

the rest of our world

Two Stabbed in Jerusalem Pride

Jerusalem - An ultra-Orthodox Jewish protester stabbed two marchers in a gay pride parade through the city last month as police pushed back demonstrators trying to stop the march. The man suspected of the stabbing was arrested along with nine other protesters. The wounded marchers were treated by medics at the scene.

According to a report from Reuters, authorities had tried to ban the parade for fear it could provoke violence, but they were overruled by Israel's High Court.

Thousands took part in Jerusalem's fourth Gay Pride March, dancing and waving through the center of the city as protesters erected a banner that read "Welcome to Sodom."

March Against War

Washington, DC - United for Peace and Justice, organizers of the major U.S. anti-war marches before and after the American invasion of Iraq, is mobilizing for a massive march on Washington on Saturday, September 24. Organizers plan grassroots training for Sunday and lobbying and acts of civil disobedience on Capitol Hill for Monday.

"A majority of Americans believe that this war never should have happened, but our elected representatives in Washington continue to rubber-stamp the Bush Administration's disastrous Iraq policies," said a statement by the group, led by Leslie Cagan, a lesbian, as reported New York's *Gay City News*. For more information, visit unitedforpeace.org.

O, Canada!

Ottawa - In late June, the Canadian House of Commons ended a four-month debate and passed a same-sex marriage bill. The bill passed the Senate in late July and received "Royal Assent" on July 20, making Canada the fourth nation in the world to recognize same-sex marriages, according to the *National Post*. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain are the other three countries which currently recognize same-sex marriages.

The Civil Marriage Act led to the most acrimonious parliamentary session since the 1980s, and opponents have vowed to take the issue to the next Federal election. "If we don't stop this ... I know what the next steps are. Euthanasia. Decriminalization of marijuana," said one senator from B.C..

But Senator Nancy Ruth, who voted for the bill, danced in the

red chamber just before the vote, according to the CBC.

"There are some reasons to dance tonight and the whole country should be dancing," she said.

Communicating Self-Hate

Washington, DC - In a phone call recorded by PageOneQ and blogACTIVE.com, Robert Traynham, Director of Communications for United States Senator Rick Santorum (R-PA) has said he is an out gay man who completely supports the senator. When asked how a gay man could speak for one of the nation's most notorious homophobes, Traynham protested that he has "been with the Senator for eight years" and that "Senator Santorum is a man of principle, I strongly do support Senator Santorum."

When pressed on whether he supported the senator's stands on lesbian and gay issues, Traynham abruptly ended the phone call.

LA Gay Seniors at Home

Los Angeles - The nation's first nonprofit LGBT senior housing complex began construction last month and was endorsed by newly elected Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who said, "We want more." As reported in the San Diego *Union-Tribune* and the Associated Press, the \$20 million complex, located in Hollywood, will be called Encore House and follows a trend toward gay retirement facilities. An octogenarian male couple together for 54 years said they will consider moving there because their generation still experiences discrimination less commonly seen by younger people.

Falwell Mum on Justice

Washington, DC - *The New York Times* revealed last month that White House officials sought advice on a Supreme Court nominee from Rev. Jerry Falwell, one of the most divisive far-right figures in America today. The report came to our attention via a Human Rights Campaign press release.

Other sources indicate that Falwell, the founder of the Moral Majority, declined to offer advice to the White House. Given Mr. Bush's track record appointing conservative judges, "I am willing to sit back and trust him and pray for him."

NY's West Free of Charges

Ulster County, NY - The Ulster County district attorney last month dropped charges against Mayor Jason West of New Paltz for marry-

ing same-sex couples, saying that a trial would be needless and divisive. West had been charged with 24 misdemeanor counts of violating the state's domestic relations law when he performed public marriage ceremonies for gay and lesbian couples in February 2004, as reported in *The New York Times*.

In a letter withdrawing the charges, District Attorney Donald A. Williams said a trial would probably "be exploited by those with a greater interest in publicity than the public good."

West had been expected to stand trial in the fall, and if convicted, could have faced fines and up to a year in prison. The mayor's lawyer accused the prosecutor "searching for the limelight, but when it got too hot, he flew away like a moth with singed wings."

Vulgar 'Dykes on Bikes'™ ?

San Francisco - Vic Germany thought registering a federal trademark for San Francisco's Dykes on Bikes organization would be no problem, according to a report on SFGate.com. The nonprofit lesbian motorcycle group is internationally known for leading San Francisco's pride parade every year for nearly three decades.

