

Spain Legalizes Gay Marriage

(AP) - Spain became the third country to legalize gay marriage last week in a parliament vote. The 350-seat Congress of Deputies, by a vote of 187-147 with four abstentions, approved the measure to give homosexual couples the same rights as heterosexual ones, including the right to adopt children. After the tally was announced, activists watching from the spectator section of the ornate chamber cried, cheered, hugged each other, waved to lawmakers and blew them kisses. Outside the stately 19th-century chamber where other chapters of Spanish history have

been written, activists jumped for joy and waved rainbow flags symbolizing the international gay rights movement. The Roman Catholic Church, which held much sway over the government just a generation ago when Gen. Francisco Franco was in power, was left smarting from the vote. Gay couples can get married as soon as the law is published in the official government registry - as early as Friday or within two weeks at the latest, parliament's press office said. The Netherlands and Belgium are the only other two countries that recognize gay marriage nationwide.

Major Church Endorses Unions

(AP) — The president of the United Church of Christ said his denomination "acted courageously to declare freedom" when it passed a resolution endorsing same-sex marriage on Independence Day. The resolution calls on member churches of the denomination's 1.3 million members to consider wedding policies "that do not discriminate against couples based on gender." It also asks churches to consider supporting legislation granting equal marriage rights to gay and lesbian couples and to work against laws banning gay marriage. The endorsement by the church's rule-making body makes it the largest Christian denomination to endorse same-sex marriage. The vote is not binding on indi-



vidual churches, but could cause some congregations to leave the fold. Roughly 80 percent of the representatives on the church's 884-member General Synod voted to approve the resolution Monday, a day after a committee recommended it. A small group of conservative congregations had proposed an alternative resolution defining marriage as between a man and a woman, and suggested that supporting gay marriage could lead to the church's collapse. Thomas Williams speaks in favor of equal marriage rights during debate Sunday before a national assembly of the United Church of Christ. (AP photo)

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Supreme Court Faces Opening

Court's first woman to step down

(AP) - Sandra Day O'Connor, the first woman on the Supreme Court and a swing vote on abortion, affirmative action and other contentious issues, announced her retirement Friday. A bruising Senate confirmation struggle loomed as President Bush pledged to name a successor quickly. "It has been a great privilege indeed to have served as a member of the court for 24 terms," the 75-

year-old justice wrote Bush in a one-paragraph resignation letter. "I will leave it with enormous respect for the integrity of the court and its role under our constitutional structure." O'Connor's decision marked the first retirement in 11 years on an aging court. It came as a modest surprise, particularly since Chief Justice William Rehnquist has been the subject of retirement rumors for months. Rehnquist, 80 and ailing with thyroid cancer, has offered no hint as to his future plans. President Reagan broke nearly 200 years of tradition when he tapped O'Connor - a top-ranked graduate of Stanford law school - for the high court. Over time, she evolved into a moderate conservative. She voted with a 5-4 majority on the case that effectively awarded the disputed 2000 presidential election to Bush. She was on the winning side again



Sandra Day O'Connor when the court upheld the right of women to have an abortion if their health were in danger. She also supported affirmative action.

Mexican Stamps Deemed Racist

President Fox defends Sambo-type caricature

(AP) - Mexico President Vicente Fox said Friday that U.S. activists who have called a new series of Mexican postage stamps racist do not understand the issue and should read the comic book on which the stamps are based. "They don't have information, frankly," Fox said in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press. U.S. black activists and the White House have criticized the stamps featuring Memin Pinguin, a black-



This image shows the series of stamps released by Mexico's postal service, paying homage to a 1940s cartoon character called Memin Pinguin. (AP photo)

jecting to the stamps and calling them an example of racial stereotyping. U.S. activists — including the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton and leaders of other civil rights and Latino organizations — also have criticized the stamps and urged that they be withdrawn. Fox's spokesman, Ruben Aguilar, said the government "emphatically rejects these complaints, which are the products of lack of knowledge or people who want publicity."

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Free Legal Help on Saturday

One day of free legal assistance will be offered Saturday, July 9 when the local African-American Chamber of Commerce sponsors Project Clean Slate. Police and prosecutors have pledged to make the event an "arrest free zone" as counselors, attorneys, judges and other volunteers meet with local residents without fear of getting arrested. The event, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the new Public Services Building adjacent to the Cascade Cam-

pus of Portland Community College, 909 N. Killingsworth St., promises help to those who want to clean up a criminal record, outstanding warrants or assistance in getting a drivers license possibly reinstated. There also will be referral and assistance for housing, education, medical and substance abuse. Those interested can pre-register by going to Oregon Action at 6601 NE Martin Luther King from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information call 503-343-5117 or 503-225-9100 or email lawone@usa.net.

Muslim Diplomats Ambushed

(AP) - In an effort to bring fear to foreign occupants of Iraq, gunmen ambushed two top diplomats from Muslim countries Tuesday. The apparent kidnap bids seemed aimed at scaring off foreign governments and isolating Iraq from the Arab world. Pakistan responded by announcing the withdrawal of its ambassador. The attacks, targeting diplomats from Bahrain as well as Pakistan, came three days after gunmen seized Egypt's top envoy to Iraq as he was buying a newspaper in the capital. The Egyptian envoy is still being held.

"This is a message from the terrorists to the Arab countries not to open embassies in Iraq and to prevent security, economic and political overtures to Iraq," said Abbas al-Bayati, a member of the parliamentary foreign relations committee. Also Tuesday, a U.S. soldier was killed and two were wounded by a roadside bomb northeast of Baghdad, the U.S. military said. At least 1,745 members of the U.S. military had died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count.

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Q: How can I tell if my daughter might have scoliosis?
A: The most common visible symptom is very prominent shoulder blade higher than the other. However, the best check for scoliosis is an annual pre-school checkup with a Chiropractor. The one professional best trained to detect and correct spinal disorders. It's a simple, painless, inexpensive procedure that can save your children years of discomfort and disfigurement later in life. For a scoliosis checkup, or for answers to any questions you might have about your own health, call us at the number below.
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