

OPALGA Bulletin

Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association • 1145 Westgate, Suite 106 • Oak Park, Illinois 60301

Domestic Partnership's Anniversary

Ray Johnson

The Village of Oak Park Declaration of Domestic Partnership begins "I, _____ and I, _____ HEREBY DECLARE UNDER OATH that we have thoroughly read and fully understand this Declaration and the Domestic Partnership Registration Ordinance (set forth in its entirety on the reverse side of this Declaration) upon which it is based, and that we are in full compliance with all requirement for a domestic partnership....."

So began our journey on October of 1997. Of course, many hours led up to that moment. The first proposed ordinance was defeated at a Village of Oak Park Trustee meeting by one vote in 1994, after nearly a year of debate in 1996 and 1997, a newly elected Village Board of Oak Park, passed by majority vote, the ordinance as we know it today.

The following press release was issued by the Village Clerks Office: "Monday, October 27, 1997 marked the first day that Oak Parkers of the same sex could register with the Village government to declare publicly that they are committed domestic partners. Declarations can be signed under oath in the Village Clerk's Office.

Domestic partners are defined in the ordinance as two unrelated and unmarried persons of the same sex who are the age of 18 or over, who live in Oak Park and who have lived together for at least six months and are jointly responsible for each other's necessities of life.

Both persons wishing to make a declaration must be present

when the document is submitted to the Village Clerk's Office, where it must be signed in the presence of a Notary Public. Identification must be presented by each partner. The fee for registering the declaration of domestic partnership with the

Village is \$50. Each partner is also issued a certificate signed by the Village Clerk at no additional charge. The certificate is a certified copy of their domestic partnership declaration on file with the Village. Village Clerk Sandra Sokol can be reached for more details at 708/383.6400. According to Clerk Sokol, "the names of the registered parties can be requested with a freedom of information request, however, no names would be released without the explicit permission of the persons registered."

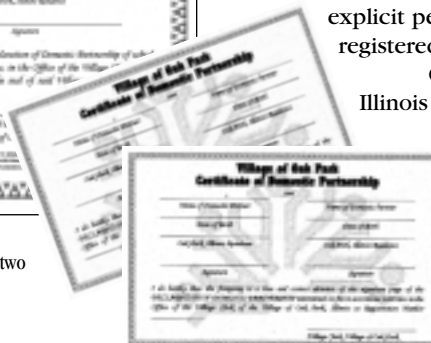
Oak Park became the first Illinois municipality and the 14th United States municipality to enact a domestic partnership ordinance. Some of you may know it is available, but many other relative newcomers may not. As we celebrate the second anniversary of this important milestone

for our village and state, we've spoken to a number of registered partners to learn what the domestic partnership registry has meant to them, their partners, families and friends. What follows are heartfelt words of support for the registry. What you'll also learn is that we live in a unique village that honors a commitment to diversity that few other places in America share.

"Registering has been a very affirming experience for both Jill and I," says Pam Freese, partner of Jill Allread and mom's to a beautiful son Jared, "the certificate is up in our bedroom, reminding us daily of our commitment to one another, and about the splendor of excitement we felt the day we "officially" made a



Certificates received when partners register with the Village of Oak Park. The Certificate (above) and the two business card-sized duplications (on right).



(cont. on p. 6)

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OPALGA Contacts

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(24-hr information and message
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FAX: 708/848.7544

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Ray Johnson 386.4851
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Jane Anderson 484.1547
Treasurer
Sam Halferty 383.5268

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Ethel Cotovsky 524.1323
John Dames 848.0515
Chuck Huffman 524.8943
Julie A. Kreiner 358.1530
Alan Maresso 386.5471
Mel Wilson 848.7934

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Merle Shapera 524.2663

Social Activities
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Betsy Stith 848.0553

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Center
Rob Ward 524.3386

Communications
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Mel Wilson 848.7934

Cultural Arts
Ethel Cotovsky 524.1323

Education/Outreach
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Helen Bishop 771.4673

Membership
co-chairs opening

Fundraising
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Office Administrator
Joyce Daley 848.0273

Graphic Arts Consultant
JAK Graphic Solutions 358.1530

Liaison, Oak Park Police Dept.
Geoff Sjostrom...386.3800, ext.2142

Calendar

September 1999 – November 1999
* **October: Gay/Lesbian History Month** *

September 12
Community Response hosts their Annual Summer Picnic from noon to 4 pm at Thatcher Woods Forest Preserve. Phone Heather at 708/386.3383 for more info.

