year, has won a Tourisme Québécois Grand Prize.

A total of 14 awards were handed out in the Montreal region to four hotels, two restaurants, two tourist attractions, two tourist events, one outdoor recreation activity and three tourist services.



The pride parade won in the category of "Tourist Event—Less Than \$1 Million Budget." Officials said the parade is an "exceptional contribution toward promoting the image of the Montreal area as a tourist destination."

UNITED KINGDOM

The sixth International Bisexual Conference is scheduled for Aug. 24-28 in Manchester, England.

Among the speakers will be Fritz Klein, who organizers described as "the father of modern bisexuality theory and research." Call 011-44-794-609-2727 or visit the Internet site come.to/bicon for more information.

GUATEMALA

Guatemalan police are abusing transvestites, Amnesty International said July 18.

"There are strong indications that Guatemalan police have subjected transvestites to systematic abuse, including threats, harassment and rape, which is tantamount to 'social cleansing,'" AI USA's Michael Heflin said.

He also called for full investigations into the recent murders of two transvestite sex workers in Guatemala City—"the latest in a string of [such] murders that apparently began in October 1997."

■ 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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