

Berlin's Tourism and Marketing Board has published a map for gay visitors. "We are simply responding to demand, especially from the U.S. market," manager Hanns Peter Nerger said.

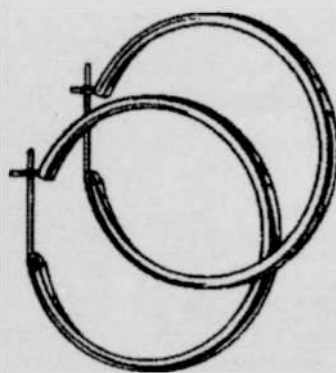
NAMIBIA

Namibia's paramilitary Special Field Force reportedly detained numerous men recently in Katutura, a suburb of the capital city of Windhoek, for wearing earrings.

Officers reportedly said they were acting on orders from vociferously anti-gay President Sam Nujoma, but the Ministry of Information told the BBC: "The president had at no time issued orders in any shape or form for SFF members to act against anyone wearing earrings or any other piercing.... The government does not

condone human rights violations or harassment of individual citizens."

Cmdr. Sacharia Asheela reportedly arrived on the scene while the detained men were being questioned and ordered officers to return their earrings and let them go. According to a journalist at the scene, he told Special Field Force members: "I told you not to assault or touch anybody. Who told you to take these men's earrings? It should not be repeated again."



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SWITZERLAND

Gay couples entered into Switzerland's first legally recognized same-sex partnerships May 8 at City Hall. Under the law, which applies only in Geneva canton, registered gay and straight couples will be treated the same as married couples in dealings with the state except in the areas of taxation, adoption and social security benefits, according to SwissInfo.org.

"We now have the same rights as heterosexual couples," activist Yves de Matteis said as he tied the knot with his lover, Patrick Berguer. "The authorities are recognizing our life together, and that may give our relationship a more lasting perspective."

AUSTRALIA

Five gay protesters were arrested for disrupting the installation of Sydney's new Catholic bishop May 10, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported.

About 80 demonstrators targeted George Pell outside the church with chants of "Church kills queers" and "Shame, Pell, shame" and placards reading "Get your rosaries off our ovaries." The arrests occurred when protesters attempted to squeeze in behind a school choir that was serenading the bishop.

The police said they took action to prevent an outbreak of violence. A spokesman for the protesters said the arrests were unnecessary and were made simply to halt the demonstration.

HONG KONG

Hong Kong actor/singer Leslie Cheung has told *Time* magazine he's bisexual.

He reportedly lives with a partner known only as Mr. Tong. At a recent concert in Toronto, a fan shouted, "I love you," and Cheung shouted back, "I love you too, whether you're a



Leslie Cheung and Tony Leung in 1997's Happy Together

boy or girl," according to Singapore's *The Straits Times*.

About 40 gay activists clashed with police during a World Red Cross Day ceremony May 6 at Telford Plaza in Kowloon Bay.

They unfurled a large banner and flung leaflets to protest the Red Cross' blanket ban on gay male blood donors. Police prevented the demonstrators from confronting Red Cross chairman Yang Ti-liang.

"We urge the Red Cross to refer to the international AIDS prevention guidelines and just exclude blood that really has a possibility to spread diseases," protest spokesman Tommy Chen Noel told the Hong Kong *iMail* newspapers. "Homosexuality is not a problem if people adopt safe sexual behavior."

UNITED KINGDOM

The chairman of Britain's national blood authority has called gay men who donate blood "evil." Mike Fogden said they are "putting at risk the innocent lives of innocent patients."

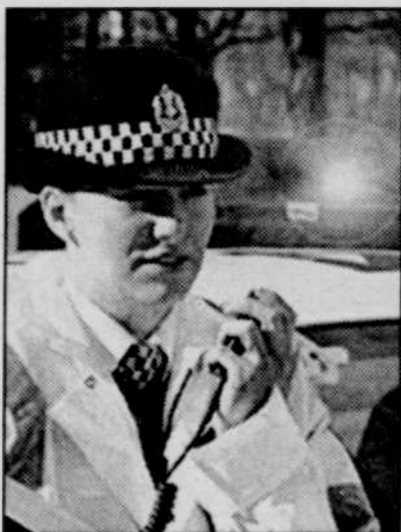
He later was forced by the nation's junior health minister to apologize for the remarks and admitted, "The tone was ill-conceived and unnecessarily judgmental." Like many nations, Britain bans all men who have sex with men from donating blood regardless of whether they have safe sex and are HIV-negative.

JAPAN

Up to eight Japanese transsexuals will file suit to have their new genders recorded on their family registrations, *Kyodo News* reported May 6. The Society of Psychiatry and Neurology OK'd sex-change operations in 1997.

SCOTLAND

Central Scotland Police plan to recruit sexual and ethnic minorities to increase diversity, *The Scotsman* newspaper reported.



Scottish police don't care what's under recruits' kilts

"I would extend an open invitation to all lesbian, gay and transsexual groups to seriously consider the police force as a profession," Chief Constable Andrew Cameron said. "We have an unequivocal openness in Central Scotland toward everyone in our community, and I would urge them to come along and see what we are about." □

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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