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**WORLD news**

**AUSTRALIA**

The state of Western Australia is requiring nightclubs that stay open past 1 a.m. to install security cameras and keep tapes of their customers' faces for 14 days, which has upset some gay bar owners who fear patrons will worry about being outed.

Police say the new law will help them solve crimes. Tim Brown, who owns Connections in the state capital of Perth, thinks customers who are not fully out of the closet will shy away from his club for fear of being taped.

"We haven't had any problems with violence at Connections, and our record shows that," he told the *West Australian* newspaper. "We are concerned for the privacy of the people who come to the club. We didn't even let people take photos until about five years ago."

Connections and 15 other clubs have asked to be exempted from the law, which goes into effect March 1.

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Basketball star Randy Duck, a guard for the Brighton Bears, is talking to his lawyers after someone impersonating him posted a sex ad on a gay Web site, the *Brighton Evening Argus* reported.

"This is really serious, and it is seriously false," the 27-year-old said. "I did not put this advert on the Web. I don't even know the Web site. I think it's pretty sad someone doesn't have a life and spends their time doing this."

**SOUTH AFRICA**

Same-sex partners of members of the South African National Defense Force are set to receive all spousal benefits following publication of new definitions of "marital status" and "spouse" in the *Government Gazette*, *Q Online* reported Jan. 11.

The changes bring the forces into line with the nation's post-apartheid constitution, which bans discrimination based on sexual orientation. For military purposes, "spouse" now is defined as "a partner (the partnership being either heterosexual or homosexual) in a permanent life partnership, if such partnership was attested before a Notary Public."

**LATVIA**

Latvian Catholic Archbishop Janis Pujats outraged gays Jan. 10 with a Web site commentary saying: "Vampires and kleptomaniacs [like homosexuals] are also strange orientations. But we aren't required to adopt a law about their special status."

Meanwhile, Protestant Archbishop Janis Vanags told the newspaper *Rigas Balsis*: "Now homosexuals are recognized as a minority. In principle after them pedophiles may also be recognized as a minority."

The clerics' statements reportedly will be included in their planned submissions to the ongoing "Latvia Without Homosexuality" essay contest organized by a publishing house,



Janis Pujats

news agencies said. Suggested themes include "Isn't It High Time We Eliminated Homosexuality?", "Homosexuality—A Norm or Satanism?", "Does Latvia Need to Join the European Union That Blasphemes the Holy Spirit by Permitting Same-Sex Marriages?"

and "Homosexuality as a Sign of Degeneration and Herald of the End of the World."

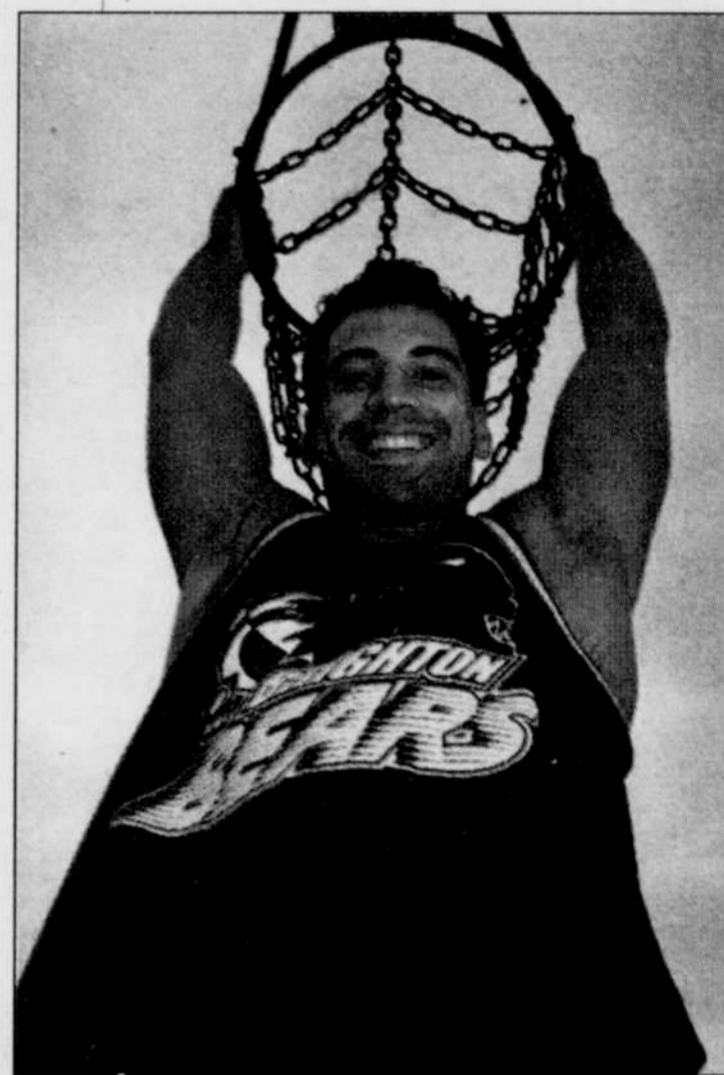
The National Human Rights Office has denounced the contest as "discriminatory," "offensive" and "humiliating" but not illegal.

**GERMANY**

Daimler Chrysler is suing the German Web site Vaneo.de, which sells cosmetics to gays. The corporation, which produces the Mercedes Vaneo van, says the site is detrimental to its image. Bavarian businessman Alfred Stoeckel, the site's owner, says he owns the legal rights to "Vaneo.de."

**NORWAY**

Finance Minister Per-Kristian Foss wed his boyfriend Jan. 4 under a registered partnership law granting more than 99 percent of the rights and obligations of marriage.



British basketball babe Randy Duck has denied posting a sex ad on a gay Web site

He is the first member of the national government to enter into a same-sex union. Foss, a Conservative, and Jan Erik Knarbakk tied the knot at the Norwegian Embassy in Stockholm.

They have refused requests for interviews. "It is a private matter," Foss told the *Dagens Naeringsliv* newspaper.

The wedding might be one for world history books as well. "We think that this is the first time that a Cabinet minister anywhere has entered a [gay registered] partnership," said Ragnhild Samuelsen of the Norwegian Ministry for Family and Children's Affairs.

**ISRAEL**

Openly gay U.S. Rep. Barney Frank and his partner made an appearance in mid-January at Jerusalem Open House, the city's gay community center. The Massachusetts Democrat was in town on official business, meeting with the president and prime minister of Israel and the president of the Palestinian Authority.

"Frank praised the work being done at the Open House in promoting LGBT rights, particularly efforts towards including gay and lesbian persons of all religious and ethnic background," the center said. "He strongly urged the Open House to actively pursue the political struggle for human rights and cited the gay-