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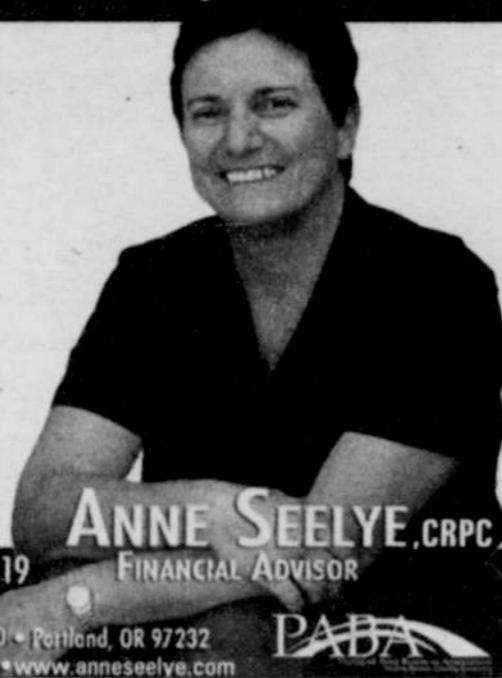


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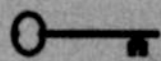


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## world

### EUROPE

#### Distress Over Ukraine's Eurovision Entry

Ukrainian nationalists are protesting the nation's official entry in the Eurovision Song Contest—a single by drag queen Verka Serdyuchka.

They demonstrated in several cities April 1, calling for Ukraine to withdraw from the wildly popular pan-European extravaganza.

Serdyuchka lampoons rural Ukrainian women. Although sometimes vulgar, she is a cult icon with a diverse fan base. Her selection by public vote as Ukraine's Eurovision entry was a landslide.

Serdyuchka is also popular elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.



Drag performer Verka Serdyuchka's musical submission to the Eurovision Song Contest sparked demonstrations in Ukraine.

#### Gay's the Word Might Close

The United Kingdom's last gay bookstore might close because of London's high rents and loss of sales to the Internet.

Gay's the Word is hoping to ward off disaster by raising \$40,000 before May 1 to pay bills and set up an online sales site itself.

Among other steps, it has launched a "Sponsor a Shelf" scheme. For \$196, "your name/organization will be listed in-store as an official Friend of Gay's the Word," says the store's Web site.

Novelist Ali Smith told *The Guardian*, "It'd be a political, cultural, communal and human loss if it went [out of business]."

Author Edmund White said: "It's a shop that keeps gay titles on the shelves for years in a way no regular book shop, even one with a gay section, would ever do. The staff know the books and can give advice. It would be very sad to see it go."

Author Sarah Waters commented: "For me it's more than a book shop. It was one of those places you went to when you first arrived in London.... It felt very empowering that it was here, and it is still important that there is a visible place for people to go."

Assistant manager Uli Lenart told *The Guardian* that teenagers arrive at the store "on the verge of tears. This is a place where you can feel less alone."

incident caused extensive damage to the windows and interior of the Iontas Theatre at Bree. Nearby cars also were damaged.

A police spokesman told the *Times*, "We cannot comment on whether there is any link between the [gay] nature of the drama festival presentation and the criminal damage which took place."

#### Blair: Civil Partnerships 'Profound'

British Prime Minister Tony Blair says the United Kingdom's new Civil Partnership Act "doesn't just give me a lot of pride, but it has actually brought a lot of joy."

Speaking to the Stonewall Equality dinner March 22, Blair said: "The change in culture and the civilizing effect of it has gone far greater than the gay and lesbian community.... By taking a stand on this issue and by removing a piece of prejudice and discrimination, and by enabling people to stand proud as what they are, it has had an impact that I think is far more profound on the way the country thinks about itself."

Stonewall is the United Kingdom's leading gay lobby group.

#### City Funds Reykjavík Pride

Meeting with members of the Gay Pride committee March 22, the mayor of Reykjavík, Iceland, Vilhjálmur Th. Vilhjálmsson, agreed to fund the city's Pride festivities to the tune of \$180,000 a year for the next three years, the *Morgunblaðið* daily reported.

During the meeting, Vilhjálmsson kissed the

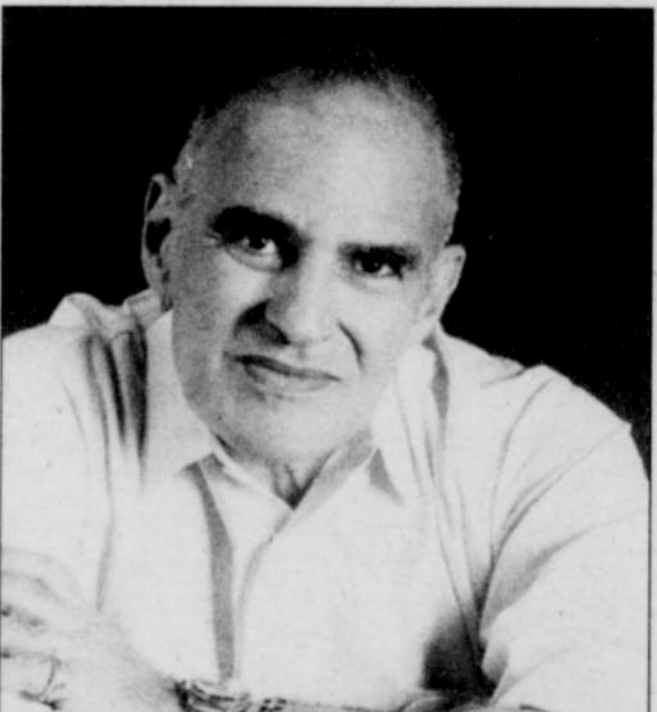
#### Normal Heart Theater Trashed

A foreign national has been detained for questioning in an attack on a theater in Monaghan County, Ireland, that had just finished a performance of Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart*.

According to *The Irish Times*, the March 11



Novelist Ali Smith said losing the United Kingdom's last gay bookstore would be a "political, cultural, communal and human loss."



Playwright Larry Kramer's *The Normal Heart* finished a performance at Iontas Theatre shortly before it was vandalized.