

reportedly was a street vendor arrested for selling watches without a license at a teahouse, another was cleaning his motorcycle on the street without his ID, and still another was initially arrested for having a fight with an off-duty police officer. After their arrests, they were placed in the ranks of suspected 'homosexuals' by police eager to stimulate a scandal."

The verdicts, which are expected to be handed down Nov. 14, cannot be appealed because the trial is taking place in an emergency state security court. The sentences could be as high as five years in prison.

UNITED KINGDOM

Retired British soccer star Eric Cantona, who played for Manchester United, will portray a bisexual character in the upcoming television series *Corto Maltese*. The program is based on a comic strip by Italian cartoonist Hugo Pratt.

"I don't have a problem playing a homosexual," Cantona said. "Some of the greatest gays are the most macho."

Manchester's Gay Village has been targeted by a gang of muggers, the *Evening News* reported Oct. 17.

At least 10 men have been robbed in the district just off Hurst Street and relieved of their money, cell phones and jewelry. Police urged gay club hoppers in the area "not to walk about on their own."

Big corporations and the Confederation of British Industry have launched a campaign to end anti-gay discrimination at work, the *Observer* reported Oct. 14. They are worried about lawsuits stemming from new European Union rules protecting gay workers from harassment and job discrimination.

"It's imperative that we attract, recruit and retain people who really are the very best," Paul Rodgers of IBM, one of the campaign sponsors, told the newspaper. "There are also lots of gay and lesbian decision makers running big businesses, and we want them to do business with us, too."

Other sponsors of the "Diversity Champions" campaign include the BBC, GlaxoSmith Kline and Marks & Spencer, the *Observer* said.

GERMANY

A new book by a respected German historian says Adolf Hitler was gay and hung out with a gay clique in Munich in his younger days, although proof that he engaged in gay sex is only circumstantial. The dictator's later persecution of homosexuals was an attempt to insulate himself against blackmail, according to Hitler's *Secret: The Double Life of a Dictator*.

"We can say that Hitler had several homoerotic friendships up through the 1920s," University of Bremen history professor Lothar Machtan told *Die Welt* newspaper. "Many of them would be described by people today as homosexual."

Machtan says Hitler's later relationship with Eva Braun likely was only for show and probably never was consummated. Ernst Rohm, the gay leader of the Storm Troopers, tried to blackmail him by threatening to reveal his sexuality, according to the author, who says Hitler had him killed as a result.

The book reportedly quotes several men and male prostitutes who claim to have had sex with Hitler. The quotes come from published accounts, service notes and police files.

CANADA

Statistics Canada wants to count the nation's gays.

The agency has launched a study in Ottawa, Calgary, Vancouver and Montreal to assess if the time is right to pop the question and to determine how to phrase it. A similar study in 1993 found that many gay Canadians were not ready to feed up.

"We're looking at the feasibility of asking questions about sexual orientation," Viviane Renaud, Statistics Canada senior analyst, told the *Globe and Mail*. "We recognize it's a sensitive topic."

Canada's 2001 census, the results of which are not yet available, gave couples the option of ticking off "same-sex partners" to describe themselves but made no attempt to count non-coupled gays.

URUGUAY

The Chamber of Deputies soon will debate a penal code amendment banning discrimination and moral, physical and psychological violence based on sexual orientation or sexual/gender identity.

It was approved unanimously by the Constitution and Codes Commission and sent to the full chamber for a vote. Should it pass, it will advance to the Senate.

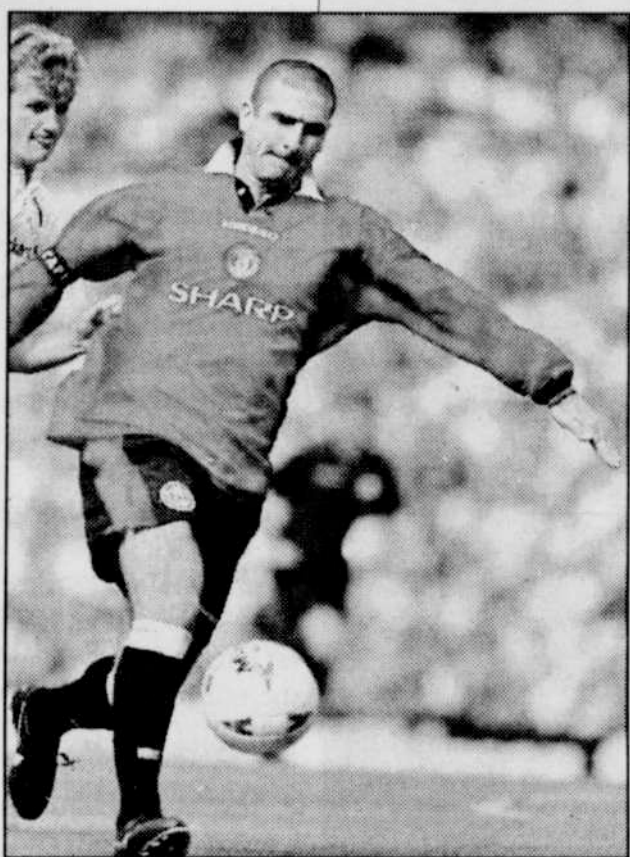
AUSTRALIA

More than 3,000 people already have registered for the next Gay Games, to be held in November 2002 in Sydney. Co-chairman Peter Bailey said that's a record number of reservations a year in advance.

