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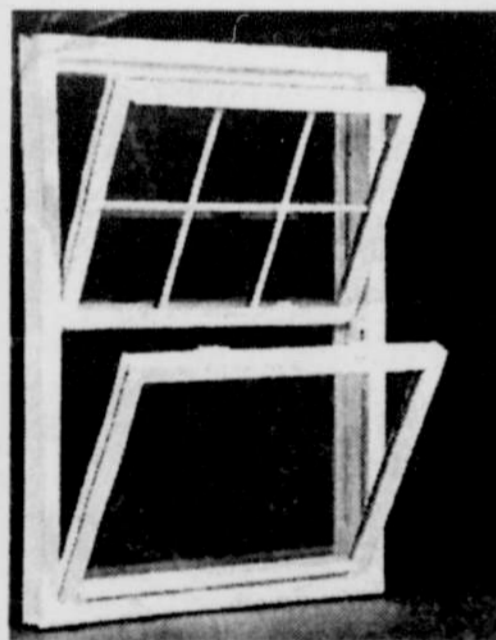
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Robert Rapp and Ernst Ostertag make history July 1 as the first same-sex couple to register their partnership in Zurich, Switzerland

**SWITZERLAND**

Same-sex couples began registering their partnerships July 1 in Zurich. Zurich follows Geneva in setting up a gay partnership registry.

Rights are extended in the areas of taxes, inheritance, hospital visits, social security and other matters. The law was passed by 62 percent of the voters in Zurich canton (province) last September.

The first couple to tie the knot were Ernst Ostertag and Robert Rapp, both 73. They arrived at City Hall in a horse-drawn carriage.

"It's really a coronation of everything that the whole community has done in the past 50 years," Ostertag told SwissInfo.org. A national partnership registration measure is working its way through Parliament.

**INTERNATIONAL**

Police said half a million people turned out for Paris' Gay Pride parade June 28, led by gay Mayor Bertrand Delanoë. Organizers believe 700,000 were present.

A representative of President Jacques Chirac's conservative Union for a Popular Movement joined the parade for the first time. Jean-Luc Romero, the party's gay national secretary, told Sky News, "I have been a militant for gay rights for a long time, so it was natural that I be the first person to represent the UMP at this march."

Berlin's 25th Gay Pride parade attracted 600,000 people to the streets June 28. Gay Mayor Klaus Wowereit led the procession, carrying red roses and a pink teddy bear.

"There is no reason to hide," he said. "We have a tolerant atmosphere here in Berlin."

A total of 650,000 people turned out to watch 40,000 marchers and 90 floats July 6 in Cologne, Germany's Christopher Street Day parade. Wowereit made the trip west to join that celebration as well.

About 200,000 people attended a Pride march June 28 in Vienna, Austria—and 200 people marched under heavy police guard in Zagreb, Croatia. Many bystanders disparaged the Croatian group, local reports said.

**ISRAEL**

Thousands of queers marched June 20 in Jerusalem and Haifa, the *Haaretz* newspaper reported. It was Jerusalem's second parade and Haifa's first.

The Jerusalem march started at Safra Square and proceeded through Jaffa Street, Shlomo Hamelech and Agron, ending at Independence Park, the paper said.

Police presence was heavy because of fears that right-wing groups or ultra-Orthodox Jews might disrupt the event. Earlier in the week, the banned, right-wing Kach movement took cred-

it for the destruction of dozens of Gay Pride flags that had been put up along the march route.

Interior Minister Avraham Poraz spoke at a post-parade rally and concert. "I have come to wish you a happy holiday," he said. "We are all proud of you."

In Haifa, marchers set off from the main bus station and proceeded down several central streets, ending at the French Carmel. That parade also saw a heavy police presence.

**INDIA**

About 100 gays and cross-dressers staged a Gay Pride march June 28 in Calcutta. Reports said puzzled bystanders stared with curiosity.

One organizer told Reuters, "We got many e-mails from gays and lesbians saying they wanted to join the march but are afraid to come out publicly." The cities of Bombay and Bangalore are considered more gay-friendly than Calcutta.

**SOUTH KOREA**

About 600 queers marched June 22 in Seoul. The *Korea Herald* took note of "men strutting their stuff in fancy tights and sequins."

"At least for a day, in a circumscribed area removed from the daily grind of family and work, many seemed to breathe a sigh of relief as they waved their pink balloons and rainbow-colored flags," the newspaper said. Most of the participants wore red ribbons around their arm, wrist or neck as a signal to media that they did not wish to be photographed, the *Herald* said.

**MEXICO**

Mérida, which is located in the state of Yucatán, saw its first Gay Pride parade June 28.

About 200 people marched from Mejorada



Israelis show their Pride on June 20 in Jerusalem