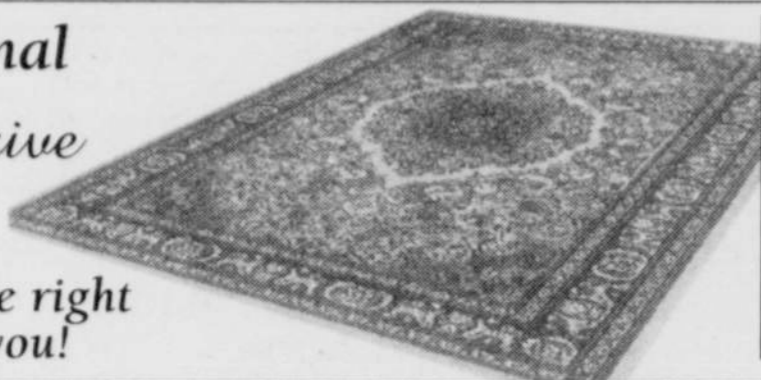


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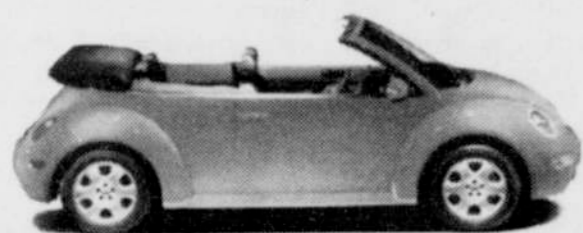
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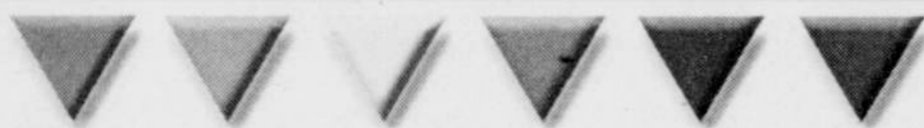
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## world

### AFRICA

#### South Africa Commission Supports Gay Blood Donors

South Africa's Human Rights Commission said Jan. 20 that gay men should not be automatically barred from donating blood.

"Everybody practicing unsafe, high-risk sex should be excluded from donating blood, and a special emphasis should not be placed on the sexual activities of gay men," said commissioner Leon Wessels. He said the South African National Blood Services should be taken to court if it refuses to change the policy.

According to several reports, black South African women might have a higher rate of HIV infection than white South African gay men.

#### Nigeria to Ban Same-Sex Marriage

The Nigerian government's Federal Executive Council approved a measure banning same-sex marriage Jan. 17 and sent it to the National Assembly for consideration.

The proposal would punish anyone entering into a same-sex relationship or marriage with five years in prison. The same penalty would apply "if you aid or support in any way anybody of the same sex to contract a relationship or marriage," said Justice Minister Bayo Ojo.

The measure also calls for a ban on gay organizations and rallies.

"In most cultures in Nigeria, same-sex relationships, sodomy and the likes of that is regarded as abominable," Frank Nweke, minister for information and national orientation, told the British Broadcasting Corp.

Gay sex is already illegal nationwide; in several northern states ruled by Islamic Sharia law, it is punished with stoning.

Nigeria, population 130 million, is Africa's most populous nation. The northern part of the country is mostly Islamic, and the southern half is mostly Christian.

### ASIA/PACIFIC

#### N.Z. Gay Men Banned from Donating Sperm

Gay men in New Zealand cannot donate to sperm banks, local media reported in mid-January.

The policy persists even though the nation has a sperm shortage that forces women to wait up to two years for artificial insemination. The Reproductive Technology Accreditation Committee uses a lifestyle declaration to reject men who have had sex with men, arguing that they are at higher risk for infection with HIV and other diseases.

