

David Ian Harrad faced deportation to England when his latest tourist visa expired. He and partner Antonio Martins dos Reis asked a court in Curitiba, 240 miles south of São Paulo, to block the deportation, arguing they are in a common law marriage.

Federal Judge Ana Carolina Morozowski agreed, writing, "Although they are of the same sex, the authors of the petition live in a state of matrimony, a fact which extends to Mr. Harrad the right of permanent residence." She based her ruling on the Brazil Constitution, which prohibits "any form of discrimination, including discrimination as to sexual preference," she said.

SOUTH AFRICA

The Miss Gay South Africa pageant proceeded as planned Nov. 29 despite several bomb threats, Durban's *The Daily News* reported.

A 10 p.m. search by the Bomb Disposal Unit found no explosives. Christians for Truth picketed the pageant.

The sold-out event took place at the Kismet Hotel in Pietermaritzburg, co-capital of the KwaZulu-Natal province. Monique Perez beat out 22 other contestants to capture the crown.

FINLAND

Openly lesbian Finnish author Pirkko Saisio has won the nation's top annual book prize, Finlandia, for her novel *The Red Book About Separation*.

She donated her \$31,584 prize to the National Organization for Sexual Equality. In the novel—part three of a semiautobiographical trilogy—Saisio describes coming out at a time when homosexuality was illegal in Finland.



Archbishop Yong Ping Chung severed ties with the U.S. Episcopal Church because the Diocese of New Hampshire consecrated an openly gay bishop

INTERNATIONAL

Anglicans in nine Southeast Asian nations cut ties Dec. 4 with the U.S. Episcopal Church because the Diocese of New Hampshire recently consecrated an openly gay man, Gene Robinson, as bishop.

Archbishop Yong Ping Chung, Anglican primate of Southeast Asia, said New Hampshire exhibited "a flagrant disregard of the fundamental teachings of the Bible and doctrines of the church." He also declared same-sex unions unnatural and an abomination to God.

Yong's authority covers Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Anglican churches in several African nations also have cut or reduced ties with the U.S. church or the New Hampshire diocese. The Russian Orthodox Church also has terminated relations with U.S. Episcopalians because of Robinson's consecration.

FRANCE

France's marriage-like Civil Solidarity Pacts proved popular in the first half of 2003—15,000 couples signed up. Last year a total of 25,000 couples tied the knot.

The pacts, which confer most marriage rights and obligations, are available to same- and opposite-sex couples. France enacted the partnership law in late 1999.

AUSTRALIA

Australia's Northern Territory, where Darwin is located, voted Nov. 25 to lower the age of consent for male-male sex from 18 to 16.

Parliamentary debate on the issue lasted until 3 a.m. It was the last Australian state or territory with unequal ages of consent for straight and gay sex, although in Queensland, where Brisbane is located, gays and straights cannot engage in anal sex until age 18, while other sexual acts are legal at 16.

RUSSIA

Gays are not banned from the Russian military, officials said Nov. 27, according to an Interfax wire service report.

"There is no such medical diagnosis as homosexuality.... A classification of diseases adopted by the World Health Organization does not indicate such a disease," Maj. Gen. Valery Kulikov, chairman of the Defense Ministry's central medical board, told a press conference in Moscow. "The new regulations on military medical examinations are based on international standards, and therefore homosexuals are treated on general grounds in terms of their fitness for military service. If they are physically and mentally healthy, they will be recognized as fit and will serve."

Kulikov suggested, however, that gays in the military not "advertise their sexual orientation." He warned, "They are not liked there and will just get beaten up."

CANADA

A conservative member of Parliament was fired as the Canadian Alliance party's family issues critic Nov. 27 after saying odd things about homosexuals. Canadian Alliance leaders said Larry Spencer's comments did not reflect party beliefs.

In an interview, he had told *The Vancouver Sun*: "I do believe it was a mistake to have legalized [gay sex]. If somebody brought a bill in the House to [recriminalize gay sex], I'd certainly vote for it."

He added that even people who have been gay for a long time, such as Canadian MP Svend Robinson, can turn straight.

"I believe he could," said Spencer, who represents a district in the province of Saskatchewan. "I believe he would struggle with it.... The mind or the conscience that we have can be sharpened against right or wrong. It can be desensitized to think that whatever wrong that's around us is nothing but natural, and we begin to accept that."

"I just wish that there was some way that society could stand up and say, 'This is not right.' [If] anybody that used Colgate toothpaste, their life expectancy was lowered by 10, 15 years, what do you think would happen to Colgate toothpaste? It would be outlawed. Well, we know that's what happens to men living a gay lifestyle."

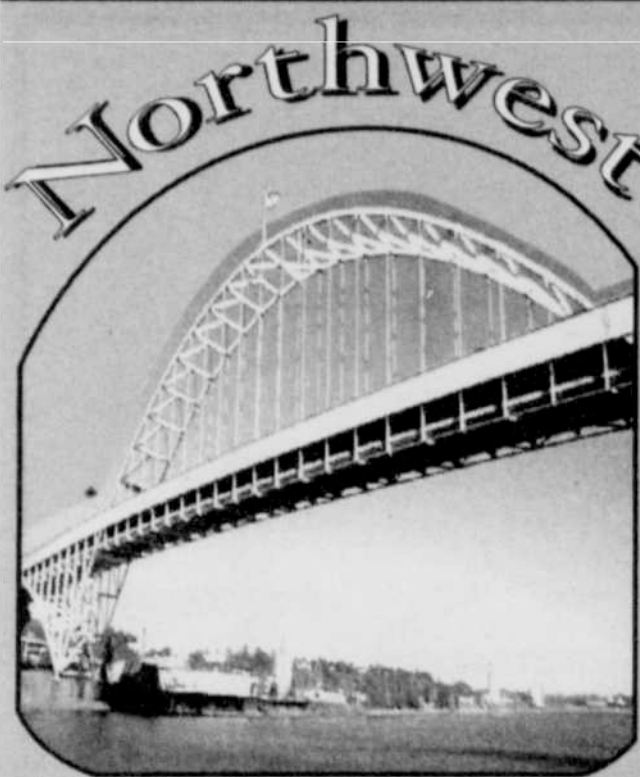
Spencer claimed there is a gay conspiracy to seduce children into the so-called homosexual lifestyle: "At some of those [gay] conventions in [the 1960s] it was discussed what some of those approaches would be, and...for this group of people to express themselves sexually, they're going to have to do the recruiting and...it's going to come by seduction." ■

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.



Member of Parliament Larry Spencer wants to recriminalize gay sex in Canada

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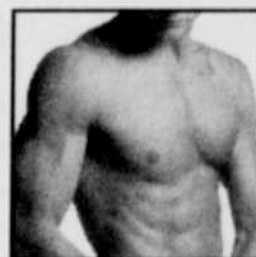
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