

WORLD news

additional funding from Gaydar.com.

"Gaydar are our major sponsors, but compared to the amount of money television should cost, our budget is about a 20th of what it should be," Payne said.

SOUTH AFRICA

Thousands of people paraded Sept. 28 through the upscale district



South Africans celebrate Gay Pride on Sept. 28 in Johannesburg

of Rosebank in Johannesburg during the city's 12th Gay Pride. Marchers said it felt like a quantum leap from the 1990 event in the now predominantly black Hillbrow neighborhood, when some participants wore paper bags on their heads to avoid outing themselves.

INTERNATIONAL

Coca-Cola said Sept. 26 it will provide anti-HIV drugs to employees in Africa, including up to 60,000 people who work for independent bottling companies. Only about 1,500 upper-level workers directly employed by Coke previously were eligible for the coverage.

The cost will be split 50-50 by the Coca-Cola Africa Foundation and the local bottlers. Spouses will be covered as well, but children will not.

AIDS activists were unimpressed with the announcement. They staged protests against the corporation Oct. 17, demanding it fund HIV treatment for all workers worldwide.

"Coke's plans will be implemented too slowly, and...the framework will only suit the largest bottlers—leaving the majority of workers in the hardest-hit regions and the smaller bottlers behind," ACT UP/New York, ACT UP/Philadelphia and Health GAP said in a joint statement. "The company [hides] behind its labyrinthine African franchise system to resist covering its total work force, which totaled 100,000 workers at the time of the announcement. [This] announced initiative will cover just 35 percent of Coke's bottler work force in Africa."

GERMANY

The upper chamber of Parliament killed \$19 million in funding Sept. 29 for the new Magnus Hirschfeld Foundation. The lower house of Parliament created the organization and allocated the money June 27 to fight discrimination and compensate the gay movement for the destruction of its infrastructure by the Nazis.

Hirschfeld is believed to have been Germany's—if not the world's—first gay activist. He founded the Scientific Humanitarian Committee in 1897.

The upper chamber of Parliament nixed the legislation creating the foundation by sending it to a Siberia-like joint committee for further discussion. "We are back to square one," an activist said.



Uzi Even

SWITZERLAND

Switzerland's largest state, Zurich canton, passed a law Sept. 22 giving gay couples numerous marriage rights. Voters approved the measure by a 63 percent to 37 percent margin.

Registered same-sex couples will receive marriage rights and obligation in the areas of immigration, taxation, inheritance, social security benefits and hospital visitation. Activists continue their push for nationwide recognition of gay partnerships.

CANADA

Canada's national gay cable network lost \$1.39 million last quarter, has reduced its staff from 25 to nine and has axed most of its original programming, Toronto's Xtra! reports.

Canceled are PrideVision's flagship news show, *Shout*; the call-in show *Under Covers*; *Urban Fitness*; and the travel show *Bump*. Two original programs remain: the comedy *Locker Room* and the talk show *Jawbreaker*.

In the United States, Viacom, Showtime and MTV are preparing to launch a full-time gay cable network. Xtra! said the U.S. effort likely has deeper pockets than PrideVision, which is owned by Canada's Headline Media Group.

EGYPT

Four Cairo men convicted in February of engaging in consensual gay sex were acquitted on appeal in September because of lack of evidence. The "Boulak 4" had remained jailed since they were arrested Nov. 10, 2001.

"Their acquittal may signal Egypt's response to mounting U.N. criticism of the treatment of homosexuals in that country," the International Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission said. "These men were unjustly arrested, tortured and convicted."

IGLHRC's Scott Long added: "It is too early to celebrate, however. Fifty of the 'Cairo 52' are still under trial while the remaining two are doing hard labor, and...we continue to receive reports of new waves of arbitrary arrests."

Egypt's ongoing roundups of suspected homosexuals have been denounced by the U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the U.N. Human Rights Committee.

ISRAEL

A gay academic will be appointed to Parliament in November to replace a Meretz party member who is retiring. Uzi Even will be the nation's first openly gay member of Parliament, the *Ha'aretz* newspaper reported.

The 61-year-old says he will introduce legislation to advance gay equality in areas such as inheritance and taxes. He has a history as an activist with the

organization Society for the Protection of Personal Rights.

A 1995 settlement in a lawsuit Even filed against his employer, Tel Aviv University, granted full spousal benefits to his partner, including tuition exemption, use of facilities, air tickets for sabbaticals and a pension. **J**

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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