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**WORLD NEWS**

**CANADA**

The Canadian Association of Police Boards is supporting a resolution calling for elimination of the gay-panic defense, in which an attacker is acquitted or receives a lesser sentence after claiming the victim made a pass at him. They also have called for queers to be added to the list of groups protected from hate speech and propaganda, according to a report in Vancouver's *Xtra! West*.

A bill on that matter is pending in Parliament. "What we are trying to do is get people to stop making remarks about homosexuals," said Vancouver Police Inspector Dave Jones, who authored the panic defense resolution and is lobbying for the hate speech legislation as well.



**Robert Ploughman gives "mounted police" a whole new meaning**

Early reports did not detail what rights would be granted to same-sex couples. The bill faces additional hurdles before it could become law.

**AUSTRALIA**

Tasmania's State Education Department has launched a queer issues bulletin to keep schools informed of the latest developments in anti-homophobia programs.

"The advent of *Talking Out* is all the more amazing given that only eight years ago all discussion of homosexuality was banned in Tas-

manian state schools unless it was about converting LGBT students into heterosexuals," commented Miranda Morris, a member of the department's LGBT Issues Reference Group. "The Tasmanian experience shows that, as daunting as the problem of homophobia in schools may seem, it is possible to make a big difference in a relatively short time."

Newfoundlander Robert Ploughman is the first Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer to come out and remain in the force, *Xtra! West* reports.

He is assigned to the University of British Columbia detachment in Vancouver and is among those who patrol Wreck Beach, the city's cruisy gay nude beach. Ploughman dropped out of a Catholic seminary and entered the police training academy after his first visit to a gay bar in St. John's, Newfoundland, in January 2000.

"I always knew I was attracted to men, but I never really explored it or worried about it," he told *Xtra! West*. "I walked into the door of the gay bar in St. John's for the first time in my life and looked around and saw all these guys that look like normal people. I had no contact with the gay community before that point.... In five minutes, my life completely changed. I knew I couldn't live a lie in the priesthood."

**INTERNATIONAL**

Six of the 10 countries that are hoping to be accepted into the European Union by spring 2003 had anti-gay laws on the books at the time of their membership application.

The International Lesbian & Gay Association and national groups responded by lobbying the European Parliament to refuse any applicant that "through its legislation or policies violates the human rights of lesbians and gay men," which the Parliament agreed to do in 1998. Since then, all six nations have repealed their anti-gay laws—Lithuania in September 2000, Estonia in September 2001, Romania in December 2001, Cyprus in July 2002, and Hungary and Bulgaria in September 2002.

"This is a truly historic success for the human rights policies of the European Union, for the European Parliament and for Europe's LGBT movement," said Ailsa Spindler, ILGA-Europe executive director. "Changes which could have taken decades without international pressure have been effected in a few years. They demonstrate that LGBT rights are now being taken seriously at the European level and give us strong encouragement to pursue actively other areas of discrimination."

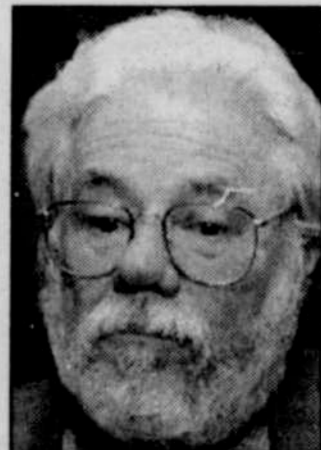
**COLOMBIA**

The First Commission of Colombia's Senate approved a gay partnership bill Oct. 8 in the measure's first committee appearance.

The vote was 15-1, with three senators absent from the hearing. The bill was written by Sen. Piedad Córdoba and introduced by Sen. Carlos Gaviria Díaz, who said it is based on constitutional principles of pluralism, personal autonomy and equality.



**Piedad Córdoba**



**Carlos Gaviria Díaz**

A huge gay luxury hotel is opening in north Queensland, Melbourne's *Herald Sun* reported Oct. 4. The 320-room Liberty Resort, located in the town of Kuranda, offers a dance floor, two swimming pools, a solarium, a health club, a clinic and a beauty salon.

It is geared to gay travelers who usually stay at mainstream luxury hotels, general manager Marcus Bear said. Dormitory rooms will be available for less affluent tourists.

**GERMANY**

German health officials are reporting a syphilis "epidemic" among gay men. The overall rate for the first half of 2002 is double the rate of recent years, and the institute that compiles medical statistics says queers are responsible for 60 percent of the increase.

Between 1,100 and 1,200 syphilis cases a year were reported from 1995 to 2000, while more than 1,100 cases were reported in the first six months of this year. Researchers blame the increase in unprotected sex on improved HIV treatments causing people no longer to consider the virus a death sentence.

But they said that available data on reduced condom use do not explain the degree of the syphilis spike and that Germany has seen no measurable jump in HIV transmission. The researchers con-