

Mayor Vilhjálmur Th. Vilhjálmsson has offered financial support for Pride festivities in Reykjavik, Iceland.

hand of the Queen of Videy, a local drag queen and member of the committee.

Turkish Queer Students Organize for First Time

Fifteen students at Istanbul's Bilgi University have set up the nation's first queer student club, *Turkish Daily News* reported March 29.

The Bilgi Gökkusagi LGBT Club applied for and received official university approval. The club meets weekly and is open to any student who wants to fight homophobia. Planned projects include a fanzine, forums, movies and workshops with other student clubs.

Chief Italian Bishop's Cathedral Defaced

Someone spray-painted "Shame on You Bagnasco" on a Roman Catholic cathedral April 2 in Genoa, Italy, after Archbishop Angelo Bagnasco, head of the Italian Conference of Catholic Bishops, likened gay relationships to incest and pedophilia.

"Why say 'no' to forms of legally recognized cohabitation which create alternatives to the family?" he asked. "Why say 'no' to incest? Why say 'no' to the pedophile party in Holland?"

The remarks came shortly after the bishops conference instructed Catholic members of Parliament to vote against Italy's pending civil union legislation. Reports said Bagnasco is now traveling with a police escort for fear that angry gays might attack him.

AMERICAS

Amnesty: Honduran Gay Activist Beaten, Raped

Honduran gay activist Donny Reyes was beaten by police and raped by fellow detainees at a police station March 18, according to Amnesty International.

The organization said Reyes, treasurer of the Rainbow LGTB Association, was arbitrarily grabbed from a taxi stand by police in Tegucigalpa and kept for six hours in a cell where other detainees, egged on by a policeman, repeatedly sexually assaulted him.

"Look, I'm bringing you a little princess. You know what to do," the officer said, according to Amnesty.

Another of the six officers who took Reyes into custody told him, "We have to disappear these queers from here."

Since then, Amnesty said, police have attempted to intimidate Reyes by parking outside the association's office. "He, and other members of the organization he heads, may be in grave danger," the organization said.

According to Ariel Herrera of Amnesty International USA's OUTfront Program, "Attacks against LGBT people in Honduras are a scourge the police should confront, yet the police are part of the problem."

Gays Attacked at Jamaican Carnival

Three Jamaican gay men were attacked by a mob April 2 at Montego Bay's MoBay Nite Out carnival event, *The Jamaica Observer* reported.

The men, one of whom was hospitalized, angered other attendees when they took to a stage and gyrated on each other, the newspaper said. The crowd threw rocks and bottles at the men, and when the men returned fire, the crowd lunged for them, chased them down and beat them.

The attack follows a Feb. 14 incident in which a mob surrounded a pharmacy in Kingston and demanded that four gay men inside come out and face punishment for being homosexuals. The crowd formed after another shopper took exception to the men's presence and began screaming that "batty-men," or faggots, must be killed.

Cops fired tear gas into that crowd of 200 and rescued the men, one of whom was hit in the head with a rock while being escorted to a police vehicle. But after removing the men from the scene, officers disparaged them en route to, and at, the police station, according to the Jamaica Forum for Lesbians, All-Sexuals and Gays.

One of the rescued men, J-FLAG leader Gareth Williams, said officers hit him in the head and struck him in the stomach with a rifle.

ASIA/PACIFIC

Australian Pop Star Comes Out

Australian pop music star Anthony Callea, 24, came out in newspaper interviews and on his Web site March 27.


Callea's No. 1 hit "The Prayer" is the biggest-selling single in Australian chart history.

"Yes, I am gay," Callea wrote on his Web site. "But I want it clear that I am proud, happy, comfortable and confident in who I am. And I have no issue with my sexuality."

"Things now feel right for me to share this part of my life. I am content. I have been in a long-term relationship with my partner, Paul, who has been by my side for the past 2 1/2 years. Together we have the love and support of our family, friends and peers."

In a 2004 interview, Callea had denied being gay.

"I know some people may feel deceived or betrayed," he said. "I hope you can find it within to understand that coming out can be a very troubling, confusing and emotional time.... For some, coming out isn't a big issue. For me, it was.... I hated myself.... I thought there was something wrong with me and I couldn't escape it or fix it.... I lied, and for that, I'm sorry."

"I have no issue with my sexuality now, but it's taken time to become confident with who I am and happy with who I am," Callea told local media. "I'm looking forward to living a life with no holds barred and not worrying about having to say the right thing." 

REX WOCKNER 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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