

world briefs

INTERNATIONAL: The World Health Organization has deleted homosexuality from its International Codex of Diseases. The new codex will be published Jan. 1, 1993.

ARGENTINA: The Supreme Court, in a 7-2 ruling, recently refused to legalize the country's only gay group, Comunidad Homosexual Argentina.

The ruling was a surprise, coming just days after Argentine President Carlos Menem—confronted in New York by gay activists—declared his support for CHA.

AUSTRALIA: The inside cover of January's *Outrage* magazine shows two male guppies (gay urban professionals) in front of their expensive house loading up their new Toyota Seca Ultima with luggage, a picnic basket, tennis rackets and their two dalmatians.

The ad is for Sydney City Toyota and Melbourne City Toyota.

The ad's slogan: "the family car."

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The Hobart, Tasmania, City Council agreed to let the Lesbian and Gay Community Foundation enter a float in the Christmas parade as long as the 'L' and 'G' words did not appear on it.

One banner on the float proclaimed, "Don we now our gay apparel." Another swiped a line from the City Council's parade advertising: "Gay and Colourful Pageantry." And the final banner went for broke: "This float is proudly presented by the Lesbian and Gay Community Foundation and HUG (Heterosexuals Unafraid of Gays)."

Hobart Deputy Lord Mayor John Freeman termed the display a "betrayal of trust" and said there'll be no gays in next year's parade.

More than 800 citizens had petitioned the City Council to ban the queer float altogether.

CANADA: The Canadian Radiotelevision and Telecommunications Commission has banned broadcasts that abuse gay men and lesbians.

Stations that violate the ban face a \$250,000 fine and individuals who make anti-gay broadcast statements can be fined \$20,000.

Xtra!

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The federal government will distribute condoms in prisons to slow the spread of HIV.

But Solicitor General Doug Lewis said it is still illegal to have sex in prison. "There's a difference between banning [sex], even though we know it happens, and permitting it," he said.

Gazette

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An Argentine gay man was granted political asylum in Toronto last month because gays are persecuted in Argentina. It is the first such move by a Canadian court.

The man, assisted by the San Francisco-based International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights

Commission (IGLHRC), detailed Argentina's abusive treatment of gays and said he personally had been arrested, threatened, beaten, raped and tortured by police. "I was beaten with billy clubs and fists. I was then stripped naked and sodomized. After this rape, I was left alone, naked and still tied up. From that time on, I was continually kept naked as well as blindfolded until I was released," the man said. He fled Argentina March 5, 1990.

Lawyers said IGLHRC's background evidence was "very influential" in the man's victory.

CHILE: Santiago Catholic Archbishop Carlos Oviedo says the Health Ministry's new HIV prevention TV ad series "encourages sexual libertarians."

Health Minister Cristiano Jorge Jimenez lamented Oviedo's statements but said he will not alter the ads to please any group.

CHINA: A new poll found that 2.3 percent of married people living in the countryside and 0.3 percent of those living in cities "admit" to having had gay sex, *China Daily* reported in December.

As recently as 1989, authorities claimed there were no gays in China and labelled homosexuality a "Western deviation."

ENGLAND: British gays continue the battle for law reform, reports *NYQ*. Among the things still illegal in merry old England: Consensual gay sex with a man age 16-21, "buggery," "soliciting," "indecent," and "procuring."

All the laws are actively enforced.

According to new statistics, 3,500 men were prosecuted in 1989 for consensual sex with men over 16. About 50 men received prison terms, and some sentences were as long as those given rapists and twice as long as those for "unlawful sexual intercourse" with girls 13-16.

GERMANY: Gay oppression in Russia took center stage as 160 activists from 21 nations gathered in Berlin Dec. 27-31 for the 13th European Regional Conference of the International Gay and Lesbian Association.

Delegates marched from (East) Berlin's Humboldt University, the conference site, to the Russian Embassy protesting Article 121.1 of the Russian Penal Code, which punishes male sex with five years in prison.

"Our priority will be explicit inclusion of lesbian and gay rights within existing human rights conventions," said Co-Secretary General John Clark.