"Volleyball, track and field, marathon, swimming, bowling and tennis are proving to be as popular as ever among the 31 official sports at Gay Games VI," he said. "Sailing, which will take place on the renowned Sydney Harbour, has reached its maximum number of registrations."

The nations with the highest number of registrants are the United States (38 percent), Australia (20 percent), the Netherlands (9.2 percent), Germany (7.5 percent), Canada (5.7 percent), the United Kingdom (4.1 percent) and New Zealand (3.1 percent). [E]

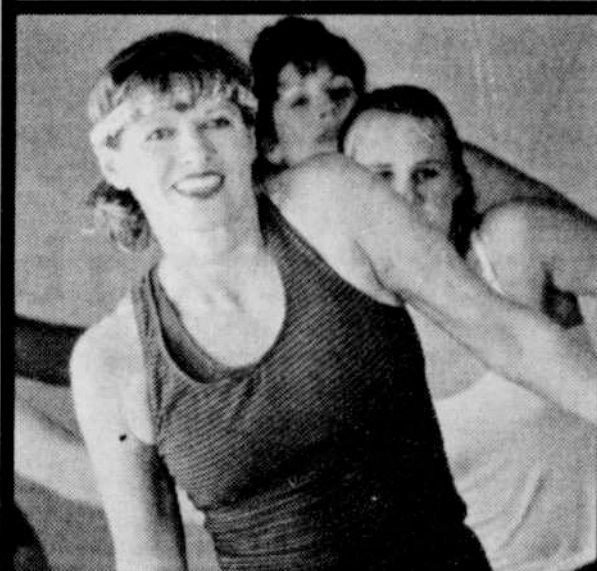
Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.



Soccer star Eric Cantona will be having a ball (or two) on the series *Corto Maltese*



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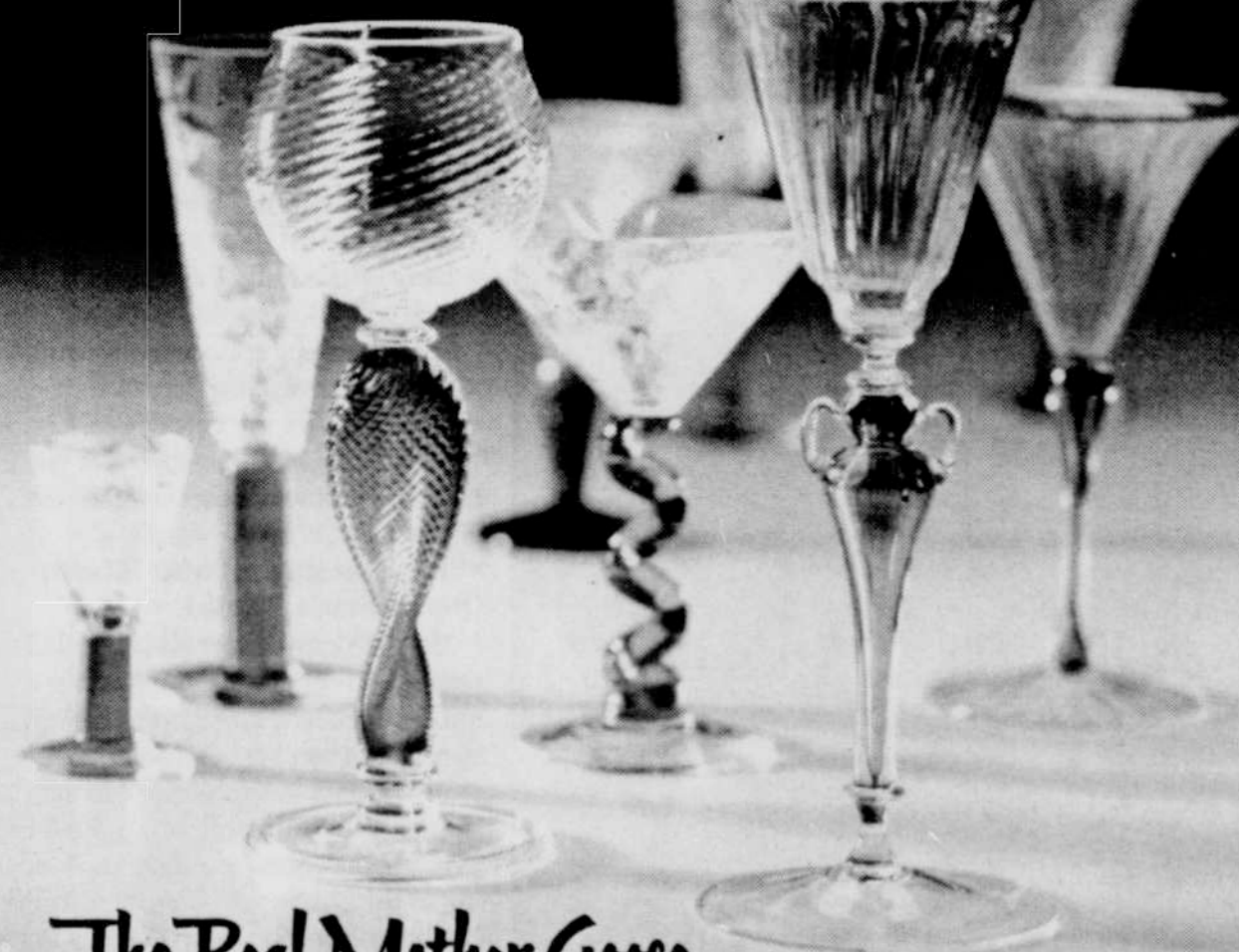
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