

International News

by Andy Harley . UK Gay News
& Matt Comer . Q-Notes Staff

Latvian Pride approved

RIGA, Latvia — A city council committee on May 8 approved a request for an LGBT Pride march here in the city center during



Riga Pride's 2007 march in the park Vermanes Darzs.

Photo Credit: Andy Harley/UK Gay News

Baltic Gay Pride, officially known as Baltic Friendship Days.

The march was scheduled for May 16 at Vermanes Darzs park, the location of the first officially approved parade in 2007.

The decision came at the eleventh hour — organizers said the council had to make its decision by May 9.

On the Baltic Pride Facebook page, organizer Kristine Garina said: "We have submitted our application to the City council in October 2008. However up till now we have not received any confirmation from the City if we will be able to hold our event at Vermanes Darzs."

The agreement was reached by seven representatives of the city council and representatives from the city's police department.

Mozaika, the group organizing the event, had wanted a longer march, but the police, worried about the safety of march participants, said a smaller march would be more secure.

"We appreciate the police do have a security problem, but we are more than happy with the decision," a Mozaika spokesperson said of the compromise.

Five members of the city council's Committee for Demonstrations and Pickets voted in favor of the march. Two, Helmi Stalite and Aina Krukule, voted against, saying that the march "threatens morality and family values."

A religious group has said they intend to hold an anti-gay rally in the same park as the Pride festival.

— by Andy Harley . UK Gay News

Irish civil unions condemned

DUBLIN — Plans by the Irish government to introduce British-style same-sex civil partnerships have been condemned as "retrograde, divisive, second best, discriminatory and sexual apartheid" by LGBT rights advocate and Green Party parliamentary candidate Peter Tatchell.

The internationally-respected advocate's comments were made during a speech at the Marriage Matters symposium held here on May 7. The event was organized by the National Lesbian and Gay Federation of Ireland and attended by delegates representing the nation's several LGBT organizations.

"The proposed Irish civil partnership leg-

islation is a big mistake and an insult to same-sex couples. It is a rejection of marriage equality," Mr. Tatchell said. "Separate laws for gay people are not equal laws."

"Civil partnerships will reinforce the ban on same-sex marriage and thereby reinforce discrimination. They will extend discrimination by denying heterosexual couples the right to have a civil partnership."

Tatchell insisted the civil partnerships were "not equality" and said the Irish government should take a "principled stand in favor of equality" by passing more inclusive civil marriage laws for same-sex couples.

"Civil partnerships are not good enough. They are second best. Same-sex couples deserve the same legal rights as heterosexual couples. Creating one law for gays and another for straights is a retrograde, divisive step," he said.

"I urge the Irish government to not follow the flawed British system of civil partnerships. Let Ireland lead the way and outdo the Brits by giving full civil marriage rights to its lesbian and gay citizens."

— by Andy Harley . UK Gay News

Lesbian journo sues

HELSINKI, Finland — A lesbian journalist is suing what was supposed to be her future employer after she says she was denied a post as editor because she is gay.

Johanna Korhonen, former editor of *Journalist*, the newspaper of the Finnish Union of Journalists, had been appointed editor of *Lapin Kansa*, a Rovaniemi newspaper. In court proceedings, which began in early May, Korhonen claims *Lapin* owner Alma Media's CEO, Kai Telanne, demanded her resignation before she even had the chance to take the position.

Talanne has told Finnish media that Korhonen's contract cancellation was due to a "lack of trust" and claimed that she had told lies during the recruitment process. Korhonen says she never mentioned that her spouse was a female because it wasn't pertinent to the job.

— by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

Parents outraged

LONDON — A parents' group has condemned a new website, concerned that its content will encourage children to participate in drag and "see gay sex as normal."

The site, My-Queen.com, was launched in late April. It allows users to sign up for an account and dress drag queen characters, take part in pageants in virtual bars or have plastic surgery. There is also an online dating component.

The site's creators, who live in various parts of the world, say the site is the "premier Queen community on the internet."

Parents say the game and site are inappropriate.

"The danger of this game is that it may give young children a state of mind where they see sex operations, dressing in drag and casual and gay sex as normal," Andy Hibberd, of parents' group Parentkind, told *The Daily Express*. "Parents have to get together to protect children's innocence and stop firms like this from making money by exploiting children."

— by Matt Comer . Q-Notes staff

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