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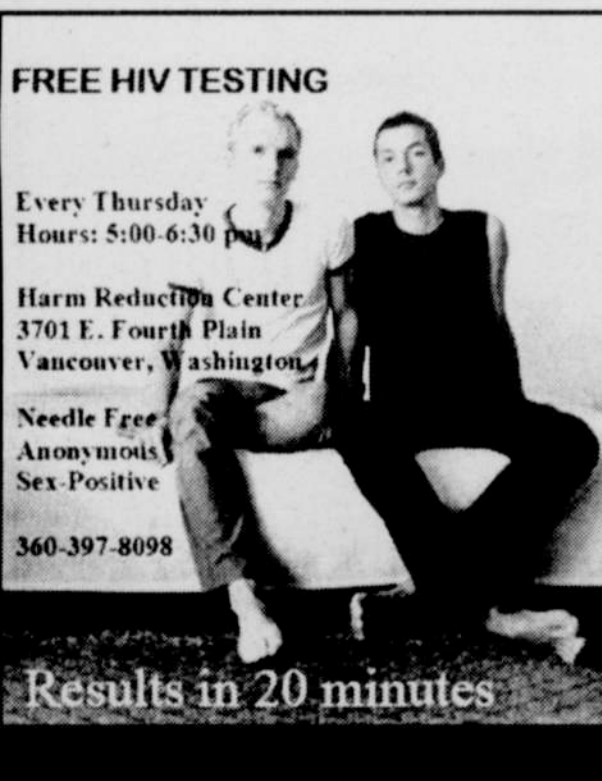
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WORLD news

HONG KONG

The government of Hong Kong will survey the population to gauge its support for a host of gay rights measures, The South China Morning Post reported July 27.

On the agenda are an anti-discrimination law, recognition of same-sex relationships and matters related to taxation, education and health. "I don't think the Hong Kong SAR [special administrative region of China] government will try to impose something like this on the community without at least 50 percent support," said Stephen Fisher, deputy secretary of the Home Affairs Bureau.

Gay activists said they are confident that at least half of the population supports equality. In an editorial, the *Morning Post* endorsed the proposed changes.

"The absence of laws protecting the gay community from discrimination sits uneasily with Hong Kong's claim to be a world city," it said. "It undermines our community's claim to be fair-minded, tolerant and diverse."

UNITED KINGDOM

The British Broadcasting Corp. upheld a complaint July 28 against one of its rugby commentators who called an altercation between two players a "gay slap."

A total of 10 viewers complained about announcer Brian Moore's remark made during February's Scotland vs. England match. The BBC said the phrase violated guidelines concerned with "hurtful or inaccurate stereotypes."

GERMANY

A record 5,000 people participated in the gay and lesbian EuroGames from July 29 to Aug. 1 in Munich.

The event featured more than 200 competitive events in 26 sports including, for the first time, "wheelchair dancing." More traditional competitions included swimming, wrestling, soccer, fencing and rowing.

The venue for the games was the 1972 Summer Olympics site. Athletes came from 17 countries, mostly in Western Europe, but participants also came from Bulgaria, Hungary and Turkey.

Some 20,000 spectators attended the games, which are staged by the European Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation. German Justice Minister Brigitte Zypries spoke at the opening ceremonies.

The leader of Germany's Free Democrats political party came out July 24 in an interview with *Der Spiegel*. Guido Westerwelle also told the magazine that gay couples should have full adoption rights and the same tax breaks as married couples.

