

News Briefs

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advice to listeners on relationships and other matters. Gay rights groups have protested the program in the United States, including a rally in March outside the Paramount Pictures lot in Los Angeles against the studio's plans for a television talk show hosted by Schlessinger.

The Canadian council cited Dr. Laura for characterizing the sexual behavior of gays and lesbians as "abnormal," "aberrant," "deviant," "disordered," "dysfunctional," and "an error."

"To use such brutal language as she does about such an essential characteristic flies in the face of Canadian provisions relating to human rights," the council decision said.

Conversion debate scrapped

CHICAGO — The American Psychiatric Association pulled the plug on a discussion of reorientation therapy at its convention after two scheduled panel members decided the issue was "too politically charged" for them to participate.

Exodus International, a Christian organization dedicated to helping gays and lesbians alter their sexual orientations through therapy, protested the cancellation. Board chair John Paulk of Colorado Springs told reporters he represented a "virtually unseen but sizable population" whose existence the APA denies.

The organizer of the debate, Dr. Robert Spitzer, said he was "distressed" by the cancellation, citing a lack of study and convincing evidence on either side of the debate.

"There is only anecdotal evidence, mostly from the therapists themselves, claiming that what they do works. That's not very scientific."

Spitzer was at the head of the movement that saw the APA remove homosexuality from its official list of mental disorders in 1973.

Gay midshipman

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — A Navy review panel says it wasn't fair, but a former midshipman at the Naval Academy still has been ordered to repay the government for his education because of his sexuality.

The academy began investigating Tommie Lee Watkins, Jr., in 1997 following alleged homosexual behavior, which is banned in the military.

Watkins, president of his

class and an aspiring Navy pilot, said he was pressured to resign and did so because he feared homophobia would prevent him from receiving a fair trial.

Carolyn H. Becraft, assistant secretary of the Navy for manpower, ordered Watkins in March to repay the government nearly \$67,000.

But a report issued in November by the Navy's highest personnel review panel, made public by The Washington Post, said making Watkins reimburse the government violates Pentagon policy.

A 1994 policy says those discharged for being gay should only be required to repay the government under certain circumstances that require a specific written finding of homosexual misconduct.

"There was no finding of any aggravated homosexual behavior," the Board for Correction of Naval Records said in its report.

'50s activist dies

LOS ANGELES — A gay activist who worked for equality starting in the early 1950s died of respiratory failure on May 11. William Dale Jennings was 82.

Jennings was best known as co-founder of the Mattachine Society, the first major American gay rights organization that broke ground in the gay liberation movement before Stonewall.

Jennings was also a co-founder of *ONE* magazine, the first gay publication in the United States, and the author of novels including *The Ronin* and *The Cowboys*, the latter of which was adapted into a motion picture starring John Wayne.

Trying in TO

TORONTO, ON — Vermonters may recognize the pattern: couple approaches clerk; couple requests marriage license; couple rejected because they're gay. But that's where the familiar ground ends.

On May 19, the city of Toronto took the unusually proactive step of asking a provincial court how to handle the situation when Michael Leshner and Michael Stark asked for their rejection in writing.

Paul Jones, the city's director of legal services, said that the law is no longer clear on the issue, given the Supreme Court of Canada ruling last year in *M. v. H.* that said gay

and lesbian couples should receive the same benefits as common-law heterosexual couples.

"We need to know that the law specifically says today," said Jones. "We've neither rejected nor approved the application. We've simply said we don't know anymore."

Further muddying the waters is the fact that Ontario law does not define marriage as heterosexual or homosexual, although pending federal legislation that offers gay and lesbian couples many marital benefits without marital status does include a definition of marriage as "one man, one woman."

Leshner and Stark applied for the license in order to join a test marriage lawsuit currently in the works. The two men were previously involved in a landmark 1992 case that established Stark's claim to Leshner's survivor pension benefits.

Gielgud dead

LONDON — Legendary British actor Sir John Gielgud died on May 21 at the age of 96.

Although a distinguished Shakespearean actor credited with the definitive portrayal of Hamlet, Gielgud was perhaps most widely known for his Oscar-winning role as Dudley Moore's sarcastic butler in *Arthur*.

Gielgud lived for more than two decades with long-time partner Martin Hensler. Although he preferred privacy to gay rights activism, he was open about his homosexuality and was once denied entry to the United States on that basis.

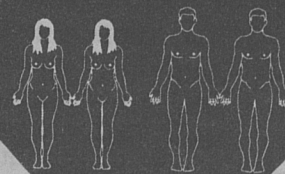
The actor and director, whose career spanned eight decades, worked almost up until the time of his death. His last project was a film adaptation of Samuel Beckett's *Catastrophe*. ▼

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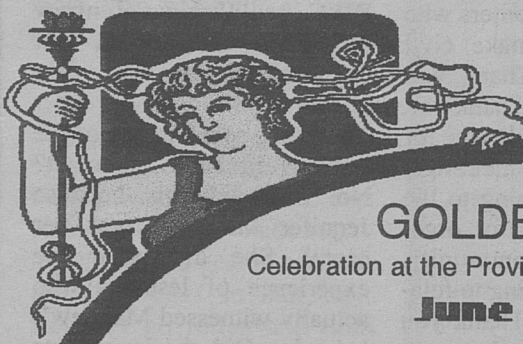


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Celebration at the Provincetown Inn, Provincetown, Massachusetts is:

June 22-25th, 2000

Lesbians from around the world converge at the Inn to focus on the Joy of being Lesbian. We make friends, play, dance, laugh and share who we are. This is our weekend of empowerment. Thurs: **Jamie Anderson** (our very own goddess babe lesbian) sings her music with humor & compassion. Friday: Bring your drum for an **Ubaka Hill** performance supreme! Sat: **Robin Tyler** presents Comedy, Comedian & Comics for your education! Workshops: Belly dancing, lesbian lawyer, Hypnotist: Past Lives, writer/writing, spiritual director, the sex-toy lady & more, Plus Line Dancing with Mickie! Crafts tables are available for vendors. Singles are "honored" with special activities to meet singles BEFORE the banquet on Sat. Nite! The **Great Banquet**, Saturday Night is led by our favorite: **DJ Mary V.** (This year's closing ritual will be a surprise event that will make an indelible mark in the herstory of GOLDEN THREADS !!) So you might want to stay an extra day to not miss anything!

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<http://members.aol.com/goldentred/index.htm>

All lesbians are invited...one need not be a Golden Threader to attend!

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