

world

EUROPE

Italian Gay Leader Dies

One of the most important gay activists in Italian history died of colon cancer Nov. 4.

Massimo Consoli, 61, also was a journalist, writer, playwright, poet, theorist, translator, archivist and historian. He wrote more than 30 books, mostly on gay issues.

Among his many accomplishments, Consoli founded two Italian gay organizations in the days before the Stonewall Riots.

In 1971 he wrote *Gay Manifesto*, which inspired the creation of other gay organizations, including the important Italian Revolutionary Homosexual United Front, Fuori.

In 1976 Consoli organized the nation's first Pride-related activities. He went on to organize hundreds

of other demonstrations, conferences, exhibitions, and intellectual and artistic events.

Later, he also was an AIDS and safer-sex organizer.

"I've lived the history of the gay movement. It's inside me," Consoli told *The International Herald-Tribune* last year.

His Web site, www.cybercore.com/consoli, will remain online, maintained by friends.



Sex educator Mariela Castro Espín, daughter of Fidel Castro's brother Raúl, says her father supports gays serving in the military.

tion is in the army also. Go on working, raising awareness, doing things, changing Cuban society, and you'll change everything else, including our institutions."

Castro Espín said she has taken a direct interest in gay issues since 2004.

"A group of more than 40 cross-dressers

and transsexuals from Havana came to see me at Cenesex to let me know about the difficulties they were having with the police in the central La Rampa zone, where they were meeting and still meet," she said. "The police were arbitrarily arresting them and then letting them go without charges, just because people were complaining [about them]."

Three years later, Cuba is set to begin offering sex-change surgery.

"There are 27 transsexuals waiting for the operation, [and] the medical team is being trained," Castro Espín said. "As soon as it's ready...they will start to operate."

Castro Espín also told *Clarín* that 80 percent of people with HIV in Cuba are men and that 85 percent of those are men who have sex with men, "often in connection with prostitution."

She also mentioned that she wants to visit the United States, "but they won't give us a visa."

"I was there once and I've been invited back twice since then, but they didn't give it to me," she said. "I asked for it, and they didn't respond...."

[But] when they want, professional Americans come [to Cuba] via a third country and we have excellent relations and excellent e-mail contact."

ASIA/PACIFIC

Iranian's Sodomy Death Sentence Lifted

After an international outcry by activists, a 21-year-old Iranian man sentenced to hang for allegedly committing sodomy and rape when he was 13 years old saw his sentence commuted Nov. 14.

Ayatollah Syed Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi, the nation's chief justice, nullified the death sentence of Makvan Mouloudzadeh, apparently agreeing with Mouloudzadeh's lawyer that evidence of the alleged crimes was lacking and that numerous elements of the case violated proper procedure. Mouloudzadeh remains jailed in the city of Kermanshah, and the case will be returned to a local court for a retrial.

"The only reason this young man managed to escape is that he had a relative in Germany that knew someone in Iran, and that someone was a reporter and she was brave enough to make a fuss about it," said Hossein Alizadeh, communications director of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission and a gay Iranian who won asylum in the United States based on Iran's treatment of gay people. "I'm sure there are many people like him who die because there was no one to hear their story," he told MSNBC. **ID**

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.



Gay Italian journalist, poet, playwright and historian Massimo Consoli died Nov. 4.

AMERICAS

Daughter: Raúl Castro Supports Gays in Military

Raúl Castro, who is leading Cuba during his brother Fidel's lengthy illness, supports gays serving openly in the military, says his daughter, Mariela Castro Espín, director of the island's National Center for Sex Education, Cenesex.

Castro Espín was asked about "gays in the military" in a Nov. 4 interview with the Buenos Aires daily newspaper *Clarín*.

"I always say where there's humanity there's diversity, and in the military world there are gays also, but of course they are careful because it's a milieu that doesn't accept them," Castro Espín said. "It is still considered that the conditions to make changes do not exist. Well, my dad, the minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces, says to me: 'Look, I think that to the extent the population changes, the army will change, because the popula-



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