September 12
Kindred Hearts (a lesbian, bisexual, feminist based gathering place where all women are welcomed), will host a 10 am, leisurely bike ride from the Evanston location to the trail up to the Botanic Gardens (about a 20 mile ride). They'll have lunch at the gardens. Phone 847/604.0913 for more info.

September 17
Community Renewal Society, Project Unity and co-hosts sponsor the **6th Annual Festival of (Potluck) Foods** on Sunday from 1-6 pm at the Hans Christian Andersen Center (Hayes/Division in Oak Park). Main Foods served promptly at 2 pm, desserts and live entertainment at 3:30 pm. Soft beverages provided. Prepare and share your favorite family dish for eight or more.

September 17
OPALGA and Kenned & Carl concert event. Pre-party at Vivaldi at 6 pm, concert at 7:30 pm, see flyer "insert" for more info.

September 19
Animal Care League's "Walk for the Animals," from 9 am - 2 pm at Maple Park. For more info phone 708/848.8155

September 19
BUNGALO Dinner event at Guadalajara Restaurant, 6 pm. Phone 708/788.6960 for reservations.

September 20
OPALGA monthly wine tasting at **Vivaldi** in Oak Park, from 6-8 pm. Tix are \$10 (includes wine and appetizers) and phone reservations to 708/267.5012.

September 25
BUNGALO "Everybody's Birthday Party" event, with games and fun, 6 pm. Phone 708/788.6960 for reservations.

September 26
Chicago AIDS Walk involving 10k on Chicago's lakefront. Call 312/739.WALK (9255) to register or volunteer.

October
In the second week, **Marie Kuda** hosts a slide lecture entitled "Gays and Lesbians in Chicago: From the fire to the flood" at the Oak Park Main Library. More details to follow in October newsletter.

Sarah's Inn (Cicero/Oak Park), the organization dedicated to "Helping survivors of domestic violence create new lives free from abuse" will hold candlelight vigils in early October. For more information or to volunteer, call Dorothy at 708/386.3305.

October 2
The **Illinois Federation for Human Rights** hosts "Statement for Freedom VI," the annual benefit showcasing Illinois' best gay and lesbian performers at the Park West in Chicago. For more info, phone 773/477.7173

October 9
OPALGA and the **Village Players Theater** co-sponsor the inauguration (and OPALGA fundraiser) of "**OPALGA/VPT Evenings at the Theater**" with a production of "Working" from the Studs Terkel book. Directed by OPALGA member, John Kibler, there will be a pre-show cocktail hour at 7 pm with performance at 8 pm. Phone 708/222.0369 to reserve tickets.

October 30
Annual Halloween Party, time and location to be announced. Phone 708/216.9723 for more info.

(see pull-out calendar for more info on activities, concerts, etc.)

EDITORIAL DEADLINES!

Deadlines for OPALGA's monthly *News* are the 3rd Friday of every month. You can email copy to OPALGA@aol.com or FAX to 708/848.7544 (otherwise mail copy to OPALGA office). Calendar information is as soon as you know it, and as far ahead as you can envision (with details on the event)!

Deadlines for OPALGA's quarterly *Bulletin* are Winter: January 1, Spring: April 1, Summer: July 1, Fall: October 1.

Former Oak Park Pastor Fights Back

Rev. Greg Dell and his Broadway United Methodist Church congregation confront bigotry in the church

Mel Wilson

Former Oak Park pastor Rev. Greg Dell will continue his struggle to open United Methodist Churches to lesbians and gays despite his March 26 conviction for violation of church law. The Trial Court of the UMC Northern Illinois Conference found Dell guilty of "disobedience in the Order and Discipline of the United Methodist Church" because he had celebrated a service of Holy Union for a gay couple last fall. The church court suspended Dell from pastoral office, as of July 5, until he signed an agreement to abide by UMC rules forbidding the performance of Holy Unions for gay and lesbian couples. Dell and his Broadway UMC congregation have another idea: they want the church to stop its war on homosexuals. And, they have a plan to do just that.