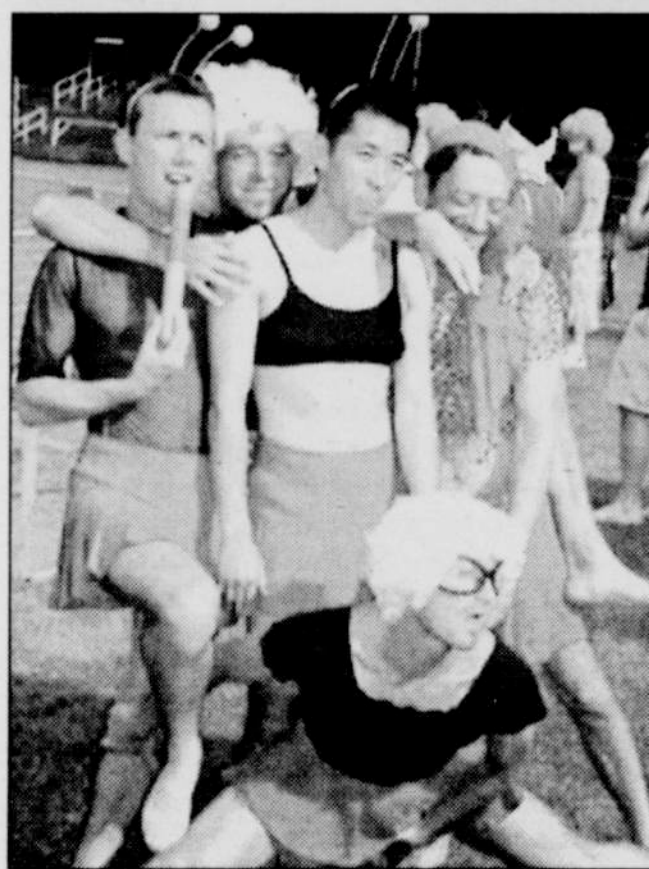
The government is planning to extend additional marriage rights this year to same-sex couples who register under the nation's 3-year-old partnership law. The statute withholds rights in areas such as adoption, pensions, inheritance, taxation, financial support, court testimony and social welfare benefits.

"I cannot change whether my life pleases the people or not—whether my life [as a gay man] brings [vote] increases in large cities or whether it possibly causes rejection in rural regions," Westerwelle told *Der Spiegel*.

The government reported July 28 that 6,000 same-sex couples have made use of the partnership law since it was enacted in 2001.

JAPAN

In a first, a Japanese postoperative transsexual was allowed to change her gender in the government's "family register" July 30. The Naha Family Court in Okinawa Prefecture approved



Athletes came from 17 countries for the queer EuroGames in Munich, Germany

the alteration after legislation permitting such changes took effect July 16.

Under the law, people diagnosed by two doctors as having a psychological makeup that is at odds with their biological sex can revise their registration if they are at least 20 years old, unmarried and childless and no longer have working reproductive organs. Around 8,000 Japanese have "gender identity disorder," said a spokesperson for the organization Gid.jp, which broke the news of the case.

JAMAICA

Jamaican dancehall music star Beenie Man issued an apology Aug. 2 for his violent lyrics advocating the murder of gay men. But the British gay group OutRage!—his main nemesis—denounced the move as "insincere."

"It has come to my attention that certain lyrics and recordings I have made in the past may have caused distress and outrage among people whose identities and lifestyles are different from my own," Beenie Man said. "While my lyrics are very personal, I do not write them with the intent of purposefully hurting or maligning others, and I offer my sincerest apologies to those who might have been offended, threatened or hurt by my songs. As a human being, I renounce violence towards other human beings in every way and pledge henceforth to uphold these values as I move forward in my career as an artist."

Those lyrics include "I'm dreaming of a new Jamaica, come to execute all the queers" and "Hang queer women with a long piece of rope." OutRage! pooh-poohed the statement.

"Beenie Man's so-called apology is so vague that it does not even mention what he is apologizing for," the group said. "It contains no explicit regret for his incitements to murder gay people and no specific affirmation of his respect for homosexuals.... He is opportunistically issuing this statement to save his career from collapse."

CHILE

About 64 percent of Chileans believe gay couples should have access to legal civil unions, a Fundación Chile 21 poll has found. But 65 per-



Guido Westerwelle



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