

THE NETHERLANDS

Prince Johan Friso—second in line to the throne—is not gay, the government said Feb. 14.

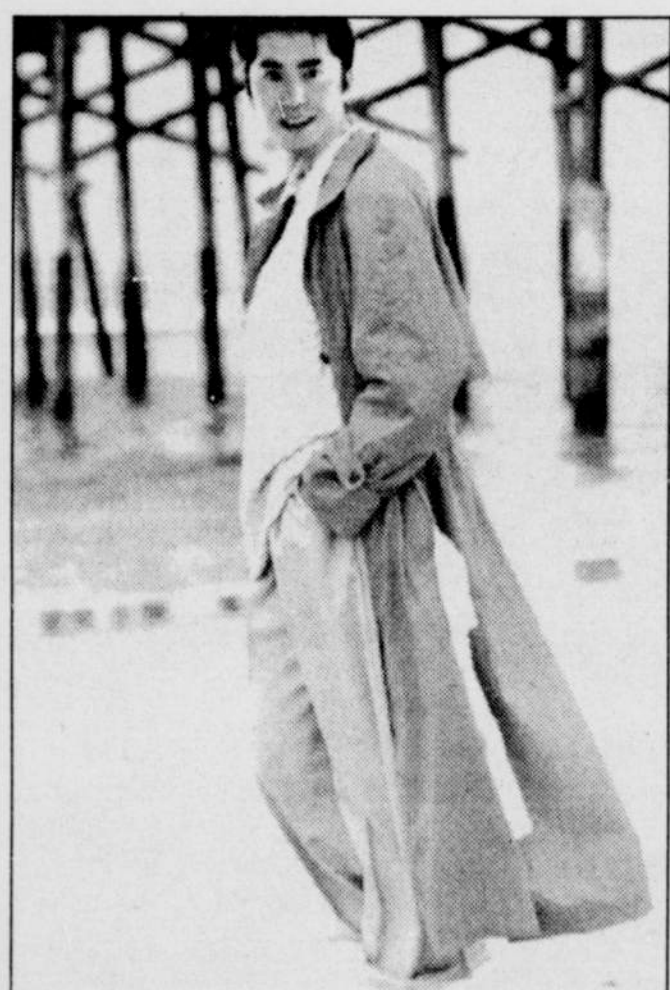
"He's fed up with these rumors," spokesman Eef Brouwers said. "He's not a homosexual."



Prince Johan Friso

The first European Bisexual Conference is scheduled for June 22 to 24 in Rotterdam. "European bisexuals will need to be able to find each other...to exchange information and experience in the areas of freedom of sexual preference and the position of bisexuality within the various countries' societies," organizers said in a press release.

The conference telephone number is 011-31-6-2843-8124. Visit the Internet site www.intbiconf.org/ for more information.



Mao Ning

CHINA

Pop music star Mao Ning was outed after being stabbed near a cruisy Beijing park allegedly by an angry ex-lover, Guan Ming. He apparently has departed China to avoid the media and distressed fans.

Writing in *The Advocate*, gay journalist Steve Friess, who is spending a year working overseas, said coverage of the stabbing marked the first time local press reported on a celebrity's homosexuality. He said the newsmagazine *21st Century* called the incident "the biggest scandal to hit China's entertainment world in recent years."

FRANCE

Lesbian tennis star Amelie Mauresmo and her lover of three years, Sylvie Bourdon, have broken up. "We have decided to go our separate ways," she told *Le Figaro*.

Mauresmo said she hoped the media would respect her privacy. "I have the right to my secret garden."



Amelie Mauresmo

THE VATICAN

Pope John Paul II said Feb. 1 that gay marriages are unnatural.

"Marriage is not just any old union between human per-

sons, susceptible to being configured according to a plurality of cultural models," he said in a speech to Vatican bureaucrats. "You observe that in a very clear way in the ongoing attempts to present de facto unions, including homosexual ones, as comparable to marriage, in which one negates, in fact, the natural character. The natural consideration of marriage shows us that a couple unite themselves precisely because they are persons of different sexuality, with all the spiritual richness that this diversity has at a human level."

NEW ZEALAND

Tens of thousands of people braved the drizzle Feb. 17 to watch Auckland's seventh gay Hero Parade on Ponsonby Road. According to the *New Zealand Herald*, "It was a night of megahigh heels...loud music, transformed trucks, marching girls and boys, dykes on bikes, lesbian mothers with their kids and ordinary folk just out for a look."

Prime Minister Helen Clark cut a ribbon to launch the two-hour parade. Transsexual Member of Parliament Georgina Beyer and Auckland Mayor Christine Fletcher were among other guests of honor.

The 70 floats included entries by the Coast Guard and by local firefighters, organizer Heather Lee said. "The parade was fantastic, colorful, spectacular and amazing."

AUSTRALIA

The police department in the state of Victoria recruited gays and lesbians Feb. 3 and 4 during Melbourne's gay Midsumma Festival.

Acting Superintendent Stuart King said the force needs to reflect the state's ethnic, religious and cultural diversity. The recruitment booth was staffed by a deputy commissioner, an assistant commissioner, recruitment officers, members of the Gay and Lesbian Employment Network and the department's gay and lesbian liaison officer.

Australians are opposed to letting single women and lesbians access artificial insemination technology and sperm banks, a Morgan poll has found. The Federal Court cleared the way for such access last July.

The poll questioned 1,116 men and women 14 and older. A total of 54 percent oppose letting single women access the procedures, and 59 percent oppose giving lesbians access.

Younger people were slightly less hostile to the idea. People older than 50 disapproved the most.

TAIWAN

According to the *Taipei Times*, someone threw a brick Jan. 27 through the window of the local gay bookstore Gin Gin's. Dozens of gay rights groups have denounced the incident.

"It seemed a minor case of a small gay and lesbian bookstore being attacked with a brick, and the mere breaking of a window seems like no big loss at all," the organizations said in a statement. "But if the attack on Gin Gin's was made because it's a gay and lesbian bookstore, then that sends a

strong message of hatred against homosexuality. If the attack with a brick is tolerated today, we might see attacks with petrol bombs in the future."

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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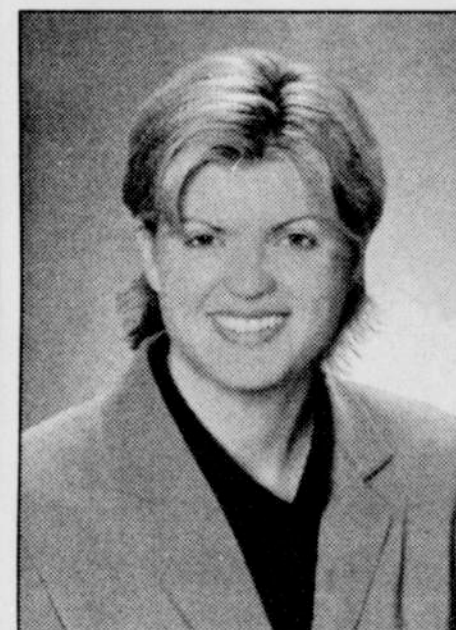
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