Following the court's verdict, Dell and his wife Jade received hundreds of communications, the overwhelming majority supportive. The messages came from people in and well beyond Dell's Broadway congregation: clergy, lay, gay and straight, old, young, of every color in the human rainbow. What they had in common was deep support for the Broadway congregation, for Dell and the ministry he and others like him represent. In every category they were about equally divided in their passionate advice to either sign or not to sign the church court's



Rev. Greg Dell (inset) and the United Methodist Church logo.

The Cross and Flame is a registered trademark and the use is supervised by the General Council on Finance and Administration of The United Methodist Church.

agreement. Those who wanted Dell to sign said that he had already made his point and that there was no use in further injuring his or the congregation's ministry. Some of them also felt that the issue of holy unions was not the issue to "go to the mat" over in the struggle around sexual orientation. On the other side were those who argued that all would be meaningless if Dell and his followers "caved in" to a demand for a loyalty statement. "If I signed, the church could again ignore or cynically minimize the cost its

exclusionary pronouncements exact," Dell told his congregation.

"I finally decided that while I couldn't ignore what people were saying I had to go to a deeper place to come to an answer," Dell said. "I did not conduct Karl and Keith's service in ignorance of what its political or practical consequences might be. But those consequences were not what was most important. I did what I did guided by what I felt I would or wouldn't be as a pastor, a Christian, and a human being by doing or not doing it. That meant that for that decision and now this one, I need to pray, think, feel, and try to listen to my heart, which, biblically, is where God always speaks. I decided I could not sign the statement," Dell concluded.

With Dell's decision to continue his drive for elimination of church supported bigotry, a proposal to continue the struggle was submitted to the Broadway congregation on April 14. At that meeting the Staff-Parish Relations Committee presented a proposal to respond to the situation of suspension. Before it was presented to the congregation the proposal had been endorsed by District Superintendent, Tallulah Fisher Williams, and had received the support of Bishop C. Joseph Sprague. Adopted unanimously by the Church Council, the proposal included:

(cont. on p. 5)

Prism to Re-open October 7th

Prism will be re-launched on October 7th at 7:00 p.m.!

But we still need your help! If you've ever thought about the importance of youth in our community, their developmental needs, and the opportunity to be a role model, this may be an item of interest for you. The "new and improved" Prism program will re-open in the Fall. This program is designed for youth ages 14-17 years of age.

OPALGA affirms the the basic purpose of Prism as a non-therapeutic youth resource program for sexual minority youth, without regard to race, ethnicity, gender or physical ability.

Interested volunteers will be required to

complete the following:

1. an application with references provided
2. In-person interview
3. background checks
4. introductory training required on Sept. 11 and Sept. 18 from 9 a.m - 6 p.m., plus Sept. 25 from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. *
5. a 6-month commitment
6. completion of a volunteer contract
7. be responsive to supervision by the Program Director
8. other duties and responsibilities as defined

Interested parties should leave there name

and phone number at the OPALGA office by calling 708/848.0273.

*We will try to get out early if material is covered and will make arrangements to cover material if someone misses training. Call for details.

SPECTRUM

Young Adults, 18-25

Social Meeting
Mondays, 7 – 9:30 p.m.
OPALGA Office

Let's Pet



*Dear Dr. John,
My one-year-old cat,
since Spring has
arrived, has really
been crying to go
outside. He was
neutered as a kitten
and I thought this
would not happen.
Would it be so bad if I*

*let him out? He makes such a pest of
himself by keeping (him) in.*

Juanita, Berwyn

Dear Juanita,

While intact (not castrated: male and female) cats ache to go outside because of the pangs of love, all cats have a sense of curiosity and some want to explore.

Cats do not have an innate sense of direction and are not naturally street smart as a lot of people think. Cats have a brain the size of a walnut and, consequently, a

slow learning curve. Their instincts get them into trouble as often as their curiosity.

In my practice, 75-90% of the feline patients are strictly indoor cats. In my practice, 80-90% of the medical problems are in the outdoor cats. These problems include parasites (internal and external), contagious diseases, bite wounds, bb/gun shots, hit by cars, poisonings, and the like. Not all cats have nine lives!

My own cat Kodak (see photo) is one of those with a need to explore. Occasionally to settle him down, I take him out in his handsome red harness on a leash into the backyard. My neighbors all get a kick out of me walking my cat.

