

# INTERNATIONAL NEWS



## BY REX WOCKNER

**ARGENTINA** - The Comunidad Homosexual Argentina won its eight-year battle to register with the government last month and is now allowed to engage in routine business activities, such as renting an office and opening a bank account.

The justice department granted CHA's registration despite a series of court rulings against the group, most recently on Nov. 25, 1991, by the Supreme Court, which said: "Homosexuality offends the nature and dignity of the human person.... Freedom of expression is limited by the need and duty to preserve public morals."

CHA's registration likely resulted from intervention by Argentine President Carlos Menem, who has faced embarrassing gay protests in New York City, Washington, D.C., Brussels and Paris. The protests, coordinated by the International Lesbian and Gay Association and the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission, interfered with Menem's efforts to promote his administration as pro-human rights. At a November run-in with members of ACT UP/New York, a flustered Menem promised to personally push through CHA's registration. "International pressure was the key factor," said CHA's Rafael Freda.

**AUSTRALIA** - Police said 400,000 people watched the 1992 Mardi Gras parade, setting a record for the annual gay event.

Taking two hours to journey from Elizabeth Street to Moore Park, the parade featured 75 entries representing the diversity of Sydney's gay community, reported *Sydney Star Observer*.

Among first-time marchers were a group of New Zealanders and a contingent of members of Parliament. Afterward, 16,000 people partied till dawn at the Sydney Showground.

**AUSTRALIA** - A gay couple from China was granted refugee status March 19 because of China's persecution of gays and lesbians.

Chinese law mandates incarceration for as long as it takes to "re-educate" an individual through "treatment," according to the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission, which provided the information that "clinched" the case, according to the couple's lawyer.

"Successful refugee or political asylum cases is one way we are documenting our persecution around the globe, which is critical to fighting for our human rights," said IGLHRC Director Julie Dorf.

Other countries that have granted asylum to gays fleeing persecution include Austria, Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the U.S., according to IGLHRC. An Argentine man and two Russians were granted asylum in Canada earlier this year; Sweden has accepted several gay Iranians.

**AUSTRALIA** - Carmakers placing pro-gay ads in gay magazines has become a trend. First it was Toyota, which created a full-page color ad for the national magazine *Outrage*. It showed two male yuppies in front of their expensive house loading up their new Seca Ultima with a picnic basket, tennis rackets and their two dalmatians. Across the top of the ad: "the family car."

Now Suzuki is advertising in *Campaign*, another national gay magazine. The full-page color ad shows a topless hunk leaning against his Suzuki jeep at the beach. "Only the Best Boys Drive Suzuki. DO IT NOW!" the ad says. The New South Wales state license plate reads "BOYTOY."

Mazda, Daihatsu and Holden have also jumped on the bandwagon. The Holden ad, which is running in Perth, Western Australia's *Westside Observer*, is downright

homeroetic. The car is parked on grass amid big trees. Two topless hunks are standing behind the open doors on either side. The slogan: "Young's Holden will get you cruising."

**BRAZIL** - The director of the Sao Paulo State Transportation Department, Cyro Vidal Soares, wants to eliminate the combination of letters that spells "gay" from auto license plates to reduce motorist distress.

The Grupo Gay da Bahia in the city of Salvador protested to Sao Paulo Gov. Luis Antonio Fleury Filho, arguing that Vidal's plans violate the state constitution, which bans discrimination based on sexual orientation, according to the newspaper *O Dia*.

**BURMA** - Twenty-five HIV-positive prostitutes were injected with cyanide after being deported from Thailand, according to a United Press International report.

Thai officials who publicized the killings said they did not know who infused the women with the lethal substance. Twenty other deported prostitutes were murdered last year by Burmese military troops, according to Nitiya Thippayanuraksakul, director of Emergency Home, a Bangkok shelter for abused women, who received her information from Thai border police. "The girls were injected with something and buried," she told UPI.

Burmese dissident groups have reported that bodies of murdered prostitutes have been found at sea, said UPI.

**CANADA** - Canadian Customs seizes all U.S. gay-porn magazines and removes depictions of or references to anal sex - even though anal sex is legal in Canada.

Canadian readers of such magazines as *Honcho* and *Jock* receive copies full of blank space. This has been going on since 1985 in accord with Customs Memorandum D9-1-1.

The Canadian Committee Against Customs Censorship has finally had enough and filed suit. Lawyer Charles Campbell will base his case on mangled copies of *Blueboy*, *Mandate* and *Playguy*. He says that since videos showing anal sex are available in Canada and anal sex is not illegal, Memorandum D9-1-1 amounts to anti-gay discrimination.

Donations are needed at CCACC Legal Defense Fund, P.O. Box 888, Station F, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2N6, Canada.

**CANADA** - McDonald's has sued the Montreal condom store La Capoterie for selling "McCondoms."

The Oak Brook, Ill.-based corporation claims McCondoms violate its trademark "McLanguage" which extends to 75 products such as McRib, McCone and McKids.

**CANADA** - A Uruguayan gay man seeking asylum from Uruguay's alleged mistreatment of gays was deported after he failed to prove his claims.

Canada recently accepted two gay refugees from Russia and one from Argentina.

**CHILE** - A gay group joined a March march marking the first anniversary of the

Rettig Commission Report, which detailed thousands of human-rights abuses committed during the military regime of Gen. Augusto Pinochet.

