

WORLD news

same-sex marriage is permitted already encompass 79 percent of Canada's population. It is not yet permitted in Alberta, the Northwest Territories, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan.

"We look forward to the day when all Canadians have the equal right to marry, when Parliament finally passes legislation to make that a reality," said Cicely McWilliam of Canadians for Equal Marriage. "Until then, we call on all the remaining provinces to accept equal marriage and begin issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples."

The federal government is expected to enact legislation redefining marriage to include same-sex couples in the coming months. About 57 percent of Canadians support same-sex marriage and 38 percent oppose it, according to a July survey by Environics Research Group and the Center for Research and Information on Canada.

Canada saw its first same-sex divorce Sept. 13.

Two Toronto women, identified as M.M. and J.H., got married June 18, 2003, eight days after Ontario became the first of the four provinces and one territory that have legalized full marriage for gay couples. In granting the divorce, Ontario Superior Court Justice Ruth Mesbur declared the section of the federal Divorce Act that defined marriage as between a man and a woman unconstitutional.

UNITED KINGDOM

Britain's Music of Black Origin awards withdrew the nominations of two Jamaican dancehall singers Sept. 7 because their lyrics encourage killing homosexuals. Elephant Man and Vybz Kartel failed to respond to a MOBO invitation to apologize for their lyrics and prove they've stopped writing and performing such music.

They had been nominated for Best Reggae Act. The awards were presented Sept. 30.

"The MOBOs have taken a lead, and we hope other promoters, sponsors and record companies will follow their positive example," said Brett Lock of the London gay direct-action group OutRage, which is spearheading an aggressive campaign against several Jamaican dancehall artists. "The singers'



Singer Vybz Kartel was un-nominated for a MOBO award because of his anti-gay lyrics



Michelle Ritchot and Stephany Cholakis were the first same-sex couple to be married in Manitoba, Canada

refusal to apologize is indicative of their unrepentant violent homophobia. Incitement to murder should never be rewarded."

OutRage also has targeted Beenie Man, Buju Banton, T.O.K., Bounty Killer, Capleton and Sizzla.

About 4,000 people turned out for the first Gay Pride celebration in Reading, England, Sept. 4 at King's Meadow.

"It was successful and absolutely fantastic," organizer Laurence O'Meara said. "It was not just the gay and lesbian communities that came along, the people of

Reading enjoyed it as well."

More than half of the queer members of the United Kingdom's and Ireland's National Union of Journalists say they've faced workplace discrimination because of their sexuality, a union survey has found.

Of the 150 journalists questioned, 35 percent said they'd been refused a promotion, 11 percent said they'd been denied work, 13 percent said they'd faced verbal abuse, and 2 percent reported sexual assault or disciplinary action because of their sexual orientation. A third of the respondents cited managers as the perpetrators of the anti-gay activity.

Ireland banned anti-gay discrimination in the workplace in 1999, and the United Kingdom did so last year.

ARGENTINA

Argentina will see its first queer film festival Oct. 28 to Nov. 3, the Reporter de Espectáculos y Cultura news service reported.

The festival, at the Cosmos Theater and Palais de Glace cultural center, will consist mainly of independent and short films that are rarely screened commercially. The films are from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, England, Lebanon, the Netherlands, South Africa and the United States.

"The criterion we utilized to select the works you're going to see...was to choose material of high emotional quality that speaks to the bonds people have and demonstrates the ways of life of GLBTT people in various parts of the world—not as victims or representations of a problem but instead to show how life is and how human relationships are, to be able to know different realities," director Gabriela Waisman said.

SOUTH AFRICA

Police in Johannesburg have banned drag queens from the Sept. 25 Gay Pride parade because their wigs and makeup obscure their identities, a violation of the nation's Gatherings Act. The law prohibits participating in a gathering, march or protest while wearing a disguise, mask or anything else that obscures facial features.

Johannesburg Metro Police Chief Superintendent Wayne Minnaar told *The Citizen*, a daily newspaper, that the decision was made to ensure consistency in application of the law. Gay activists said any ban on drag queens would be unconstitutional and would be met with legal action. [7]

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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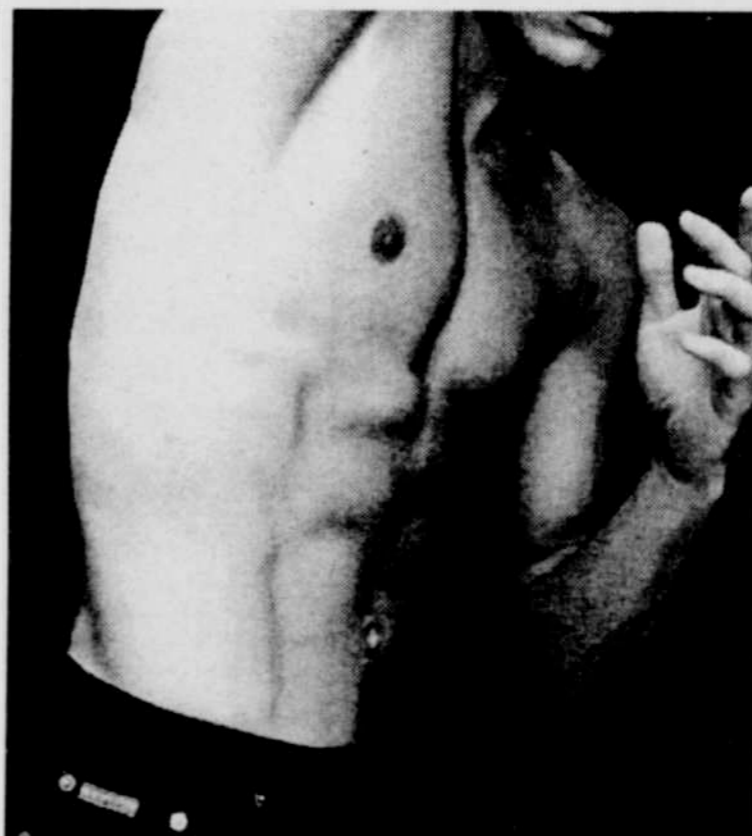
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