Weigh the consequences, Juanita, and if you elect to let your cat outdoors, at least use a flea repellent (squirrels can drop fleas into your yard)), use a breakaway I.D. collar, get your cat microchipped, and have your cat vaccinated annually for rabies, distemper/U.R.I., and leukemia.

Voicemail received:

*Dr. John,
Call me back as soon as you get this
message. This is Naomi and my dog Allie
just ate one entire block of baker's
chocolate stolen from the counter. I'll call
the emergency number you advised on
your message.*

Naomi's dog had eaten a lethal dose of chocolate (Theobromine is the toxic agent). Two hours later, I returned her call and Naomi had received advice which saved Allie's life.

A tablespoon of hydrogen peroxide for every 30 lbs. of dog every 15-20 minutes will induce vomiting in an emergency situation. Don't use it if the ingested substance could have caused irritation on the way down (bone shards, acids, etc.) or it will cause double damage on the way back up.

Allie, today, is doing fine.

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708.848.2144, Jack Finney, Pastor

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Pilgrim Congregational Church

460 Lake Street, Oak Park

708/848.5860

Worship services:

Sunday 11 am

Spilling the Beans: Experiencing food in the Oak Park Area

Brookhart

Fish
319B South Harlem Ave.
Forest Park, IL 60310
(708) 209-1515

Fuji Grill
315A South Harlem Ave.
Forest Park, IL 60310
(708) 366-3773

Two Restaurants for Food to go!

Dear Reader,

Brookhart sincerely hopes you have all enjoyed your summer experiences in 1999. Much of the allure of summer lies in the opportunity for discovery she offers us each year. One may explore a previously unknown vacation spot, find a new nighttime entertainment venue, or meet a new love. Two of my pleasant discoveries this very busy summer are the two restaurants reviewed in this episode of "Spilling the Beans". They are moderately priced, fast, and offer a healthy choice to many of the fast food restaurants. For both establishments, I recommend procuring a take home menu and ordering the food to go. Chances are, the food will be ready by the time you reach your destination.

First, Fish. I am most impressed that a fast food restaurant offers fresh grilled fish. Let me repeat, FRESH GRILLED FISH! It is such a wonderful break from the typical fast food burgers, fried everything, and french fries. Brookhart recommends the Grilled Yellow Fin Tuna Steak (6.99), Grilled Salmon Fillet with Dill (6.59), or the Grilled Catfish, Blackened (4.99). These are dinners served with your choice of two side orders and garlic toast. I find the rice pilaf and mixed vegetables nicely complete a healthy fast meal.

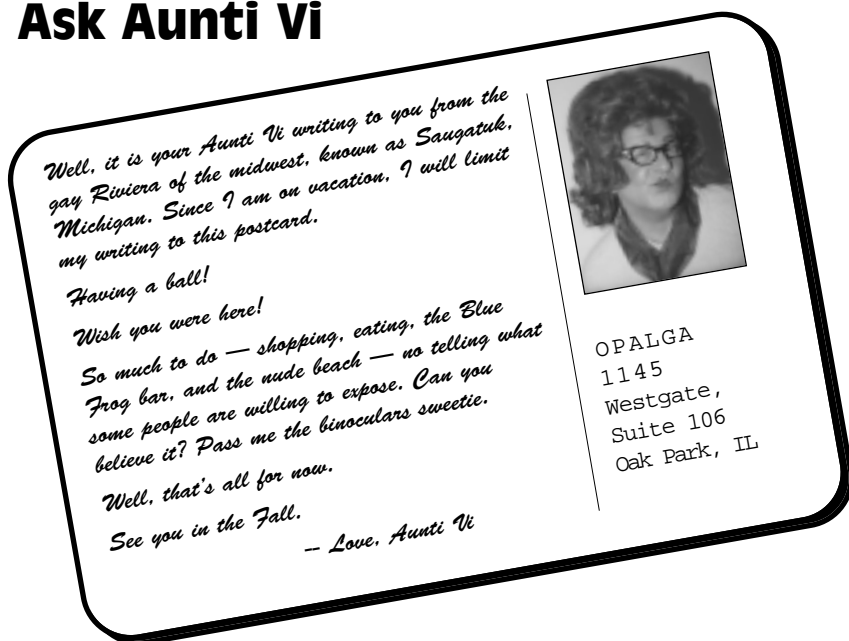
Second, the Fuji Grill. Palatable, affordable sushi in our neighborhood. Brookhart prefers the sushi from Fuji Grill over their other offerings. You can indulge in a nice assortment of sushi for around \$10.00. For those of you who are sushi shy, Fuji Grill also offers traditional teriyaki and tempura meals, u-dong, and numerous other Japanese favorites. The prices are reasonable, and the food is tasty and healthy.

