


18 July - 31 August, 2002  
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*Sock Monkeys*



Sock Monkey #1586, 2000

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

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**WORLD news**

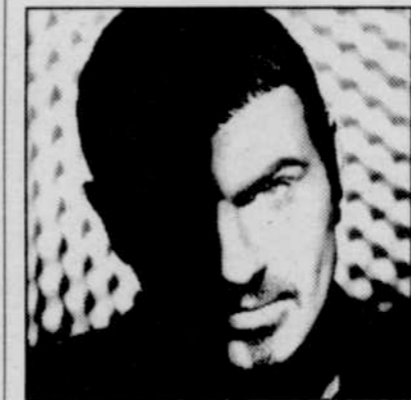
**UNITED KINGDOM**  
 The European Court of Human Rights has told the United Kingdom to stop discriminating against transsexual Christine Goodwin by refusing to recognize she is female.

The government's treatment of the 64-year-old violated the European Convention on Human Rights' guarantees of the right to respect for private and family life and the right to marry, judges said July 12. "In the 21st century," the court wrote, "the right of transsexuals to personal development and to physical and moral security in the full sense enjoyed by others in society can no longer be regarded as a matter of controversy requiring the lapse of time to cast clearer light on the issues involved."

Goodwin, a former bus driver, was awarded \$22,600 for expenses. She will become the first U.K. citizen allowed to change the gender on her birth certificate, which will allow her to draw a state retirement pension earlier than if she were a man.

"This is...the beginning of the end of a 30-year legal nightmare for the U.K.'s 5,000 trans people," said Stephen Whittle, vice president of the transsexual activist group Press for Change.

The British Broadcasting Corp.'s Radio 1 and London's Capital Radio opted not to playlist the new George Michael single that has been denounced by some as anti-American.



George Michael

and British Prime Minister Tony Blair as gay. The single will not be released here but can be downloaded at [www.mtv.co.uk](http://www.mtv.co.uk).

According to Michael, the reaction against him in the United States has been so strong that he will remain abroad for a time.

"It's been very heavily inferred that I was actually an al-Qaeda sympathizer, that somehow I thought that there was something not horrific and shocking and undesired about the attacks on Sept. 11," he said July 12. "Americans are very reactionary right now, and I...cannot return to America, even though my partner lives there."

About a dozen gay and free-speech activists read a "blasphemous" poem depicting Jesus as gay July 11 on the steps of St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in London's Trafalgar Square. The stunt was a challenge to 17th century laws banning outrageous and indecent attacks on Christianity.

Publication of the poem—"The Love That Dares to Speak Its Name" by James Kirkup—led to prosecution of the paper *Gay News* 25 years ago. Editor Denis Lemon received a fine and a suspended prison sentence.

He was the only person prosecuted between 1922 and 1977 under the laws, which have not been invoked since. The House of Lords is considering repealing the statutes.

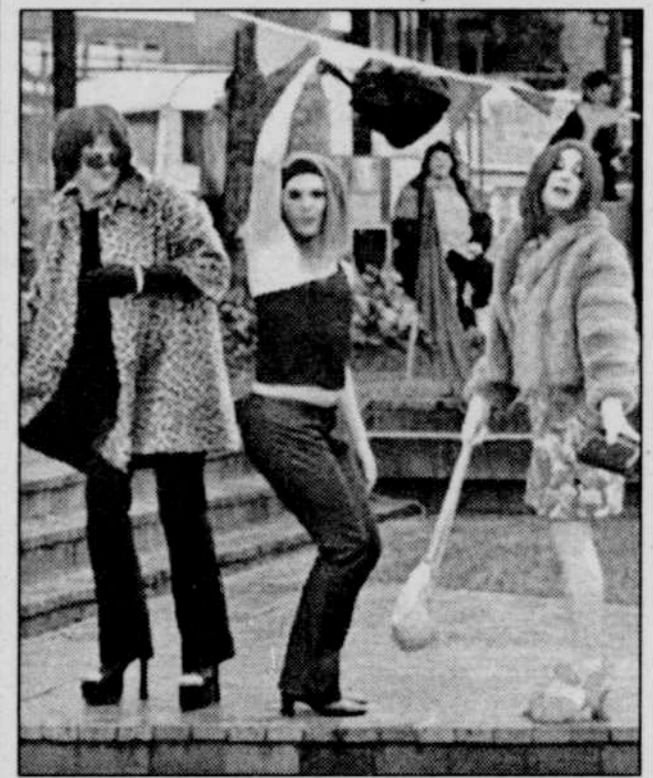
Police videotaped the reading, gay activist Peter Tatchell said. A small group of noisy counterdemonstrators made it difficult to hear the free-speech protest, according to reports.

**GERMANY**  
 Germany's conservative Christian Democrats have come courting gays in anticipation of September's general elections, London's *Times* reported.

"We have to sort out these problems now," said Katherina Reiche, the party's family affairs spokeswoman. "Homosexuals are being discriminated against in many areas."

The party is backing expansion of spousal rights into certain areas that are not covered by the nation's gay partnership law. The *Times* cited court testimony, medical information and jail visits.

The partnership law granted registered gay couples spousal rights and obligations in areas such as inheritance, health insurance, immigration, name changes and alimony but withheld rights in the areas of adoption, taxation, pensions and social welfare benefits. It took effect in August 2001.



Drag queens strut their stuff July 10 in Dunedin, New Zealand

**NEW ZEALAND**  
 Drag queens in Dunedin celebrated Pride Week with a handbag- and high-heels-hurling competition, the *Otago Daily Times* reported July 11. But it quickly degenerated into a public cat fight with the queens bludgeoning each other with the purses and pumps.

"We're keen to keep some of the stereotypes," organizer Malcolm West said. They're a bit of fun."

**BAHRAIN**  
 Bahrain has begun expelling gay migrant workers, the *Manila Times* reported July 11. The Islamic state bans gay sex.

As part of the crackdown, the government has ordered closed about 500 beauty salons, massage parlors, flower shops and tailor shops that it says "provide haven for illicit homosexual activities and prostitution," according to Wilhelm Soriano, administrator of the Philippines' Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. About 2,000 Filipino gays work in the affected businesses, he added.

**CYPRUS**  
 Parliament lowered the legal age for gay sex from 18 to 17 and raised the legal age for straight sex from 16 to 17 on July 11.

Cyprus wants to join the European Union, which strongly discourages member countries from violating the human rights of homosexuals. Two of the other 12 countries seeking membership, Bulgaria and Hungary, also have anti-gay laws that must be fixed, the International Lesbian & Gay Association said.

**AUSTRALIA**  
 The Sydney Gay Games and the city's famous gay Mardi Gras celebration are both in economic trouble, the *Weekend Australian* reported July 7. "The Gay Games, to be held in Sydney in November, was supposed to