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A recent poll in Germany revealed that 42 percent of the people believe the Nazis had their good sides. In the magazine *Der Spiegel*, the poll went on to show that 27 percent thought Hitler would have been a great statesman, had he not started a war and massacred Jewish people. 69

percent disagreed. 32 percent said "Jews are partly responsible, if they are hated and persecuted." Synagogues are still guarded around the clock by police officers carrying machine guns. The poll was conducted among 2,000 western Germans and 1,000 eastern Germans.

INDIA: The Health Ministry will provide blood banks with HIV testing equipment. The ministry also announced Jan. 10 that it will organize social support for HIV positive people. To date, HIV has spread primarily to prostitutes and drug users, statistics show. An epidemic of HIV infection along highways has led officials to declare truck drivers a high-risk group.

IPS/Brazil

IRELAND: ACT UP/Dublin went all out in November for a protest against the Catholic church's anti-safe sex stance.

About 40 activists marched through rush hour traffic, some dressed as bishops, others carrying a large cross and a five foot condom. Arriving at the cathedral, they chanted, then they crucified the five foot condom.

ISRAEL: In response to gay bashing by teenagers in Tel Aviv's cruisey Independence Park, Mark Ariel, publisher of the gay magazine *Maga'im*, launched a gay self-defense patrol armed with walkie-talkies, mace and electric shockers, according to London's *Gay Times*.

MEXICO: Tijuana police raided four gay bars at the end of the year and arrested more than 50 patrons, including several U.S. citizens, for "inciting to engage in sex" and spread AIDS.

NETHERLANDS: An ad for Smirnoff Blue vodka in the Dutch newspaper *De Gay Krant* carries the tag line, "And you thought coming out was the best thing that ever happened to you? Try Smirnoff Blue."

RUSSIA: Moscow gays and lesbians have launched their own radio show—something many U.S. cities don't have yet.

The premiere broadcast went out New Year's Day on Radio Maximum, a private Russian-American joint venture. For now, the program will appear monthly.

Called "Without Complexes," the show is produced by Moscow activist Aleksandr Rene and Kevin Gardner, the Moscow employee of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, which is headquartered in San Francisco.

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Amnesty International has taken on the case of Vladimir Mironov, who was sentenced to three years in prison by the Volgograd District People's Court in Moscow last May 7 for allegedly engaging in sex with another man.

Russian Penal Code Article 121.1 allows up to

five years imprisonment for the crime of male penile-anal sex; the law's repeal is the prime objective of gay activists.

"Amnesty International believes that the imprisonment of adults for their consenting homosexual activity in private is a violation of their fundamental human rights," the group said in a statement from its London headquarters.

SOUTH AFRICA: GLINT, or Gay Life In Non-racial, is this independent region's first gay group, based in the capital, Umtata. Technically, Stranskei is a nation, but it has not received international recognition.

Eleven people attended the first meeting, adopted a constitution, approved a log, created a lending library, and elected officers.

TURKEY: *Cumhuriyet* recently became the first mainstream newspaper to publish a gay-related advertisement.

The ad read: "If there will be any talk of 'democracy' in our country at all, the rights of millions of homosexuals to their basic human rights should be recognized."

"Obviously, we should be the ones who fight for these rights and explain to all our fellow citizens that our right to our sexual orientation is not an infringement on theirs."

"We invite interested parties to talk about all this in an afternoon tea party at [an address followed]. Our tea party is closed to the press. Sincerely, Erhan Gumus, on behalf of a group of homosexuals."

The meeting took place without harassment from Istanbul police, who have a long record of terrorizing and torturing gays and transvestites.

YUGOSLAVIA: Although a small group of gay and lesbian activists has worked for years in the relatively liberal city of Ljubljana, only now has gay organizing begun in Belgrade, the capital.

About 20 people formed the group Arkadia to fight for gay rights and foster gay and lesbian pride.

For now, Arkadia's activities are organized primarily through a weekly gay radio program on independent station 892.

UKRAINE: Parliament in this former Soviet Republic abolished the male sodomy law at the end of the year, reports the International Lesbian and Gay Association, citing a report from gay leaders in Russia. The law prohibited anal sex between men under penalty of five years in prison.

ILGA's report could not be immediately confirmed. All 14 of the other countries that formerly constituted the USSR have similar laws.

"We urge the other ex-Soviet republics to follow the Ukrainian example and abolish their anti-sodomy legislation immediately," said ILGA Information Secretary Micha Ramakers.

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316 N.E. 28TH ST., PORTLAND, OR 97232
(503) 230-0812