Until next time,

Bon Appetite!



Ask Aunti Vi



REVIEW

Bi & Gay married men's support group
End the Isolation
 Call Jerry at 630.627.1990
 or email: ReviewGp@aol.com

Metropolitan Community Church of the Incarnation

460 Lake Street
 Oak Park, IL 60302
 708.383.3033

Rev. Bradley E. Mickelson, Pastor

Service: Sunday 11 AM
 in Chapel of Pilgrim Congregational Church

"Come Home to Your Church"

Pastor Fights Back . . .

(cont. from page 3)

- Hiring Rev. Dell as director of "In All Things Charity." IATC is a national movement begun in 1997 to protest the denomination's negative policies on sexual orientation. IATC's work is directed toward influencing the denomination's General Conference in May of 2000. In 1998 Broadway adopted the movement as one of its ministries and it is funded under Broadway's tax exempt status.

- Retaining Dell as consultant to Broadway's new interim pastor. Dell won't be providing pastoral services to the congregation. The only lay persons from the congregation with whom Dell will have professional contact will be those working on "In All Things Charity."

- Sending a letter to the Northern Illinois Annual Conference through the

weekly "United Methodist Reporter" expressing pain, commitment, and thanks (see side bar "Laity Statement").

Broadway UMC's stand against repressive church law and doctrine has drawn many people to consider becoming a part of Broadway. They have come, Dell reports, "because they see this church as 'on the way'. I agree with them."

Rev. Dell is no stranger to Oak Parkers involved in our own community-wide dialogue on the subject of sexual orientation. As pastor of Euclid Avenue Methodist Church in Oak Park, Dell guided his congregation to become a Reconciling Congregation welcoming gays and lesbians to all parts of church participation and service. When it came time to testify in support of Oak Park's civil rights

ordinance protecting gays and lesbians from discrimination, he was there. He spoke eloquently as well in public testimony supporting the human dignity of gay and lesbian students and teachers at Oak Park-River Forest High School – at a time when church-driven bigotry swept the village like a firestorm. He picketed Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park when that church dared sponsor a conference on "recovering homosexuals".

"We have only just begun," Dell told his Broadway congregation on Palm Sunday. "The struggle to realize God's vision of a church and society that is fully inclusive – racially, by gender, sexual orientation, and every other identity – is ongoing. But while that struggle goes on, we are called not to lose the experience and taste of

(cont. on p. 5)

ALTERNATIVE FAMILY PRACTICE

Davida Ellen Williams

ACSW, LCSW / 708.386.9121

- Psychotherapy and co-parent adoption studies
- Single Parent Families



- Blended Families
- Adoptive Families
- Contemplating Parenthood
- Custody/Visitation Planning

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 for over 13 years.*

Domestic Partnership's Anniversary

(cont. from page 1)

pledge to one another about how we wanted to live the rest of our lives. Many of our friends who do not live in Oak Park comment about how very lucky we are to have this option. It is indeed one of the many reasons why we love this community and have chosen to make it the home for our family."

Ron Rauch and Phil Bellerive, partners for nearly 15 years, were the first couple to register on that fall day in October of 97 and they too have found great value in registering their partnership with the Village. Says Phil, "Shortly after all the brouhaha over the registry, my uncle, who lives in Florida, heard the news on WGN news. He called my Mom and asked, in all seriousness, if he was supposed to send a gift. I chuckled and didn't think much of it until last week-end when we attended our family reunion. They had laid out a lifesize family tree, listing spouses and children of all of my aunts, uncles, cousins, second cousins, third cousins, etc. There, among all the cards was one that just said "Phillip J. Bellerive and Ronald C. Rauch," just like there was one for my parents and my aunts and uncles marriages. I was pretty impressed." And Ron and Phil, so are we. What a wonderful statement for inclusion and the rewards of coming out to family and friends.