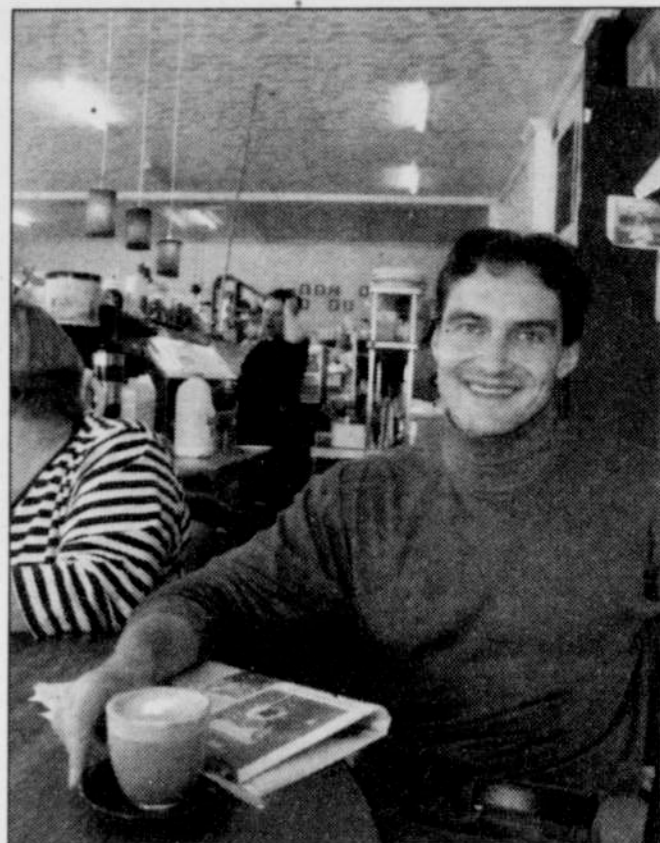
#### Tasmanian Partner Law Unpopular

Only 58 couples have taken advantage of the relationships register in the Australian state of Tasmania during its two years of existence, *The Mercury* newspaper reported Jan. 16.

Forty-three couples got hitched in 2003 and 15 in 2004. Forty-six were same-sex couples and 12 opposite-sex. Of the same-sex couples, 24 are male and 22 are female.

Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group spokesman Rodney Croome blamed the slow take-up on the government, saying it has failed to promote the register.

The register also is available to nonsexual partnerships, such as when one person is a caregiver to another. It grants spousal rights in areas such as



Rodney Croome says Tasmania has failed to promote the relationship register.

pensions, taxes, insurance, health care, hospital visitation, wills, property, parenting and bereavement leave.

#### Australian Tennis Star Comes Out

Australia's most accomplished women's doubles tennis player came out Jan. 16 in the Australian gay newspaper *Melbourne Community Voice*.

Rennae Stubbs, 34, who has won the Australian Open and Wimbledon, said she was inspired by U.S. basketball player Sheryl Swoopes' coming out.

"When I read that, I remember thinking, wow, it would be great to be out in the public eye just so I didn't have to answer any questions carefully or worry about it anymore—that I could do my job," she told MCV. "I thought maybe I can make a bit of a difference here and try and get the general public to think that their kids can look up to me and aspire to be me—but I'm gay and it's not a big deal."



Rennae Stubbs has won the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

#### Australia Tries to Stop Citizens from Marrying Overseas

Australia's government is trying to stop its citizens who live overseas from entering same-sex marriages in countries that allow them, *The Age* newspaper reported Jan. 14.

The tactic being utilized is refusing to provide written proof to the other nation that the Australian in question is free to marry.

In one case, Peter Kakucska, an Australian living in Vienna who wanted to marry his Austrian partner in the Netherlands, where same-sex marriage is allowed, was given stamped certifications of the anti-gay policies by Australia's Austrian embassy.

One certification said: "Following the advice of the Australian Attorney-General's Department we herewith certify that Australian law does not allow the issue of a Certificate of No Impediment to Marriage to persons wishing to enter into a same-