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WORLD news

NEW ZEALAND
The world's first openly
transsexual member
of parliament, Georgina
Beyer, will not seek a sec-
ond term next year.

She wants to devote
more time to her Maori
tribe and family and to gay
and human rights issues.
Beyer first was elected to
public office in 1993 and
says she never planned to
spend her life in politics.

"It was not my inten-
tion to be in politics for-
ever," she told local
media. "There are other
things that I want to do
in my life."

Beyer represents the
conservative Wairarapa
region in the southeast-
ern corner of the North Island.
Before becoming a politician,
she was a nationally
known actor and, before that,
a prostitute, stripper
and drag queen.



Georgina Beyer takes to the airwaves

BOTSWANA

A man arrested in Gaborone for engaging in
gay sex has filed suit in the High Court
against the nation's sodomy laws. Utijwa Kanani
says the ban on "unnatural sex" unconstitutional-
ly discriminates against him based on his gender
and violates his right to freedom of association.

He was arrested in 1995 while in bed at his
lover's residence. The case will be heard May 31.

BELGIUM

Former vice premier and current Socialist
Party president Elio di Rupo told Zizo he's



Elio di Rupo (left) takes to the streets

gay April 26. He said he plans to attend Brussels'
gay pride parade, "but don't expect me to dance
on a wagon!"

UNITED KINGDOM

The Ministry of Defence is funding the ongo-
ing gender-reassignment processes of at
least five soldiers, newspapers reported April 30.

Trans people are allowed in the British military,
although many are asked to leave when it comes
time for surgery because Ministry of Defence doc-
tors are not qualified to perform the procedures.
Newspapers said three servicemen have under-
gone sex changes, paid for by the national health
service, and remained in the forces.

The National Lottery Community Fund has
financed a group that campaigns for recogni-
tion by the Church of England of gay priests'
romantic relationships. Changing Attitude, which

has 286 members, received about \$180,000.

Some senior members of the church's ruling
council and some conservative politicians
denounced the grant. The Right Rev. Michael
Bourke, bishop of Wolverhampton, supports it.

"I believe in equality between gay people and
straight people in the church," he told Birming-
ham's *Evening Mail*. "Some people may say that
homosexuality is contrary to some passages in the
Bible on face value, but I think it is no more con-
trary than the ordination of women or slavery."

MSN UK is adding a gay channel in
July.

Gay.UK.net and QueerCompany.com will pro-
vide content. "MSN's biggest Harris Online Poll
in January showed that
gay and lesbian e-com-
merce activity outstrips
that of nongay Web
users," MSN UK busi-
ness marketing manager
Matt Whittingham told
Revolution.

The British Fertility
Society voted in
favor of equal parenting
rights for gay couples
April 26 at its annual
conference in Belfast,
Northern Ireland. Such
rights would include
access to in vitro fertil-
ization, sperm banks,
surrogacy and other
reproductive technology.

Gay activist Peter Tatchell co-authored the
motion, which was approved by a two-thirds
majority. "This vote doesn't change the law, but
it does signal that key members of the fertility
profession believe that discrimination against
lesbian and gay couples is wrong," he said.

POLAND

More than 200 people marched in Warsaw's
first gay pride parade May 1.

Led off by drag queens, the "Parade of Equal-
ity" began at Castle Square, one of Poland's
best-known locales, proceeded down Kra-
kowskie Przedmiescie (a major street in the old
city) and halted in front of the Presidential
Palace, where a declaration was read demanding
President Aleksander Kwasniewski support a
gay marriage bill. Marchers stopped again at
University of Warsaw and accused the school of
anti-gay discrimination before reaching the end
of the route at the Copernicus monument.