



# crossbeams

A publication of the Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance, Inc.  
Issue # 50 Easter Season 2003

www.gladalliance.org glad@gladalliance.org

## WOW2003 God's Deliverance Is For All

*a gathering of sexually and gender diverse  
Christians from the U.S. and Canada.*

**August 14-17, 2003**  
**University of Pennsylvania**  
**Philadelphia PA**

### Schedule

#### Thursday August 14th

Registration and Hospitality  
Opening Worship and Convocation  
Entertainment

#### Friday, August 15th

Breakfast Bible Studies and Dialogues  
Morning Worship  
Plenary on Race, Racism and the  
Welcoming Movement  
Lunch  
Workshops  
Dinner  
Evening Worship  
Entertainment

#### Saturday, August 16th

Breakfast Bible Studies and Dialogues  
Morning Worship  
Denominational Meetings  
Lunch  
Workshops  
Picnic featuring Local Entertainers

#### Sunday, August 17th

Breakfast Bible Studies and Dialogues  
Regional Meetings  
Closing Worship

**Register now at [www.wow2k.org](http://www.wow2k.org)**

## GLAD Alliance Annual Event "Breaking Silence"

**Friday October 17, 2003**  
**9 AM - 5 PM**

**First United Methodist Church**  
**501 N Tyron**  
**Charlotte NC**

**BREAKING SILENCE** encompasses the ministry of GLAD to the church as we challenge the church to welcome all persons to the ministry of the body of Christ. While we are sensitive to the need of some individuals to maintain their silence, GLAD is responding to the call of God upon us to break the silence that causes the church to deny the full presence and ministry of gay/lesbian/transgendered/bisexual persons within the church.

The psalmist writes:  
For the Lord will not forsake  
his people;  
he will not abandon his  
heritage;  
for justice will return to the  
righteous,  
and all the upright in heart  
will follow it.  
Who rises up for me against  
the wicked?  
Who stands up for me  
against evildoers?  
If the Lord had not been my  
help,  
my soul would soon have  
lived in the land of  
silence.  
When I thought, "My foot is  
slipping,"  
your steadfast love, O Lord,  
held me up.  
When the cares of my heart  
are many,  
your consolations cheer my  
soul. (Psalm 94:14-19 NRSV)

(continued on page 2)

**GLAD ALLIANCE  
COUNCIL MEMBERS**

**Rev. Dr. Mark Johnston (2004)**  
*Moderator*  
MJohnston@gladalliance.org

**Rev. Vaughn F Beckman (2003)**  
*Vice Moderator*  
Development and Finance  
Human Resources and Nominating  
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**Doris Steeg (2003)**  
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**Rev. Pamela June Webb (2004)**  
O & A Ministry Team  
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**David Nickel (2005)**  
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DNickel@gladalliance.org

**Victor Gomez (2005)**  
*Treasurer*  
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VGomez@gladalliance.org

**Virginia Greeley (2006)**  
*Chaplain*  
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VGreeley@gladalliance.org

**Lisa Haley (2006)**  
Discernment  
LHaley@gladalliance.org

***Crossbeams Editor (Interim)***

Doris L. Steeg,

**OUR MINISTRY TEAMS**

**Discernment Ministry Team**  
Council Liaison: Lisa Haley

**Open & Affirming Ministry Team**  
Leader: Sharon Hart  
Council Liaison: Pam Webb

**Strategic Action Ministry Team**  
Leader: Victor Cruz  
Council Liaison: David Nickel

**Support and Advocacy Ministry Team**  
Leaders: Claudia Highbaugh  
and Gerry Brague  
Council Liaison: Virginia Greeley

**Communications Ministry Support Team**  
Council Liaison: Doris Steeg

**Development and Finance Ministry Support Team**  
Council Liaison: Vaughn Beckman

**Human Resources and Nominating Ministry Support Team**  
Leader: David Downing  
Council Liaison: Vaughn Beckman

BREAKING Silence (continued from page 1)

As the psalmist knew, and as we who are a part of GLAD know, silence in the church leads to death. When the church is silent in the face of injustice, the people of God experience death. GLAD is BREAKING SILENCE so that all of God's creation may know the consolation of God through the church, so that all of God's people may share fully in the life and ministry of the church.

Your Open & Affirming Ministry Team along with your Strategic Action Ministry Team is planning the pre-Assembly event: we will celebrate God's presence in worship, rejoice together in fellowship, and encourage one another in the ministry of BREAKING SILENCE through study and discussion. **Circle the date now: October 17, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM in Charlotte, NC!**

Sharon Hart  
Open and Affirming Ministry Team

**E-Mail to Office of General Minister and President  
Christian Church Disciples of Christ  
May 16, 2003**

Dick Hamm, John Foulkes, and Bill Edwards:

I am writing to you while wearing several hats: moderator of the Gay, Lesbian, and Affirming Disciples Alliance; a member of the steering committee on the process of discernment on the place of lesbian and gay Christians in the church; the person who wrote the first draft of the assembly resolution calling for this discernment from Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City; a member of the Christian Church concerned that we attend to the will of the assembly as expressed in Denver when this discernment process was approved; and perhaps most important as a member concerned about the unity and vision of our church.

