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in the holiday season at our 2nd Monday Luncheon

Monday, December 11, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

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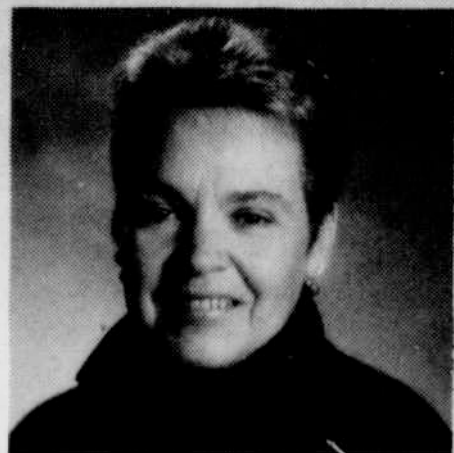
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## WORLD news

### UNITED KINGDOM

Britain will force its Caribbean Overseas Territories to legalize gay sex before Christmas. Almost two years ago, the Foreign Office told Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands to repeal their sodomy laws so the United Kingdom will not be in violation of European human rights laws.

None of the islands did so, and the repeals now will be imposed from London, officials said last month. Homosexuality is punished with life imprisonment on the Turks and Caicos Islands.

Britain's House of Lords refused for the third time Nov. 13 to lower the age of consent for gay sex from 18 to 16, in line with that for heterosexual sex.

The vote was 205 to 144. The measure has passed the House of Commons.

The government of Prime Minister Tony Blair now plans to invoke the rarely used Parliament Act to force the measure into law over the Lords' objections. The act was created to guarantee that the will of elected lawmakers (members of the House of Commons) prevails over the wishes of appointed lawmakers (members of the House of Lords).

### SLOVAKIA

Slovakia has its first nonporn gay publication, *Atribt*, published with a \$6,000 grant from the Dutch embassy.

"We decided to finance the magazine for one year in order to encourage its growth," Dutch Ambassador Henk Soeters told the *Slovak Spectator*. "We provided the financial initiative, and now we hope it bears fruit."

The magazine's editor, Marin Grec of the Bratislava gay group HaBiO, said the organization "wanted to create a magazine focused only on the social, political and cultural themes of the homosexual community."

"The Dutch also supported our April gay and lesbian film festival," he said. "They are an open-minded, politically correct, liberal people, and they have been a great help in Slovakia by setting positive examples."

### CANADA

A gay member of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly has become Canada's first openly gay cabinet minister. Premier Ujjal Dosanjh appointed Tim Stevenson, 55, as provincial employment and investment minister Nov. 8.

"When I was young and wanted to get into politics, I was afraid if I came out, I'd never get elected," he told Toronto's *Globe and Mail*. "I've gone from the closet to the cabinet in 25 years."

### INDONESIA

A mob of 150 masked people wielding sticks and machetes attacked 500 gays and transvestites attending an AIDS awareness party Nov. 11 at a resort near Yogyakarta, Java. At least 25 people were injured, and the building was damaged.

Police said they have no clue who staged the assault. Local media have blamed "Moslems" and people wearing "Arab-style garments."

### MEXICO

The Mexico City police department is reaching out to gays with a pamphlet on personal safety, the *Wall Street Journal* reported. The flier also provides a hot line number con-

necting victims with lawyers.

The brochure was produced by a new police unit that specializes in anti-gay crimes. The *Journal* also reported that two open gays, Arturo Diaz and Enoe Uranga, were elected to the City Council in September.

### GERMANY

The lower house of Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, passed a two-part gay "life partnerships" bill Nov. 10.



Part one gives registered couples spousal rights and obligations in areas such as tenancy, inheritance, hospital visitation, health insurance, immigration, child custody and alimony. Part one does not need approval from the more conservative upper house of parliament and will become law in a few months.

Part two, which equalizes gay couples in areas such as taxation and welfare benefits, does need approval from the Bundesrat and faces a tough battle there.

"Our long struggle for equal rights of lesbian and gay partnerships has been acknowledged and has now succeeded," said Manfred Bruns of the German Lesbian & Gay Association. "The debate in the parliament today and all opinion polls prove there is an overwhelming majority among politicians and in the society for the legal recognition of lesbian and gay partnerships."

The Vatican denounced the German parliament for legitimizing "a moral disorder." Such laws "disfigure the divine project of matrimony, damage the family and produce negative effects on society and on new generations," the church said.

Elsewhere, gay couples have almost all rights of marriage in Denmark, France, Greenland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Vermont. Beginning in January, gay couples in the Netherlands will have access to full marriage under the regular marriage laws.

### KOREA

Hong Suk-chon, the well-known Korean actor who became the nation's first out-of-the-closet public figure in September, is warming to his new role.

"I at least have gotten people talking about homosexuality," he said Nov. 3. "I dream of a day when parents tell their kids that homosexuals are no freaks."

Hong, 29, came out in an interview with a monthly publication on the condition that editors hold the story until he had time to come out to his parents. But before he had a chance to speak to them, a daily newspaper broke the story.

Immediately afterward, Hong broke down during a television interview and said: "I really tried to live properly, but I've failed. I'm sorry."

"If you find that you don't like me anymore, I don't know what I'll do. I'm so emotionally worn out. I'm so sorry to the audience, who trusted me and feel betrayed."

Hong is feeling better now.

"I was so sorry at the time for causing concern to the people around me, especially my parents," he said. "In the first few days, the