It was believed to be the first demonstration by gays in Chilean history. All marchers wore masks, making it easier for members of the new Homosexual Liberation Movement to participate. The group carried a banner and handed out a statement detailing atrocities suffered by gays under Pinochet.

Most observers reacted to the contingent with surprise and curiosity. The march was staged by relatives of people "disappeared" during the 1973-90 dictatorship. - *Correspondent Tim Frasca in Santiago.*

**CHINA** - A male doctor from Canton was jailed for eight years for having "indecent" affairs with 19 men, reported London's *Capital Gay*, citing the newspaper *Nangfang Bao*. The man, Li, met the men at work, *Nangfang Bao* reported, adding: "Li's behavior indeed falls into an abnormal personality characterized by abnormal sexual love. This kind of abnormal homosexual behavior disrupts public order... which causes harm to society."

**CUBA** - Cuba is moving away from quarantining HIV-positives in sanatoriums, reports *Latinamerica Press*.

Plans call for converting the sanatoriums to outpatient clinics where HIV-positives "can be evaluated medically and psychologically, educated in the ethics as well as the biology of AIDS prevention, and then go out and lead a normal life," according to journalist Karen Wald.

At present, most of Cuba's more than 600 known HIV-positives may leave the sanatoriums on weekends, holidays and when they need to go somewhere. A few work regular jobs and return at night. To be let out, patients must convince their keepers they will not have unsafe sex.

**CZECHOSLOVAKIA** - The International Lesbian and Gay Association's Sixth Regional Conference for Eastern and Southeastern Europe was May 1-3 in Bratislava. "The objective... is to promote cooperation between gay and lesbian organizations in Western and Eastern Europe," said ILGA Information Secretary Micha Ramakers. For information, phone or fax Ganymedes, direct-dial, at (011) 42-7-25-38-88.

**ECUADOR** - Twenty gay men were killed by morality death squads in the last half of 1991, *The Advocate* reported.

"The murders are carried out as executions," according to the defunct Quito gay newspaper *El Directo*. "Some victims were kidnapped and raped." *El Directo* ceased publication after two issues when the publishers received death threats.

"The gay activists (there) are full of fear," said Enrique Santos of the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission. "The only chance that they have now is international pressure."

Anti-gay death squads also operate in Ar-

gentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru and Venezuela.

**ENGLAND** - The Obscene Publications Squad in Manchester seized 1,000 magazines, 1,500 greeting cards and seven Tom of Finland T-shirts from the gay Clone Zone store last month, reported *Capital Gay*.

The material is valued at \$11,000. Nabbed magazines included the soft-core British publications *Him*, *Zipper*, *Vulcan*, *Euro-Boy*, *US Male* and *Mister*, and the U.S. magazines *In Touch* and *Advocate Men*. The greeting cards were from the U.S. TNT line.

"There's obviously a problem with erections," said Clone Zone's Paul Orton. "Somebody has taken a personal objection to the angle of the dangle."

Clone Zone stocks no magazines that show semen or intercourse, having been informed earlier that such depictions are "obscene."

**ENGLAND** - Prime Minister John Major issued a statement welcoming the re-born group Tories Campaigning for Homosexual Equality.

"I am glad that the party's continued strength and wide appeal are once more demonstrated by the relaunch of TORCHE and I hope it will prove a valuable forum for discussion of these issues," he said.

TORCHE Chair David Starkey called Major's remarks "characteristically Major..., encouraging and non-committal in equal measure." TORCHE has 300 members.

**ENGLAND** - One hundred OutRage members staged a "cruise-in" in Picadilly Circus last month to protest laws that prohibit publicly seeking male-male sex, even though gay sex is legal.

Under laws dating to 1885, it is a crime to publicly invite, encourage, facilitate or aid and abet homosexual behavior. In 1989, the most-recent year for which statistics are available, 346 men were convicted under the laws; three were jailed.

Later in the demo, several threesomes took turns placing a small mock house over the top 3/5 of their bodies and dropping their pants to engage in "frenzied bonking." This worked a horde of news photographers into a frenzy of their own. It is illegal for more than two men to bonk in England, even in private.

Pop stars Jimmy Somerville, Andy Bell (Erasure) and Tom Robinson joined the protest. "I should have been arrested a thousand times for cruising," Bell told reporters. Somerville related to MTV-Europe how he'd been arrested for a frenzied bonk in Hyde Park.

Two weeks later, OutRage members staged a "spank-in" outside the High Court to protest a recent ruling that criminalized all sadomasochistic sex (see last month's news roundup). The 40 activists whipped and thrashed volunteers in stocks. Police only twitched when one enthusiast appeared to fist-fuck a Sister of Perpetual Indulgence.

**FRANCE** - About 60 ACT UP'ers and 30 sex workers protested last month in the Bois de Boulogne, the large, cruisy park that police now close at night to thwart AIDS transmission among transvestite prostitutes, their customers, and gay men on the prowl (see the March news roundup).

The demonstrators chanted, "AIDS: Close your eyes, close the woods, it's the same fight," and "AIDS: Only one barrier, the condom." The group opened barricaded roads and disturbed traffic flow near park entrances.

Late last year, voluntary testing of 350

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14