It appears to me that there is no attention to the discernment process at the upcoming Charlotte assembly. It is also apparent to me that the theme of this assembly -- One Church, One Vision -- and the purpose of this discernment process are closely intertwined. Park Avenue Christian Church in New York City called for discernment out of concern that denominational in fighting about lesbian and gay issues has been tearing many churches apart. It has been the prayer of many that discernment would give us a deeper understanding of these issues and, more important, an increased love for one another and a more faithful vision of Christ's inclusive love.

In order to implement the will of the assembly and work for the unity and vision of the church, I believe it imperative that we attend to the discernment process by means of presentations and at this assembly.

I know that several members of the steering committee have from time to time offered support for just such activities. GLAD is also willing to provide support as appropriate, but GLAD is well aware that this process belongs to the denomination and not to GLAD.

Please let me know what is planned around discernment at this assembly, and please let me know how I can support these efforts.

Rev. Mark C. Johnston, Ph.D.

## REFLECTIONS ON BECOMING OPEN AND AFFIRMING

by Kathy Emmert

Growing up in a Disciples of Christ congregation in Chicago's south suburbs, the expectation of welcome and acceptance was ingrained. *Everyone* was welcome in God's house. When we came to that place, the joy of the combined faith journey made us one. I'm not in church if it's otherwise. The process at Renton UCC was thorough, beginning with discussions years ago as the congregation addressed the gay/lesbian issue well ahead of its time. More recently, we had a potluck with a guest speaker to address the issue and the process so that we would be ready for what lay ahead. We held classes, attended mostly by those who shared my open welcome to whomever might enter our building. We notified the congregation there would be a meeting for the vote on this issue and we held a meeting for the vote.

It was interesting that the question we heard most often prior to the vote itself was focused on the perceived negative of "registering" with the clearinghouses of both denominations (DOC and UCC). Some felt this smacked of control and that is not the hallmark of either denomination for its congregations. Once we explained that the registration was, in fact, a communication tool allowing anyone to know our church was a safe and affirming place, I for one felt we had it made.

Our congregation already enjoyed the fellowship and faith walk companionship of several gay/lesbian folks and it was truly inconceivable to me that we would vote anything other than to become an O & A congregation. There were some discussions about the "what if"...It was clear that a negative vote meant we had to reach out to our gay/lesbian folks to assure them the welcome was still there. We might face a delay, but ultimately the issue would be addressed again because we felt so strongly O & A is Christ's way. It was equally clear, the O & A vote would mean we needed to equally reach out to those who did not share the will of the group. Because someone disagrees does not mean they have no value and should not continue to be a part of this faith community.

On the day of the vote we listened as one now former member read her statement and quoted scripture to us. The pain was searing as I watched the faces of my friends, many of us in tears at the hurtful, judgmental, narrow views we heard. Several others of us spoke, unable to be silent, and attempting to ease the pain. We could not let the comments go unanswered.

an Open and Affirming congregation. I have used the words of a song from South Pacific as my guide for my life. As a 7 year old my parent took me to see this inter-racial love story and I was struck by "You Have To Be Carefully Taught". Basically you have to be taught to hate and fear - you have to be carefully taught. I am proud to be in a congregation and denominations that carefully teach love and value of each human being as a child of God.

Kathy Emmert is a member of United Christian Church of Renton, WA

## BETHANY CHRISTIAN UNITED PARISH RE-AFFIRMS WELCOMING STATUS

By Rev. Elizabeth Magill

Bethany Christian United Parish re-affirmed their Welcoming status by adopting the Rape Crisis Center of Central Massachusetts as their primary mission project. Bethany is an Open and Affirming Disciple of Christ congregation that is also associated with the American Baptists and the UCC. As part of a two year study in preparation for revitalization, the congregation sold their building and are meeting in what was once a restaurant in Worcester, Mass. The congregation considered combining with several other local churches, but realized that their Open and Affirming status is a critical part of their identity. It was this foundation of acceptance of sexuality as part of God's Gift that led to Bethany's link with the Rape Crisis Center. •We realized that people are separated from the church by their sexual orientation, but also by the sexual violence that is pervasive in our society•, said Pastor Liz Magill. •We are trying to imagine a world where the church creates healing rather than separation. •Bethany's weekly healing service will begin September 7, 2003. The following week a Bible Study •Rape and Redemption• will explore what the Biblical tradition has to offer about rape, and how (or if!) we can redeem those texts.

