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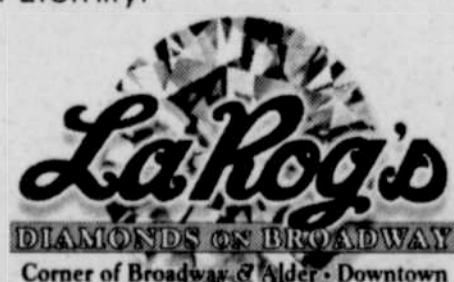


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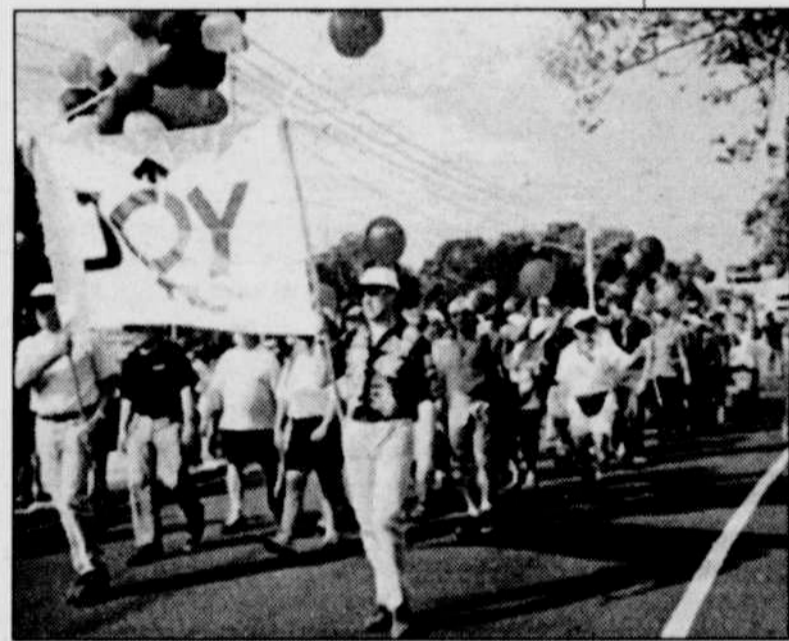
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WORLD news

SAUDI ARABIA
Saudi Arabia executed three men Jan. 1 in the southwestern city of Abha for engaging in "the extreme obscenity and ugly acts of homosexuality, marrying among themselves and molesting the young," the Saudi Press Agency reported. Officials said Ali bin Hittan bin Sa'id, Mohammad bin Suleyman bin Mohammad and Mohammad bin Khalil bin Abdullah violated Islamic teachings. "The execution of these three men is yet another gesture of defiance by the Saudi Arabian government of international standards which urge states not to impose the death penalty for offenses with no lethal consequences," Amnesty International commented. More than 100 people were executed in Saudi Arabia last year, including murderers, rapists, drug traffickers, robbers, gays and apostates, according to reports. Last May, seven men were decapitated with swords in the Red Sea city of al-Kunfudah for gang-raping a man. In 2000, six men were beheaded in Abha for allegedly engaging in sodomy, transvestism and "homosexual marriage" and raping youths after drugging them with sleeping pills. Also that year, three men from neighboring Yemen were beheaded in Jizan on charges of homosexuality, transvestism, same-sex marriage and luring boys into sexual activity.

rerun its controversial instructional course "Bondage 4 Beginners," the *Pink Paper* reported. The four-day class covers handcuffs, gags, rope tying and negotiating safer sex. "It helps men to make clear choices, and that gives us a better chance of halting the transmission of HIV," spokesman Matthew Hodson said. "Self-esteem and assertiveness improve men's abilities to negotiate safer sex." When the course first was offered in 1998, Britain's tabloid media had a field day, accusing Gay Men Fighting AIDS of spending tax dollars to teach homosexuality. The group also will be offering sadomasochism and smoking cessation classes this year.

A bill to grant some spousal rights to gay and unmarried straight couples will be debated Jan. 25 in Britain's House of Lords, the *Telegraph* reported. Authored by Liberal Democrat Anthony Lester, the measure would extend as-of-yet-undefined legal rights and obligations to officially registered couples. As a so-called Private Member's Bill, the proposal is unlikely to become law unless the government throws its weight behind it.



JOY Melbourne marches during Pride 2001

Police in a town near Liverpool are cracking down on men cruising for sex at the Gun Site picnic area in North Wirral Coastal Park. The situation has gotten out of control because of Internet sites promoting the area, they said. "The Gun Site is a lovely beauty spot and should be there to be enjoyed by all the people of Wirral, not by a minority who use it for seedy activities," City Councilor Lesley Rennie said. "Many families go down to the area, and occasionally children have been confronted by shocking scenes. It would be good to get some CCTV surveillance up there. This activity needs to be stamped out for good."

AUSTRALIA
A gay radio station that has broadcast off and on since 1993 under a series of temporary licenses was granted a permanent license Dec. 19 by the Australian Broadcasting Authority. JOY Melbourne, which is operated by 160 volunteers, will broadcast full time on 94.9 FM starting this month. "Full-time JOY is the best Christmas present that the government could have given our community," station president Carol Wilkinson said.

BRITAIN
British actor Sir Nigel Hawthorne died of a heart attack Dec. 26. He was 72. Hawthorne had been battling pancreatic cancer, but recent chemotherapy treatments had been considered successful, according to British reports. He lived quietly in Hertfordshire in a 15th century manor house with his lover, Trevor Bentham, according to the *Guardian*. Hawthorne was best known as civil servant Sir Humphrey Appleby in the television series *Yes, Minister* and for the film *The Madness of King George*. He won a Tony in 1991 for *Shadowlands*, an Olivier award and several Bafta Best Light Entertainment honors.

UKRAINE
Activists celebrated the 10-year anniversary of the repeal of the nation's ban on gay sex in mid-December with a cultural conference titled "Our Rainbow." Supporters attended from Belarus, Moldova, the Netherlands, Russia, Sweden and the United States. Events took place at five venues around Kiev, including the international press center, a bookstore cafe, a bar and a sauna, where men and women sat together to discuss gay culture, visibility and human rights.



UNITED KINGDOM
Britain's Gay Men Fighting AIDS group will Sir Nigel Hawthorne (left) co-starred with fellow gay actor Sir Ian McKellen in 1995's *Richard III*