Jim Kelly and Bruce Broerman, a long-time Oak Park couple have been at the forefront of many of our civil rights initiatives here in Oak Park. They have also registered and shared their thoughts with us on the registry. "Our certificate sits prominently in our living room, declaring to all who enter that the town we live in honors our relationship and values our presence. I carry the wallet card with me, too. It's an identity card of the most comforting kind. It satisfied my desire to be a 'card-carrying' person!" says Jim Kelly.

And lastly, the impact on the family of Betsy Stith and Cheryl Haugh and their two children, who have also been deeply impacted by the registry. Says Betsy, "for me, my personal commitment to Cheryl expanded to include a commitment to the community with the domestic partnership registry. That same extension to our faith-community happened when we had our union service. Consequently, our commitment to each other is a

more public "institution" in the positive sense. That seems to require from me a willingness to live up to that commitment - theirs and ours - and it encourages me to allow this partnership to be a force for my growth and maturation."

And no one can disavow the impact on the family with the registry. Stith continues, "When Cheryl and I were preparing for our Union Service, my then 9 year old son - who's read the papers enough to be familiar with both sides of the marriage question - asked if there were going to be police there to arrest us. He knew what we were doing was not "legal and legitimate." Certainly, at least in Oak Park the domestic partnership registry helps to end that fear."

These are just a few examples of the positive impact the domestic partnership registry has had on the families of our community. The impact is great. The following numbers of registered partners bear that out:

1997 - 20 (11 Female/9 Male)

1998 - 12 (7 Female/5 Male)

1999 - 2 (2 Female)

When you figure in immediate and extended families, parents, siblings, and more, the affirmation value of each and every relationship is immeasurable. But as you have read, these couples, who represent a good cross section of our community, have allowed our entire Village to move forward in recognizing the contributions of all families.

The battle for this registry was at times painful. But in the end, the rewards are even greater. On top of all that, this ordinance was also affirmed by a majority vote within Oak Park through a non-binding referendum in the spring of 1998. That important vote during the March 1998 Illinois primary, again affirmed this Village's commitment to diversity. We are lucky to live in such a unique town.

To all those registered couples, thank you for your commitment. To all those who supported the passing of the registry ordinance and the registry referendum, you too, have made a difference in the lives of many. The commitment to fairness and equality will continue.

Quip of the Quarter

"A kiss is a lovely trick designed by nature to stop speech when words become superfluous." — Ingrid Bergman



DOWNTOWN OAK PARK S 8TH ANNUAL

OKTOBERFEST

SEPT. 24-26, 1999

MARION ST. PEDESTRIAN MALL

Music, fun, good food, beer garden

Sat., Sept. 25 — Koko Taylor and her Blues Machine!

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Volunteer of the Quarter: Betsy Ritzman-Stith



Betsy Ritzman-Stith (left), and her partner Cheryl Haugh at the recent OPALGA. (photo by Tracy Baim, OUTLINES)

Betsy, a mother of two, partner, and friend to the lesbian, gay, and transgender community is an inspiration to us all. She not only opens up her home for numerous meetings of the Prism Youth (14-17 years old) Steering Committee, but she opens up her heart as well. She has been instrumental in helping to guide the Prism rebuilding process with a focus on the needs of sexual minority youth, while at the same time providing

keen insights into the needs of a program like ours.

Betsy is the Director of the Midwest Resources for Counseling and Psychotherapy, on the Music and Worship Committee at Hyde Park Union, and has just started a drumming circle for lesbians in the Chicagoland area. Yes, a busy woman!

She has previously served as the host for the local Girl Scout Troop and room mother at Beye School here in Oak Park.

Betsy has a smile and energy that seems limitless. Her positive influence in all that she decides to focus on is an inspiration to us all. Congratulations Betsy on your selection as OPALGA's volunteer of the quarter. We appreciate all that you do for us! A round of applause and a standing ovation for our friend, Betsy.



Feel like you're missing out on fun and interesting times?
Join OPALGA!



