

edgment of our relationship and are over the moon that is finally going to happen."

The law takes effect Dec. 5, and couples can get hitched at a register office starting Dec. 21—15 days after giving notice of their intention to do so.

Registered partners will receive rights and obligations in areas including accident compensation, life insurance, immigration, inheritance, intestacy, pensions, taxation, tenancy, spouse and child support and workplace benefits. Couples who have entered a legal same-sex union overseas will not need to reregister in the United Kingdom to be recognized. There will be a formal court process for dissolution of a civil partnership.



Hats off to the chaps!

SWEDISH PROSECUTOR APPEALS ANTI-GAY PASTOR CASE

The case of a Swedish pastor who preached that homosexuality is "a cancerous tumor on the body of society" that leads to bestiality and pedophilia is heading to Sweden's Supreme Court.

Åke Green was convicted of "agitation against a group" by a district court and sentenced to a month in prison, but the conviction was overturned by the Göta Court of Appeal. The state prosecutor now is appealing that ruling.

"In the sermon there were statements which must be interpreted as extremely offensive for homosexuals," prosecutor Fredrik Wersälls said March 9. "We need guiding pronouncements about where the boundaries lie between an objective, genuine discussion and punishable abuse, as well as what the significance is if the person making the offensive statements says he has support for them in religious documents."

Green says if he loses at the Supreme Court, he will appeal to the European Court of Human Rights.

GREEK OFFICIALS CALL FOR GAY CIVIL UNIONS

Greece's National Commission for Human Rights said Feb. 25 that the nation should pass a civil union law to recognize and extend spousal benefits to same-sex relationships. The Justice Ministry can choose to follow or ignore the committee's advice.

"We are dealing with this only as a state issue. We do not care if the church agrees or not," said commission spokeswoman Christina Papadopoulou.

Gay groups welcomed the proposal but said it doesn't go far enough.

MIDEAST/AFRICA

SAUDI ARABIA EXECUTES SAME-SEX COUPLE

Saudi Arabia executed two men March 13 for the murder of a Pakistani man they feared would expose their gay relationship.

According to the Interior Ministry, Ahmed al-Inizi and Shaher al-Ruwaily ran over Malek Zade Khan with a car, smashed his head with a rock and set him on fire after he caught them having sex. The executions occurred in Arar, a northern city near the Iraq border.

QUEERS MARCH IN CAPE TOWN

Hundreds of people marched in Cape Town, South Africa's Gay Pride parade Feb. 26, including traffic cops twirling their truncheons, The

Sunday Argus reported.

Mayor Nomaindia Mfeketo kicked off the procession, which was followed by a big street bash in Green Point. The 10-day Cape Town Pride Festival also featured parties, films, art exhibitions and the crowning of Miss Gay Pride 2005.



Awash in diamonds.
Ms. Gay Pride 2005

ASIA/PACIFIC

SINGAPOREAN HEALTH OFFICIAL UPSETS GAYS

Gay activists reacted angrily March 10 to a suggestion by Singapore's junior health minister that the annual "Nation.04" gay circuit party could be to blame for the country's increasing HIV rate.

The party, Balaji Sadasivan said, may have attracted "gays from high-prevalence societies to fraternize with local gay men, seeding the infection in the local community."

Activist Eileena Lee from the People Like Us group accused him of "paranoia." The party's organizer, via the Fridae.com Web site, said the government must accept blame for the infection rate because gay sex is illegal and official HIV educational campaigns never target the gay community.

A total of 311 Singaporeans were diagnosed with HIV in 2004, a 28 percent increase. Only a third of the newly infected men acknowledged having gay sex.

MARRIAGE PROTESTERS CLASH IN NEW ZEALAND

Protesters for and against gay civil unions clashed March 6 in Auckland, New Zealand. Thousands of anti-gays affiliated with churches staged a march from the waterfront to Myers Park.

But the kickoff was delayed when 30 gay activists sat in the street blocking the way. They chanted, "Celebrate, don't hate."

Police moved the gays out of the way and kept the groups separated for the rest of the march.

New Zealand's Parliament passed a civil union law for gay and straight couples Dec. 9 by a vote of 65-55. Registered couples will receive the same rights and responsibilities as married people. The measure takes effect in April.

450,000 ATTEND SYDNEY'S MARDI GRAS

About 450,000 people turned out to watch the 28th gay Mardi Gras parade March 5 in Sydney, Australia.

