

world briefs

ARGENTINA: The Supreme Court of Argentina, in a 7-2 ruling, refused to legalize the country's only gay-rights group, Comunidad Homosexual Argentina, leaving the group unable to rent an office, open a bank account, accept donations or conduct other routine business.

AUSTRALIA: The lower house of the Tasmanian parliament, the House of Assembly, passed a measure last month to ban discrimination against gays in employment, accommodations and the provision of goods and services.

AUSTRIA: Following government promises to repeal laws that ban gay organizations and the promotion of homosexuality, activists have targeted the nation's final anti-gay law, which sets a higher age of sexual consent for gay men.

BELGIUM: The groundbreaking International Lesbian and Gay Association will lay off its only employee Dec. 31. The group is \$13,000 in debt and appeals for contributions and new members have failed.

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A European Community document has addressed gays and lesbians for the first time. New EC guidelines entitled "Protecting the Dignity of Women and Men at Work: A Code of Practice on Measures to Combat Sexual Harassment" note that "lesbians...are disproportionately at risk. Gay men and young men are also vulnerable to harassment." The pro-gay swing follows a meeting between EC Social Affairs Commissioner and representatives of the International Lesbian and Gay Association.

CANADA: Gay-ghetto voters elected Toronto's first openly gay city councilor. Kyle Rae joins the three-man Canadian club of Gordon Price in Vancouver, Raymond Blain in Montreal and Grant Murray in Winnipeg.

Xtra!

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New Brunswick is expected to add "sexual orientation" to its human rights act.

Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec and the Yukon Territory already protect gays and lesbians from discrimination.

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Calgary, Alberta. Mayor Al Duerr and the City Council will not declare Gay Rights Week this year because last year's proclamation caused Duerr "the most difficult time I've ever gone through." Fundamentalists Christians opposed the proclamation. Duerr said he "still strongly support(s) rights for the gay community—equal rights before law, which they do not presently enjoy."

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After a year of controversy, members of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Nova Scotia voted that no one may dance shirtless at its club, Rumours, Halifax's leading gay establishment. Lesbians had argued the club discriminated against them by letting men but not women dance shirtless. During Pride Week, a large number of lesbians illegally danced topless in protest.

GALA also formed a Shirtlessness Lobbying Committee to urge the Liquor License Board and the provincial government to allow women to go topless in public.

CHINA: The way to control AIDS is "to eliminate deviant behavior," the official Xinhua News Agency quoted Guangdong Province officials saying last month.

COLOMBIA: "Social clean-up death squads" have murdered hundreds of gay men in the past seven years, the International Lesbian and Gay Association reported last month.

Amnesty International has implicated the Colombian government in the death-squad killings. And ILGA charges that the murders are not investigated because of "police and military complicity."

ENGLAND: Gay and Lesbian Motorcyclists

of Europe is a new federation of biker clubs from Britain, Holland and Switzerland. It has 500 members. Write GMBCC, c/o Gay Switchboard, 31a Mansfield Road, Nottingham NG1 3FF, England.

FRANCE: ACT UP/Paris staged France's largest AIDS demonstration to date on World AIDS Day, Dec. 1. About 2,000 demonstrators marched through the Marais gay district, chanting for gays in bars to come out and join the fight against the disease.

The activists hung a 50-square-meter banner from the second floor of the Beaubourg Museum proclaiming, "SIDA: Déclarez l'état d'urgence!" ("AIDS—Declare a State of Emergency!"). Protesters also collapsed in a large "die-in."

GREECE: The lesbian editor of Greece's oldest gay magazine was sentenced to five months in prison and a \$300 fine last month for publishing material that is "indecent and offensive to public feeling."

The magazine had received requests from heterosexual men looking to meet lesbians, so Petropoulou published an announcement reminding straight men they "have nothing in common to share in bed" with lesbians.

JAPAN: OCCUR, the leading gay group, continues its groundbreaking campaign against the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, which will not rent overnight rooms at Tokyo Youth Centers to gay groups. A lawsuit—Japan's first gay rights suit—is pending.

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Under pressure from OCCUR, the publisher of Japan's most authoritative dictionary has revised its inaccurate definition of "homosexuality." The "Kojien" dictionary had defined homosexuality as a "perversion of being attracted to members of the same sex." Homosexuality was also an example under the entry for "perversion."

NETHERLANDS: The Ministry of Defense announced that gay soldiers sent to foreign countries may take their lovers with them.

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The Second European Conference on Homosexuality and HIV is Feb. 14-16 in Amsterdam.

NIGERIA: A previously unknown gay group has contacted the International Lesbian and Gay Association—making Nigeria the fifth African nation known to have developed a gay movement. Nigerian Gentlemen Alliance parties have brought together as many as 1,500 gay men.

NORWAY: Gay activists last month denounced new immigration rules for unmarried partners. For a foreign lover to be granted residency, a couple now must prove they have lived together for two years. It is impossible for a mixed-citizenship gay couple to live together for two years anywhere in the world without violating immigration laws.

Previously, Norway only required couples to prove they had known each other for 12 months.

Blick

RUSSIA: The NAMES Project AIDS Memorial Quilt visited Moscow in October. Hundreds of Muscovites viewed the indoor exhibit of 128 panels, according to AP. Quilt officials and Moscow employees of the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission distributed condoms, buttons and safe-sex material.

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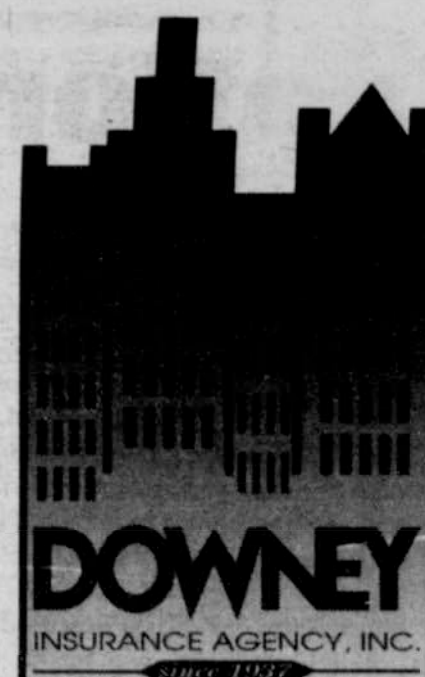
The first Russian gay biker club has formed, reports *Out* of Pittsburgh. The eight members of Cossacks MC wear studded leather jackets, tight jeans and high-top biker boots. But there's a problem: the group only has one motorcycle, a vintage World War II Harley Davidson, for which they have no battery.

SOUTH AFRICA: ACT UP has arrived. The group is fast becoming as universal as gay bars and cruisy parks.

New Year's Resolutions

1. Review your insurance coverage
2. Insure your holiday gifts
3. Pledge \$10/month to your favorite charity

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Warm Wishes for a
Wonderful New Year
Thanks to everyone
in the community
for your
continuing support.

Sue Davis
Janyce Bender
Watch this Space!