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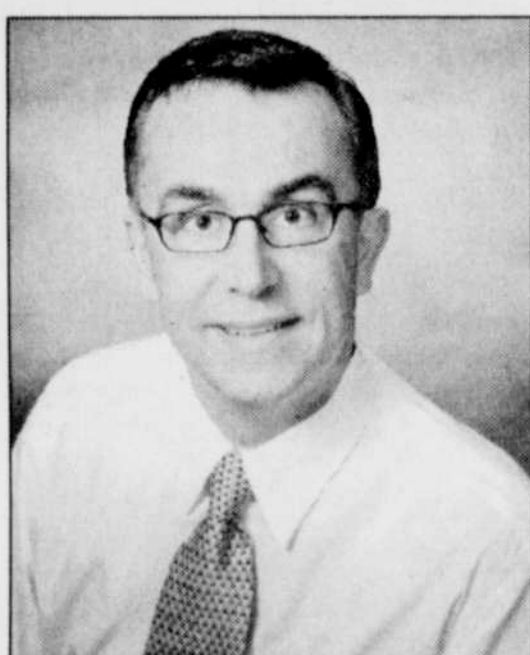
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WORLD news

Democratic U.S. Reps. Sheila Jackson-Lee of Texas (left) and Loretta Sanchez of California are urging repeal of a customs policy under which a married Canadian gay couple were refused entry to the United States

AUSTRALIA

The Civil and Administrative Appeals Tribunal in the state of Victoria has revoked an exemption it granted to Lesfest 2004 that would have allowed the weeklong January event to ban attendees and service providers who are not female-born lesbians.

The exemption from state human rights laws was withdrawn because Lesfest organizers failed to inform the tribunal that a transsexual organization had objected to the waiver, the Australian Associated Press reported Sept. 30. The Australian WOMAN Network had complained that the exemption was offensive because male-to-female transsexuals are legally and medically women.

Lesfest spokeswoman Anna Holland-Moore expressed disappointment at the new ruling. "We just wanted a week together to consolidate our culture and discuss relevant issues," she told AAP.

The rural festival will feature political forums, art performances, healing space, workshops and talking circles. Boys older than 8 and heterosexual girls older than 15 also were to be banned.

INDONESIA

Indonesia's Justice Ministry has drafted laws to ban premarital sex, extramarital sex, living together without being married, reneging on a promise to marry, visiting a prostitute, performing as a stripper, witchcraft and promotion of communism, local media reported Sept. 30.

Although the proposed legislation reportedly would allow gay sex between adults, it was unclear why that would not be considered premarital or extramarital. The proposed new crimes would draw penalties of two to 20 years in prison.

Indonesian Bar Association chairman Gayus Lumbuun told a newspaper, "Not all ethical and moral offenses are crimes." The Indonesian Lawyers Association also opposes the proposals.

Some Muslim groups and political parties have been pushing for the incorporation of Islamic law into legal codes. Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation.

The 600 pages of proposals face at least a year of discussion in Parliament before they could become law, according to a report in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

CANADA

Four members of the U.S. House of Representatives with responsibility for overseeing immigration policy wrote to the commissioner of the U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection on Oct. 1 urging repeal of the policy under which a married Canadian gay couple were refused entry to the United States when they insisted on filling out a single form designed for families.

Kevin Bourassa and Joe Varnell were turned back Sept. 18 at the Toronto airport, where the

Homeland Security Department clears U.S.-bound passengers in order to avoid operating customs and immigration facilities in smaller U.S. cities where the only international flights arrive from Canada. The couple got married this summer in Ontario after full same-sex marriage was legalized by court order.

U.S. officials said the two men were legally single and needed to fill out separate forms.

In the letter to Commissioner Robert Bonner, Democratic U.S. Reps. Barney Frank of Massachusetts, Sheila Jackson-Lee of Texas, Jerrold Nadler of New York and Loretta Sanchez of California said: "We do not understand why it should be American policy to insist that people seeking to enter our country as tourists from another country repudiate their own country's rules and engage in what are to them wholly inaccurate self-descriptions, and in a way that they understandably found to be degrading. Forcing people to deny their own important values, when this has no legal bearing in the U.S., serves no public purpose, and whatever its motivation, becomes a form of meanness—inflicting emotional pain on people for no reason other than to express our official disapproval of them."

Jackson-Lee is the senior Democrat on the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Immigration, Border Security and Claims. Sanchez is the senior Democrat on the Homeland Security Committee's Subcommittee on Infrastructure and Border Security. Nadler is the senior Democrat on the Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution. Frank, who is gay, is the senior Democrat on the Financial Services Committee.

The Film Review Board in the province of Ontario has OK'd movie depictions of vaginal "fisting" but has declared anal fisting off-limits, Toronto's *Xtra!* reported Sept. 18. Scenes of vaginal fisting will be tolerated if the participants appear to be enjoying themselves and are not pregnant, but scenes of anal fisting will not be permitted even if the participants look like they're having fun.

Review board chairman Bill Moody said the Ontario Medical Association told the board that anal fisting is dangerous. "It becomes physical abuse when the medical people tell us that it's abuse."

The board also considered banning rimming scenes but ultimately decided, "We're not germ police," Moody said.

RUSSIA

Russia's first gay wedding has upset religious officials. Denis Gogolev, 27, and Mikhail Morozov, 23, paid a Russian Orthodox priest \$450 to marry them Sept. 1 in the city of Nizhny Novgorod.