144 S. Oak Park Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60302

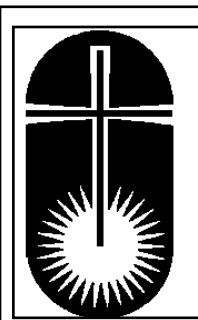
TEL (708) 848-8885
FAX (708) 848-9116



Adoption Center
1013 Garfield
Oak Park, IL 60304
(708) 848-8155

Resale Shop
159 S. Oak Park Ave.
Oak Park, IL 60302
(708) 383-9660
A thrift and gift shop

A non-profit organization dedicated to homeless animals



**First United
Church of
Oak Park**

848 Lake Street
708.386.5215
An Open Community
United in Love &
Justice

Harambe Jahard

(Swahilli for "Working Together to do Good!")

Discussion group for
Suburban Black Gay/Bi Men
Meets every 2nd Friday, 7 pm
1145 Westgate, Suite 106, Oak Park

708.492.2055

Facilitated by Preston L. Shumaker

The Carol Zientek Memorial Fund

Yes, I want to contribute to the Carol Zientek Memorial Fund:

\$100.00 \$50.00 \$25.00 Other _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Please make check payable to: OPALGA and write "Carol Zientek Fund" in the memo line on the check.

Or to pay be credit card, phone OPALGA and provide the following information: Credit Card, Card Number, Expiration Date, Name as it appears on the card.

Musings

Joyce Daley

It has been almost a year since the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard; since we gathered to remember him. I re-read last year's Bulletin to remind myself of what we said and felt then. I remembered our feelings of powerlessness in the face of the brutality that too often surrounds us. But I also remembered we felt powerful too. Our numbers made us feel strong and potent. We were united. We made a statement.

I've also been thinking about James Byrd. I remember Vernita Gray, in her remarks at the Shepard memorial, challenging us to remember his name and the horrible way he was killed, being dragged behind a pick-up truck. I was chagrined that I had, in fact, forgotten his name. I didn't march for him. Or light a candle for him. I don't know if anyone did.

I don't think the papers have been

long without a story of something terrible happening to someone somewhere because of a hate crime. Recently it has been about a "white supremacist" opening fire in a San Fernando Valley Jewish Community Center and, not being able to satisfy his blood lust, then murdering a nearby postal worker just because he was a Filipino. If what he did...and I will not give him the twisted satisfaction of publicity by speaking his name...wasn't shocking enough, seeing him smile and smirk and strut not long after being apprehended left me in disbelief. He was proud of trying to murder children because they were Jewish. Proud of murdering a man because he was Filipino.

Where do these people come from? Where does such hate come from? How does it start? How can it be stopped? Can it even be stopped until and unless we

know how it starts?

Early this week, more than 500 people gathered to stage what organizers called "a unity march against hate". They gathered with a sense of purpose. As did we. They went home with their sadness and outrage blunted a bit, feeling that they had taken a stand, made a statement. As did we. But, in the end, did any of us really do anything? We can march from now till Hell freezes over and the only real result will be tired feet. Hate, intolerance, bigotry, and violence will still be there. What can we do? I wish I knew. I know one thing, though. Hate is an equal opportunity attacker. The same venom kills lesbians, gay men, lynches blacks, brutalizes Jewish children, and murders Filipino postal workers. We are all in this together.

Maybe we need to start acting like it.



OPALGA's Roll Call of Thanks

We'd like to take time to thank our members, whether they be new to the organization or old hands at participating within. Following are names taken from our membership forms (with their permission). If your name was asked to be listed, please let us know. We would like to continue to list and thank members in the future. Our subscription form is at the

back of this Bulletin. Thank you for your continued support.

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10/01/98 - 9/01/99

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The News Keeps Getting Better!

Julie A. Kreiner & Ray Johnson, OPAL GALA co-chairs

We are proud to announce that after the final tallying, counting, opening of envelopes, sending out those invoices, etc. that our OPAL GALA had kept within its proposed budget. But the really good news is that thanks to all our volunteers, OPAL GALA attendees, sponsors, advertisers, and extra donations received, we have doubled our net income from last year's benefit! Yes, not just a 10% increase in income, but a 100% increase!

We are continually amazed at the gracious and giving support we continue to receive. With this jump in income we will be able to fund a professional program director for our Prism youth program.

With continued good news, we are also happy to announce that Prism will be reopening in the Fall. See the notice for

youth advisors in the *Bulletin*.

