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ARTISTIC DIRECTOR / SARAH SLIPPER

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The Oregonian

FRIDAY / AUG 10 / 8PM
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ALL WORLD PREMIERE PROGRAM


Photo / Blaine Covert. Dancer / Olivia Ancona

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EUROPE

Austrian Gay Leader Acquitted of Libel

Austria's leading gay organization, Homosexual Initiative Vienna, and its secretary general, Kurt Krickler, saw their conviction for defamation and libel overturned July 9 by the Vienna Regional Criminal Court.

Austrian People's Party Member of Parliament Walter Tancsits sought legal relief after Krickler called him a "mental descendant of the brown Nazi myrmidons" in a press release about Tancsits' engineering the exclusion of gays from the Nazi Victim Compensation Act.

A lower court convicted Krickler in April 2006, sentencing him to three years' probation and the choice of a suspended fine of 240 euros or a suspended sentence of one month in jail. Under the terms of the conviction, if Krickler did not commit another crime during the probationary period, he would not have had to pay the fine or serve time. Homosexual Initiative Vienna was ordered to pay Tancsits 1,500 euros.

But the appeals court decided Krickler's denunciation of Tancsits fell into the realm of expressing an opinion, which is allowable, rather than stating as fact something that is untrue, which can be libelous. He called the acquittal a "great victory for freedom of speech and human rights in Austria" and noted that Tancsits "has to pay now all legal costs of both parties."

Mayor Blasts Budapest Pride Attackers

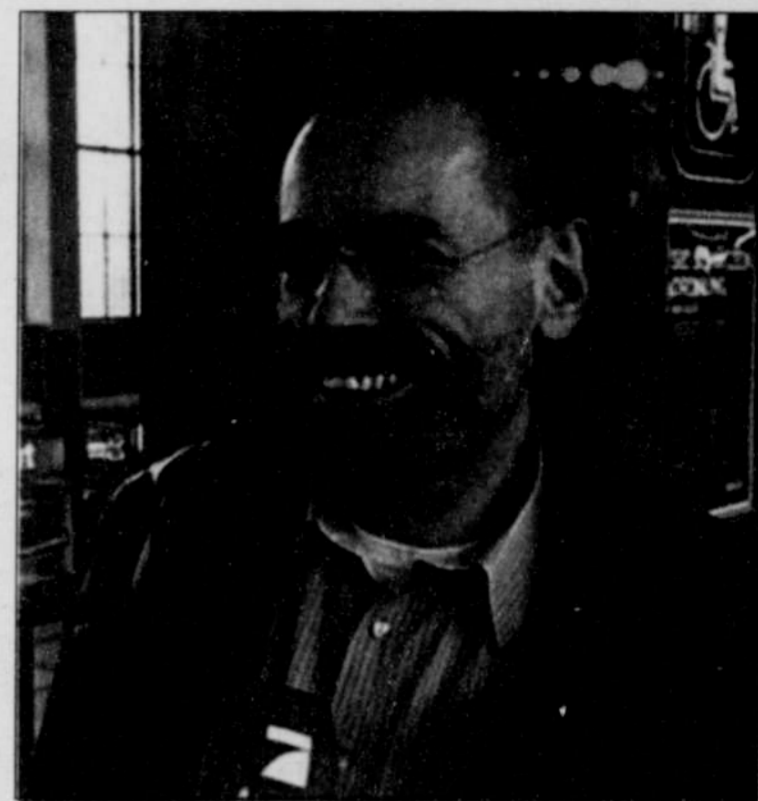
Budapest Mayor Demszky Gábor denounced July 9 the hundreds of neo-Nazis and skinheads who violently attacked the city's Gay Pride march July 7.

"Physical violence and murderous threats were meted out against peaceful marchers who were expressing their sexual identities," Gábor said. "Not a single well-meaning democrat can remain silent about this! [It was] intolerant, primitive and cowardly, all at once."

"It was those [queer marchers] who dared to declare their own selves, in spite of the threats, who bore witness to true courage," he continued. "The main demand of Saturday's march was the extension of the right to marry to gay couples. A part of Budapest probably agrees with this demand, while another part does not. I am certain, however, that an overwhelming majority of the citizens of the capital condemns all the acts of violence committed against demonstrators standing up for their rights."

"As mayor of Budapest it is my duty to stand up for all those who are persecuted in Budapest. If need be, I am also Jewish, gypsy and gay.... We will not allow that anyone should fear because they belong to a minority."

Hundreds of skinheads, neo-Nazis and other opponents threw eggs, bottles, smoke bombs, Molotov cocktails and plastic bags of sand at the 2,000 marchers. The counterdemonstrators shouted, "Faggots into the Danube, followed by the Jews," "soap factory" and "filthy faggots."



Homosexual Initiative Vienna secretary general Kurt Krickler was acquitted of a libel charge when a judge ruled he was only stating an opinion.

Later, dozens of Pride attendees were attacked in the vicinity of the post-parade party at the open-air, riverside Buddha Beach nightclub, the parade's endpoint.

Parade opponents included members of Movement for a Better Hungary and the Hungarian National Front, who said they were annoyed that the Hungarian Socialists, part of the ruling government coalition, have come out in support of legalizing same-sex marriage, and that Gábor Szetey, the government's human resources secretary of state, publicly came out July 5 as he opened Budapest's 12th Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Festival of culture and arts.

Ireland to Pass Civil Unions

Ireland's government will pass a law to extend marriage-like rights to same-sex couples, Prime Minister Bertie Ahern said July 16.

Speaking at the reopening of the refurbished Outhouse queer community center, Ahern said his government is committed to full equality for gay couples, *The Evening Echo* newspaper reported. "We will legislate for civil partnerships at the earliest possible date in the lifetime of this government," he said.

Outhouse provides office space to 70 sexual minority groups and contains a library and cafe.



Budapest Mayor Demszky Gábor referred to gays when he said it was his duty to stand up for all who are persecuted in the Hungarian capital.