

WORLDnews

reaction was such that I thought people might attack me when they saw me on the streets. But I have since learned that there are many supporters, too."

BELARUS

The Minsk bar Reactor canceled the Miss Diva 2000 drag contest Oct. 27, saying the nation's president and city officials have threatened to close the club if it holds gay events, local activists reported. The club also refused to return \$1,300 that the Belarus Lambda League had paid to rent the venue, the league said.

In September, city officials banned the gay pride parade, shut down the pride week launch event, closed the entire building that houses the pride office, canceled the gay film festival and shut down other locations where pride events were planned. Gays protested by holding an afternoon of unauthorized seminars in a city park, then marching to a downtown monument and unfurling a large rainbow flag.

AUSTRALIA

The 2002 Gay Games in Sydney will pour \$260 million into Australia's economy, the Federation of Gay Games says.



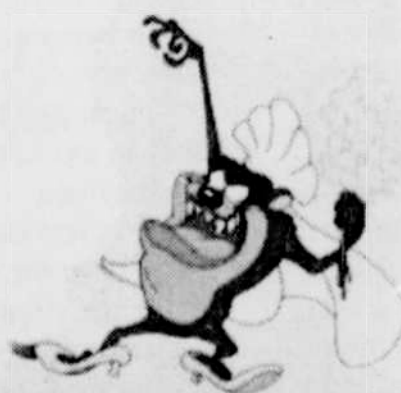
About 15,000 athletes and 25,000 visitors are expected. The recent Sydney Olympics attracted 11,000 athletes.

"Since we do not use the athletes village, we expect all of the participants and the spectators to go to the hotels in the city, eat in the restaurants around the city, shop in the shops around the city," federation co-president Bill Wassmer told *The Age*. "Since it is such a far distance to come, we expect that most of the participants will stay for two or three weeks to see much more of Australia, so the economic impact will not only be felt in Sydney or New South Wales but all over Australia and New Zealand and the South Pacific region."

Meanwhile, New South Wales Premier Bob Carr has refused to give local games organizers a \$260,000 grant. Sydney Gay Games head Garrie Gibson said he needs the money to hire staff.

"By not having that immediate cash contribution, it is severely limiting my capacity to plan this event and to achieve the goals because I am not able to employ the people I need to employ," he told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "The government has got to appreciate that you can't put on one of the world's biggest sporting events—and make sure that Sydney gets a return on those venues that we have built—without financial support."

The parliament of the Australian state of Tasmania lifted a 65-year-old ban on men wearing women's clothes in public after dark Nov. 14.



"Tasmanian anti-cross-dressing laws have been used in the past—including the recent past—as a justification for harassment of transgendered people," said Rodney Croome of the Tasmanian Gay and Lesbian Rights Group. "This change will eliminate an anachronistic and very damaging section of Tasmanian law."

PHILIPPINES

Philippine cops went undercover as homosexuals Nov. 5 to catch strippers dancing naked at the Malabon gay bar Bobelle's Disco.

A total of 10 men were arrested and charged with indecent exposure and illegal public exhibition. The bar likely will be shut down, according to the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*.

THAILAND

Bangkok's daylong Lady Party 2000 drew 400 lesbians to the Hera Club on Ratchadaphisek Road on Nov. 4.

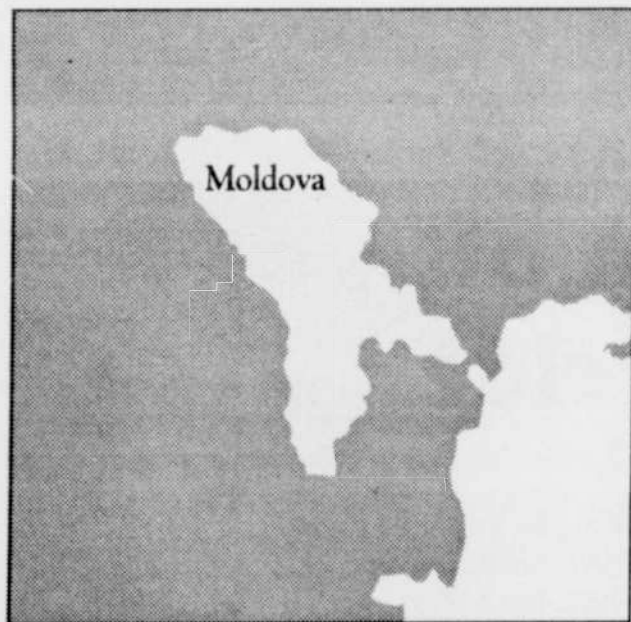
But it wasn't all fun and games. The lesbian organization Anjaree announced plans to launch a gay awareness campaign in public schools.

"Homosexuals exist in every age group, but most of those who declare themselves homosexual are teen-agers," coordinator Chantarak Rak-sayu told the *Bangkok Post*. The day also included stage entertainment, a fancy dress contest, a Miss Popular contest and a dance.

MOLDOVA

The first public meeting of Moldova's only legal gay organization, GenderDoc-M, was broken up by Kishinev police Sept. 23 at the Public Art Library because activists were unable to produce the group's official registration documents.

"Sexual minorities are not protected in any way," GenderDoc-M director Max Anmegikyan said. "We are outlawed, the lowest caste possi-



ble, pedophiles and criminals."

Moldova was formerly part of the Soviet Union. Anmegikyan hopes U.S. citizens might lend a hand.

"Gay and lesbian America has a big heart, and their support can be very helpful," he said. "Letters of support sent to genderdoc@mail.md can help because our authorities have a mixture of respect and fear toward America. Established contacts could also help us lobby the U.S. embassy in requesting some money for our projects."

"Most important, of course, is moral support. It is very useful sometimes to feel you are not alone and there's somebody to back you up." JN

Compiled by REX WOCKNER, who has reported for the gay press since 1985. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from Drake University and started his career as a radio reporter.



North Portland

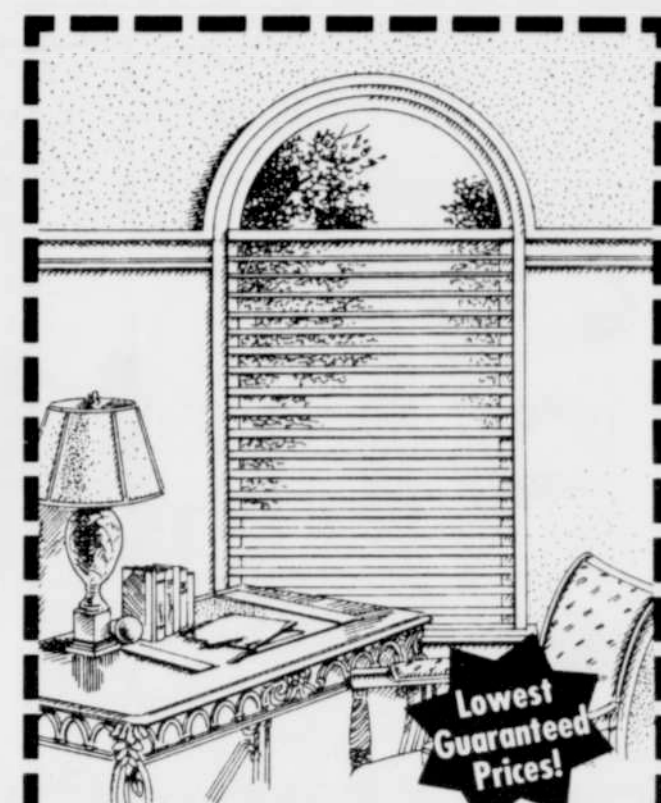
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