We are proud to continue to bring OPALGA into its second decade with such a supportive and fiscally stable start. This doesn't mean the fundraising is over, our Board has an abundance of new ideas that you will see come to fruition in the coming year. But we can't stop there. The OPALGA board wants to reach even farther, but we can't do it alone. We need more people to volunteer to be on committees, give us their ideas, and help plan events. Please consider participation on the committees that comprise OPALGA.

For those who were unable to attend, we missed you and we will try to recreate the evening with the soon-to-be published "OPAL GALA Gazette."

Thank you all again.

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Roll Call of Thanks . . .

(cont. from p. 8)

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Pastor Fights Back . . .

(cont. from page 3)

that vision we already enjoy. It's too important to us, to those who might become part of us, and to those around us. As the scripture tells us, if this is of God it cannot be stopped. If it is not of God, it will never prevail.

In All Things Charity

"In All Things Charity," a national movement formed in 1996 and housed at Broadway Church, opposes the discriminatory policies of the United Methodist Church toward gay and lesbian individuals. Rev. Greg Dell's new role as the head of IATC began July 6. He will oversee the growth of In All Things Charity as a movement of conscience and protest. His will be devoted to organizing around changing the United Methodist Church's negative stances around sexual orientation and will be focused toward the May 2000 quadrennial meeting of the denomination at the General Conference. IATC's hope is to bring to bear on the General Conference the energy and commitment of people who believe in justice and inclusion for all people.

The United Methodist Church faces a watershed in May 2000. Issues around sexual orientation will not be resolved, but the character of the Church as a community that pronounces that differences are to be respected and charity is to be extended, rather than expulsion of minorities, has never been more explicitly challenged than it is now.

Rev. Dell will speak throughout the country in the coming year. Affirmation, the Methodist Federation for Social Action and the Reconciling Congregation Program, national groups already working on this agenda, will work in concert with IATC. How much they will be able to do will depend largely on the degree of support received. Contributions to "In All

Things Charity - Broadway United Methodist Church" may be sent to 3344 N. Broadway, Chicago, IL 60657.

Broadway United Methodist Church Laity Statement

As United Methodist lay persons, we claim "The Ministry of All Christians" which declares: "The Church as the community of the New Covenant has participated in Christ ministry of grace across the years and around the world. It stretches out to human needs wherever love and service may convey God's love and ours. The outreach of such ministry knows no limits. Beyond the diverse forms of ministry is this ultimate concern: that all persons will be brought into a saving relationship with God through Jesus Christ and be renewed after the image of that creator (Colossians 3:10). This means that all Christians are called to minister wherever Christ would have them serve and witness in deeds and words that heal and free." (105,'96 Discipline) That call to ministry moves us to this statement of witness.

In the face of the decisions of the General Conference of 1996 regarding homosexuality, we are moved to a statement of conscience and commitment. The classical ecumenical watchword, "In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things charity" challenges us and the Church to be both clear and gracious about our differences.

While faithfully presenting to our congregations and constituencies the positions of the denomination as adopted by the General Conference, we will also witness to the following:

1. Scripture, tradition, reason and experience convince us that "the practice of homosexuality" is not in itself "incompatible with Christian teaching."
2. We know that humans discover their

sexual "preference" as they mature, and because of evidence that they are born the way they are, we support their right to live according to their sexual orientation.

3. As we affirm committed Christian relationship in heterosexual marriages, we believe the same standards of faithfulness, mutual respect, and growth in love are possible for persons of the same sex. We support pastors who perform a covenantal service for those couples who desire to publicly proclaim their lifelong commitment to each other. We will work to assure our buildings and sanctuaries will welcome such services.

4. Because we seek and expect respect for our viewpoints, we will give respect to viewpoints differing from ours, provided those viewpoints do not lead to words or actions which demean or bring harm to other persons.

5. We support the ordination of gay men and lesbians who have a personal commitment to Christ, and who exhibit the same gifts of ministry which we ask from heterosexual persons, and will accept them as pastors in our local churches when they are appointed.

6. In all other matters regarding homosexuality, we are committed to charity, grace and accountability of the same character as applies to heterosexuality.

This statement is offered as an expression of conscience and commitment. We believe that public dissent from a teaching of the Church must be done only prayerfully and with humility. However, we also believe that when we are confronted with an injustice, we must not remain silent.

By God's grace we pray we may be able to forgive and be forgiven and move forward toward God's vision of a reconciled human family.

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Sum99

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