(The Rev.) Elizabeth Magill  
Imagine Healing at Bethany  
PO Box 30356/186 Stafford Street  
Worcester MA 01603

**SHARE THE STORIES  
JOIN THE SHOWER OF STOLES AT WOW2003**

We invite you to join the Shower of Stoles Project in telling your story at WOW2003 this summer. The Shower of Stoles is a collection of hundreds of liturgical stoles from gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons from twenty denominations in five countries. Each stole contains the story of a GLBT person who is active in the life and leadership of their faith community in some way: minister, elder, deacon, teacher, missionary, musician, administrator or active lay person. This extraordinary collection celebrates the gifts of GLBT person who serve God in countless ways, while also lifting up those who have been excluded from service because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. Over 100 of these stoles were on display at the GLAD retreat in Lexington, KY last summer.

This summer close to one thousand stoles will be on display at "WOW: Witness Our Welcome 2003" in Philadelphia. WOW2003 will be the largest ever gathering of Canadian and U.S. Christians - gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and heterosexual allies - who support the full participation of GLBT persons in congregations and ministries, advocating justice, equality and the inclusion of all people. The Shower of Stoles Project is collecting new stoles for this historic event.

We encourage you to take advantage of this unique opportunity to celebrate the gifts of your congregation's GLBT members with a stole, or demonstrate your church's support by making a "signature stole." Instructions for making stoles can be found on our website: [www.showerofstoles.org](http://www.showerofstoles.org). We would be happy to answer any of your questions about the Project or how to make stoles. Please feel free to e-mail Martha Juillerat, National Program Director of the SOSP, [stoleproj@aol.com](mailto:stoleproj@aol.com).

**THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIVING STOLES FOR  
WOW2003 IS JULY 15.**

Nancy Fisher, Admin. Asst.  
The Shower of Stoles Project  
57 Upton Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55405  
(612) 377-8792  
[nfisher@mn.rr.com](mailto:nfisher@mn.rr.com) or [stoleproj@aol.com](mailto:stoleproj@aol.com)  
[www.showerofstoles.org](http://www.showerofstoles.org)

**Calling for Nominations for Recognition Awards**

**THE CAROL BLAKLEY RECOGNITION**

Award named for Carol Blakley of Caldwell, Idaho, a Disciple mother of a gay son, who broke silence at the 1977 Kansas City General Assembly. She called on all Disciples to name the reality that gay, lesbian, bisexual and affirming persons are our sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, parents, congregants, pastors and staff. Mrs. Blakley was the first award recipient. This Recognition is given to a member of the Alliance who has contributed significantly to the call on Disciples to name the reality which Mrs. Blakley dared to name, to the other purposes of the Alliance and to the growth and development of the Alliance within the general manifestation of the church.

**THE REV. O. D. JOHNSON RECOGNITION**

Award named for the late Rev. O. D. Johnson of Kansas City, Missouri, the first award recipient. A Disciple clergyman who came out of the closet at retirement and founded GLAD-Kansas City in 1987, first Alliance Chapter. This Recognition shall be given to individuals or groups who contribute significantly to the development and growth of an Alliance chapter or to the visible presence of the Alliance within the regional manifestation of the church.

**THE PEEVEY/HARRIS RECOGNITION**

Award named for Rev. Debra Peevey, first award recipient and Rev. Allen Harris, second award recipient. Rev. Peevey, formerly pastor of Findlay Street Christian Church in Seattle, came out as a lesbian to her congregation and led them through the process of becoming Open and Affirming in 1988. Rev. Harris, co-pastor of Park Avenue Christian Church in New York, was called to that congregation and ordained as an openly gay clergyman and helped lead them to becoming Open and Affirming in 1992. Rev. Peevey and Rev. Harris were original members of the former Coordinating Committee of the Alliance. This Recognition is given to individuals and groups who contribute significantly to leading their congregations to become Open and Affirming or who contribute significantly to the visible presence of the Alliance within the congregational manifestation of the church.

**THE REV. MICHAEL SCHLOFF RECOGNITION**

Award named for the late Rev. Michael Schloff of Boston, Massachusetts for the purpose of recognizing him posthumously. Rev. Schloff, an openly gay Disciples clergyman, died of AIDS related pneumonia in the fall of 1988. At the time of his death, he was an original member of the former Alliance Coordinating Committee. He is credited with furthering the formation of the Alliance through his efforts during the 1985 Des Moines General Assembly. Michael was best known in the Boston area as a powerful advocate for the homeless and disenfranchised and for his work on the staff of the gay and lesbian counseling center. This Recognition is given to individuals or groups who demonstrate the powerful Christian commitment to lesbian, bisexual, gay and affirming Christians and to all persons within or without the church.