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CHECK THESE OUT

CATTLE DRIVE IN MONTANA	May 7 - 14 ♀
MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE	May 14 - 29 ♂
QE2 NEW YORK PARTY CRUISE	May 13 - 15 ♀♂
AFRICAN SAFARI	May 27 - June 9 ♀
GAY DAY AT DISNEYWORLD	June 3 ♀♂
UTAH RIVER RAFTING	June 11 - 18 ♂
GAY GAMES & STONEWALL - NEW YORK	June 18 - 26 ♀♂
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COSTA RICA TOUR	July 1 - 10 ♀♂

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International Gay Travel Association
IGTA

world news

AUSTRALIA
 The Australian Broadcast Company aired coverage of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade in March, despite a petition from some 90 members of the Federal Parliament demanding that the network ignore the parade.
 The Sydney Gay and Lesbian Rights Lobby wrote a letter to each of the politicians asking why they signed the petition. Responses included a note from Sen. Parer, of Queensland, who wrote: "What I object to is a campaign to foist those deviant practices on the vast majority of normal people. That objection is strengthened when the taxpayers' own broadcast network, the ABC, becomes involved in activities that denigrate true family values."

GREAT BRITAIN
 London International Group, a British condom manufacturer, says it has developed a new, ultra-thin condom from plastic, that it hopes will encourage more men to use prophylactics, thus reducing the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. The "Duron" condom is made from a polyurethane material which is thought to be as strong as latex, at thinner weights. Concerns that condoms reduce sensitivity during sex prompted the company to conduct a 5-year research and development project. "The result of that project is a condom that's extremely comfortable to use, but as strong as the traditional condom," says Clive Kitchener, LIG's director of marketing. "We have carried out tests with 7,000 users, who on every occasion said sensitivity was much higher than with latex condoms." The new condoms are odor-free and can be used with lubricants, without risk of damage to the condom. Duron will make its U.S. debut in late summer.

JAPAN
 Officials of the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare are emphasizing that people with HIV or AIDS are welcome in Japan. Yokohama is the host city of the 10th International Conference on AIDS, scheduled for August 7 to 12. "The contributions and perspectives of people with

HIV or AIDS are essential to a successful AIDS conference, and those people are welcome in Japan," said Dr. Naoko Yamamoto, deputy director of the Infectious Diseases Control Division, Health Services Bureau, at the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare.

Japanese officials do not ask visa applicants about their HIV status or sexual orientation, and do not require them to take an HIV antibody test. "The policy applies...not only during the Yokohama conference, but at all times," stated Dr. Yamamoto. According to Ministry officials, Japan has never denied access to any visitor or immigrant because of having HIV or AIDS.

The Ministry's Environmental Health Bureau has notified local governments and a national association for hotel health standards that the Japanese Hotel Business Law does not allow discrimination against people with HIV or AIDS. In addition, the group has been hosting seminars and lectures to ensure that hotel personnel are well educated on AIDS issues.

SCOTLAND
 The Royal Bank of Scotland announced that it would begin issuing extra check-cashing ID cards to its transvestite customers who request them. This would allow customers to have separate cards depicting themselves in male or female dress, in order to avoid "embarrassment or difficulties," said a bank spokesperson.



Compiled by Jann Gilbert

Mexican man gains asylum because of sexual orientation

A Mexican man has been granted asylum in the United States by the Immigration and Naturalization Service based on his fears that in returning to Mexico he would face persecution because he is a gay man.

The decision is believed to be the first issued by the INS which recognizes sexual orientation as a class protected by the Refugee Act of 1980.

Jose Garcia told immigration officials that Mexican police have arrested him many times because of his sexual orientation. On one occasion, he said, police extorted money from him and raped him.

He also said that he feared persecution based on his involvement with AIDS prevention and awareness efforts in San Francisco.

Garcia's lawyer, Ron Silberstein, presented documentation that members of the Mexican police and military have assassinated gay men and health care workers who treat people with HIV or

AIDS. Between 15 and 25 transvestites and gay men have been killed in the state of Chiapas from 1991 to 1993, according to the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission. Many of the victims were killed with the high caliber bullets used by police.

The governor of Chiapas has recently reopened investigation into the killings. Earlier this month, activists met with government officials to urge timely investigation of the cases. Activists, including members of the Circulo Cultural Gay in Chiapas, are concerned that the government is not sincere in its investigation.

Also, people with AIDS who gain access to medical care in Mexico are often discriminated against and abused. Some hospitals deny people with AIDS access to medicines to treat secondary infection and sometimes refuse to care for people with AIDS at all.

"I hope that this decision will compel the Mexican government to make serious efforts to respect everyone's human rights, whether in Chiapas or with respect to its gay citizens," said Silberstein.

Compiled by Pamela Lyons

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