

office Aug. 26 protesting the Iranian government's executions of gay men, the death penalty and sodomy laws. The action was organized by the groups Rosa Lila Villa and Homosexual Initiative Vienna.

Iran recently executed two gay teen-agers. The government said they raped another boy, but some activist groups claim that the rape charge was bogus and that the two were hanged solely for being gay.

The Iranian exile gay group Homan reportedly claims that 4,000 homosexuals have been executed in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

DUTCH GET GAY MEN'S ENCYCLOPEDIA

In what may be a world first, an encyclopedia of gay men has been published in the Netherlands, Expatia.com reports.

Published by Ambo/Anthos, the book contains 1,300 entries written by 25 gay male authors covering such issues as history, culture, politics, the law, philosophy and media. A spokesman for the publishing house said the book is written in accessible language and contains many things "that outsiders would not know about."

Two foundations, Hartenfonds and VSN Fonds, provided subsidies to help get the book printed. A copy from the initial print run of 3,000 was presented Aug. 25 to Amsterdam Mayor Geert Dales, Expatia said.

ROMANIAN POLITICIAN WARNED ABOUT HATEFUL RHETORIC

Romania's National Council for Combating Discrimination issued a disciplinary warning Aug. 25 against ultranationalist party leader Vadim Tudor for defaming gays—and threatened to fine him if he does it again.

"Homosexuals are an aberration of nature," Tudor said on television in May. "They shouldn't mess with me because I'm going to impale them on wooden stakes and they might like it."

The council said the remarks "violate gay minority rights to dignity, freedom from discrimination and equal treatment."

Tudor responded with a threat to sue the council, according to Reuters. "I am the one who is discriminated against because they don't allow me to express my constitutional right to free speech," he said.

ISLE OF MAN TO EQUALIZE SEX LAWS

The Isle of Man, a British crown dependency, is planning to equalize the age of consent for gay and straight sex, *Isle of Man Today* reported.

The island off the west coast of Britain allows heterosexual sex at age 16 but prohibits gay sex until age 18. The government said it wants to make the change to stay in line with the European Convention on Human Rights.

ASIA/PACIFIC

FUJI GAY SEX CONVICTIONS OVERTURNED

The convictions of an Australian tourist and a Fijian man for having sex in private in Fiji last April were overturned Aug. 26.

Lautoka High Court Justice Gerard Winter struck down the convictions on constitutional grounds, citing rights to privacy and equality. State prosecutors said they may appeal the decision.

Thomas McCosker, 55, and Dharendra Nandan, 23, had been convicted of "unnatural offense" and "indecent practice between males" by a judge who called their crimes "something so disgusting that it would make any person vomit." They were sentenced to two years in prison, spent a week in jail and then were bailed out pending appeal.

Officials became aware of the men's activities after McCosker reported a theft and police discovered incriminating images on his digital camera. The photos were used as evidence in court.

McCosker, a retired university teacher from the state of Victoria, has now returned to Australia.

AUSSIE BROADCASTER ESCAPES CENSURE

Veteran Sydney, Australia, radio broadcaster John Laws will not be censured by the Australian Media and Communications Authority for calling *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* star Carson Kressley a "pompous little pansy prig" and a "pillow-biter." The outburst aired last November on Laws' program on radio station 2UE.

The media watchdog agency called the comments offensive and tasteless but said they were unlikely to incite or perpetuate hatred or vilification of gays. The station itself was rapped for failing to respond to complaints within 30 days, a breach of broadcasting codes.

Laws later apologized for the slurs in the gay weekly *Sydney Star Observer*.

"My intentions were humorous and satirical, and this is how I believe people who heard my show that morning would have reacted," he wrote. "I do apologize to you for any distress my words might have caused, especially if you might have come to believe I was condoning or supporting any form of verbal or physical violence directed at gay men and lesbians."

LIVERPOOL SEEKS TO CREATE GAY VILLAGE

The City Council in Liverpool, England, voted unanimously Sept. 7 to support the idea of creating a gay commercial district, *The Liverpool Daily Post* reported.

"We hope to get moving on it very quickly, and we want to talk to businesses who are already gay-friendly and also the gay community to get their ideas and suggestions about the way forward," said Councilor Peter Millea. "Liverpool has always had gay-friendly bars, but they have never worked together as part of a strategy."

Councilors said the district could make gays and lesbians feel safer and more welcome, stem the routine flow of gay parties to Manchester's Canal Street and lead to gentrification of the city center. They envision a neighborhood of gay bars, clubs, health services, clothing stores, barbers and residential buildings, said Councilor Paul Brant.

GAY RUGBY PLAYERS PRODUCE SEXY CALENDAR

Wales' gay rugby team, the Cardiff Lions, has released a sexy calendar in hopes of raising money to send itself to New York for next year's Bingham Cup tournament.

"We are over the moon with the finished product—it's brilliant," team spokesman Stuart Savage told the *Wales on Sunday* newspaper.

"We were all nervous at the start of the shoot, but as soon as one person did it, we all relaxed. It was in a good cause!"

The calendar sells for about \$16.57. It is available at the team's Web site, www.cardiffions.co.uk/calendar.htm.

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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