

**AUSTRALIA**

In a probable national first, a public-service announcement dealing with gay hate assault aired on television in the state of Tasmania in mid-May.

The ad depicts a gay man talking about being the victim of a hate crime and ends with messages about public safety.

The 30-second spot is part of a series of PSAs on safety in public places produced by the Common Ground Project.

"Gay and lesbian people are at high risk of assault, both in terms of numbers of incidents and the violence of these incidents," said project coordinator Lynn Lee.

**CANADA**

Canada's broadcasting watchdog agency blasted U.S. radio talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger on May 10, saying her homophobic statements could ignite anti-gay violence.

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council denounced Schlessinger for calling gays "abnormal," "aberrant," "deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional" and "an error."

She is "abusively discriminatory" and in violation of Canada's broadcasting code, the council said, adding that Schlessinger's anti-gay positions are "fatuous and unsustainable."

The ruling requires radio stations to cease broadcasting any comments by Schlessinger that breach the broadcasting code, CBSC head Ron Cohen said.

Other programs that have faced crackdowns include *The Howard Stern Show* (which is now broadcast with a time delay to allow deletions), the *Jerry Springer Show* (also time-delayed) and *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, which was banned in Canada due to excessive violence.

Statistics Canada will count gay couples in next year's census.

All Canadians will be asked if they are living in a common-law partnership, defined as "two people of the opposite sex or of the same sex who live together as a couple but who are not legally married to each other."

A follow-up question requires the person filling out the form to define his or her relationship to the other people in the household, with one of the choices being "common-law partner (same sex) of person 1."



ILLUSTRATION BY MARC ACITO

**EGYPT**

Authorities arrested two men in Zagazig who were discovered to have gotten "married" by signing a private contract, the *Cairo Times* reported April 21.

Mumin S., 38, was charged with a "violation of honor by threat." His lover, Amir Mohammed Saber Abduh Ali, age 18 or 19, was charged with immoral and indecent behavior but was later released.

According to the *Times*, Ali told police the relationship had been going on for a year and a half while he worked in the older man's computer games store. But Ali claimed the relationship was not one of mutual consent because he had been "tricked" into it.

Although the contract has no standing in the eyes of the law, Mumin S. faces up to six years in prison if convicted of forcing Ali to have sex against his will.

**INDIA**

One hundred ten gay and lesbian activists from around India gathered near Mumbai this month for a three-day conference titled Looking into the Next Millennium.

Addressing the opening session, actress and television talk show host Kiron Kher urged: "You must fight for your rights. You need to make your intentions clear and come public with your sexual preferences rather than spoil another's life."

Kher apparently was referring to opposite-sex spouses who unknowingly marry homosexuals.

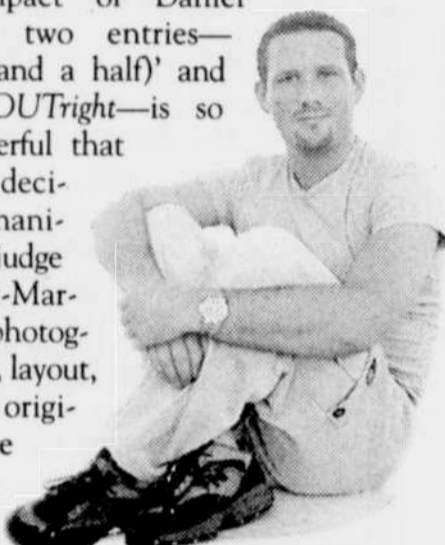
Dr. Alka Gogte of the Maharashtra District AIDS Control Society agreed that coming out is the answer.

"No one will understand your problems till you speak for yourself," she told the conferees.

**SOUTH AFRICA**

On May 10, the gay magazine *OUTright* won the mainstream *Mondi Paper Magazine* Award for Best Fashion Editorials of 1999.

"The impact of Daniel Somerville's two entries—'Episode 1 (and a half)' and 'Loop' in *OUTright*—is so visually powerful that the judges' decision was unanimous," said judge Sue Grant-Marshall. "The photography, styling, layout, design and originality of the entries came together in a strong fashion statement. Men's fashion is nearly always challenging, and Daniel and his team have broken new turf with their win."



Daniel Somerville

PHOTO BY VIN KRUGER

**UNITED KINGDOM**

Glasgow, Scotland's City Council temporarily suspended all funding of gay groups May 12 after a citizen filed suit charging the city with violating Section 28 of the Local Government Act, a 10-year-old United Kingdom law that prohibits cities from "intentionally promot[ing] homosexuality" or teaching "the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship" in schools.

Among the defunded groups are HIV Carers, the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard, the Glasgow arts festival, the MCT Theatre Company and the West of Scotland Lesbian and Gay Forum.



**UKRAINE**

Government officials continue to beleague the Our World Gay and Lesbian Center in Lugansk, the center reports.

In the latest incident, the Tax Inspection agency ruled that the organization must pay 30 percent tax on grants it receives because it does not engage in educational, cultural, scientific and health care activities.

Our World officers say their group does exactly those types of work and their grants should therefore be tax-free. They have filed suit to reverse the ruling.

A year ago, Our World was denied government registration as a nonprofit organization. The center sued, won and was registered.

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.

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