But despite two years of slogging through trademark law, Germany, president of the San Francisco Women's Motorcycle Contingent, a.k.a. Dykes on Bikes, said the application has been twice rejected, on the grounds that "dyke" is vulgar and offensive. Patent office attorneys cite Webster's dictionary, which says dyke is "often used disparagingly."

Dykes to Watch Out For cartoonist Alison Bechdel testified in favor of reclaiming the term.

Yet, in November, the patent office registered a trademark for the hit television show *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*. "So what's the difference between 'queer' and 'dyke'?" said Brooke Oliver, the attorney handling the Dykes' case.

Spanish Marriage Hitch

Washington, DC - The Spanish Parliament made history in late June by allowing same-sex couples and their children access to the rights, responsibilities and protections of marriage, as reported in an HRC press release.

However, the AP reported, within one week, a court ruled that a Spanish man cannot wed his Indian partner because India does not allow gay marriages, the first glitch for the new law. The court cited a provision in marriage codes that foreign resi-

dents seeking to wed Spaniards must adhere to the laws of their home country.

CA DP Law OK

Sacramento, CA - In late June, the California Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal by anti-gay activists challenging the state's comprehensive domestic partnership protections for same-sex couples. The order cleared the only remaining hurdle for the law, which became effective in January, according to the American Civil Liberties Union.

By enacting AB 205, California became the first state in the U.S. to voluntarily provide comprehensive protections to same-sex couples. In April, Connecticut followed suit by enacting civil unions for same-sex couples there.

Turkish Pride Success

Istanbul - The 12th annual LGBT pride events took place July 1-3, 2005, with more than 150 lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders marching through Turkey's capital city, according to www.kaosgl.com, a Turkish LGBT website. During the march a group carried a large rainbow flag. At the end of the parade they issued a press statement calling on the government to take action against discrimination towards LGBT people. The three days of events included a cocktail party, movies, a picnic, symposium, and dance.

The peaceful celebration was in stark contrast to the first Christopher Street Day Sexual Liberation Activities day in 1993, when the governor banned the conference, allegedly encouraged hotels to refuse lodgings to attendees, and detained, threatened, then deported 28 foreign delegates to the event.

Lambda Istanbul grew out of that repression, and with the prospect of European Union membership, Turkish LGBT organizations have begun to benefit from relaxed censorship.

Church Vandalized

Middlebrook, Va - Anti-gay hatred appears to be the motive in an arson attempt at St. John's Reformed United Church of Christ (UCC). Anti-gay graffiti was found after a fire was set causing damage to a portion of the church, according to a report on www.ucc.org.

Police and church leaders believe the attempted arson was a response to the UCC General Synod's gay-affirming vote on July 4. Delegates there overwhelmingly approved a resolution supporting same-gender marriage equality, making it the largest and only main-

stream Christian denomination to take such a stance.

Earlier this year, two other churches in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley were vandalized near the time the UCC began running television ads welcoming all people, including gays and lesbians.

Uganda Denies Marriage

New York - In voting for a constitutional amendment to criminalize marriage between persons of the same sex, Uganda's parliament has struck a gratuitous blow for prejudice and against basic human rights, Human Rights Watch reported last month.

On July 5, the Ugandan parliament approved a constitutional amendment that "marriage is lawful only if entered into between a man and a woman," and that "it is unlawful for same-sex couples to marry." The amendment must still pass a third reading in parliament, which was expected later in the month.

"Uganda already imposes draconian prison sentences on people who engage in homosexual conduct," said Scott Long, director of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Rights Program at Human Rights Watch.

Same-sex sexual relations are criminalized in Uganda under a sodomy law inherited from British colonial rule. Punishments were substantially strengthened in 1990, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Gay Nigerian to Be Stoned

New York - A United Nations human rights expert has raised the alarm over the sentencing of a man in northern Nigeria to death by stoning after he admitted engaging in homosexual sex, as reported by Reuters. The UN special rapporteur on arbitrary executions, Philip Alston, has called for an immediate review of the entire process that led to the man's death sentence under Islamic Sharia law.

The man, about 50 years-old, was acquitted on a charge of having sex with a much younger man. But after the judge asked him if he had previously had homosexual sex, the man said yes. The judge then sentenced him to be stoned to death.

Ten Nigerian women have been sentenced to death by stoning for having sex outside of wedlock since Sharia was brought in; all the cases created outcries and were overturned on appeal. ▼

Compiled this month by Susan McMillan.