Highlights included an "Adam and Steve, Ada and Eve" contingent and a parody of Prince Charles and Camilla Parker Bowles' wedding complete with Princess Diana's ghost, said *The Sydney Star Observer*. Another entry depicted a wedding between President Bush and Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

The lead marching group carried flags of countries where gay sex remains criminalized. After the parade, about 19,000 people attended a dance party at Fox Studios. **JO**



Reveler at
Sydney's
Mardi Gras

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.

PRESS RELEASE

Linda Lee Michelet will be returning to the Heathman Hotel

Heathman Hotel at SW Salmon & Broadway
Saturday, March 26, 2005 * 8:00 p.m. to midnight * No cover

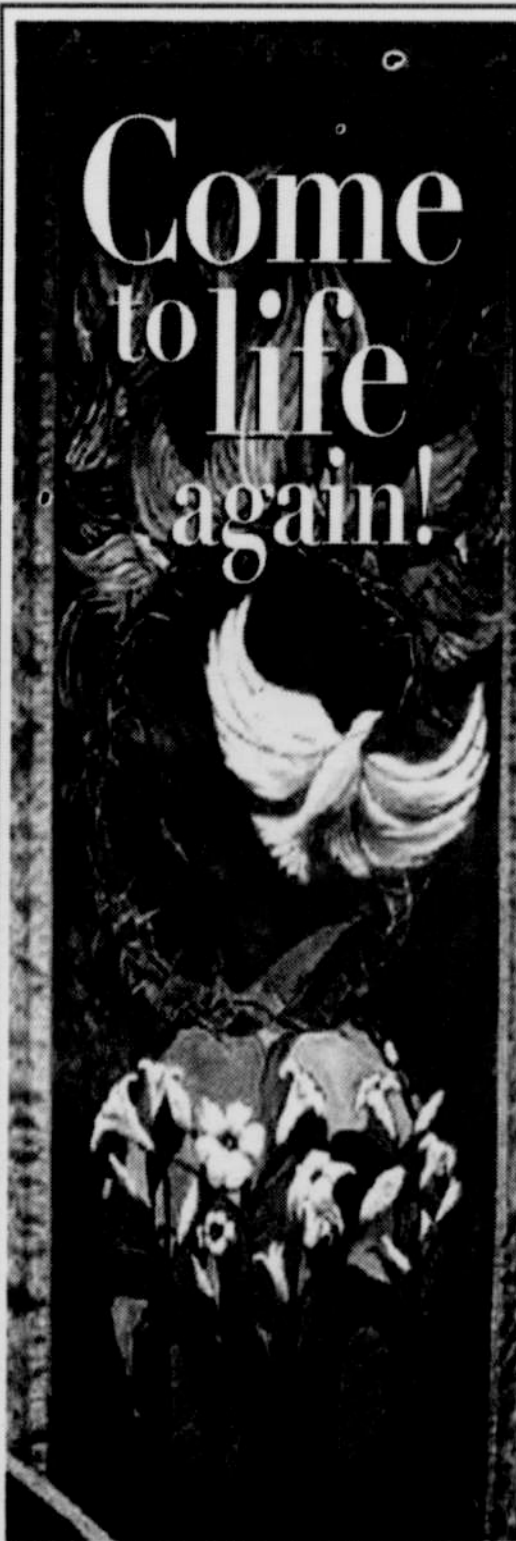
The greatest American tunes. The classiest venue. And one gorgeous songstress – together again.



Linda Lee Michelet will be returning to the Heathman Hotel Saturday, March 26, with her sultry, seductive homage to the great torch singers. Reflecting her love for vocal legends like Julie London, Rosemary Clooney and Peggy Lee, Ms. Michelet breathes radiance into the depth and beauty of the great American songbook with her own distinctive voice and sensitive touch. Backed by an accomplished and unique musical ensemble, including world-renowned Bobby Torres on percussion, Ms. Michelet's captivating show brings class and glamour to the sophisticated atmosphere of the Heathman for this magical excursion through the works of classic songwriters like Rogers and Hart, Irving Berlin and the marvelous Cole Porter. The unforgettable Peggy Lee's Afro-Cuban renditions of Broadway musical classics will highlight the March performance. You will want to reserve the evening at the Heathman for this performance celebrating the sexy, sensual women of American jazz. Look for Ms. Michelet at the Heathman monthly throughout the year.

Memories are made of this great American music.

www.lindamichelet.com



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with choir and brass
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