

OPALGA Bulletin

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

OPALGA's First Decade

Mel Wilson

On March 17, the Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association celebrated the organization's 10th anniversary. It's difficult to remember for us, now, what it was like in Oak Park prior to OPALGA's formation so changed has been the paradigm of gay life in the village. Any description of what it has taken to make these changes could never be described by any single individual. Positive change in the quality of life for gay men and lesbians in Oak Park has been the result of struggles of hundreds of individuals as well as the collective actions of OPALGA and a dozen other organizations and institutions. A hundred stories could be told of how lesbians and gay men came out to become members of our community, and our debt to these men and women is tremendous.

But, I've been asked here to write something about the actual creation of OPALGA, and that story is a story in and of itself. In doing so, I hope that readers will recognize that I can only tell what I personally know and not the equally compelling stories of others.

In March 1989, a myriad of factors (and people) came together to create an organization that seemed almost predestined to emerge at that time, and in Oak Park. The peculiar "culture" of



The first OPALGA board retreat held in HoneyCreek, Wisconsin, in May of 1989. It encompassed board and various partners. From left (top row): Jane Anderson, Phil Bellerive, Ron Rausch, Nathan Linsk, Jim Aull and Jeffrey Smith. (bottom row): Marsha Borders, friend of Marsha's, Bekah Levin, Mel Wilson, Bruce Broerman and Jim Kelly.

Oak Park, with its tensions of middle class conservatism and progressive liberalism; together with the momentum of bold initiatives directed at conscious social change in the context of racial integration; presented lesbians and gay men with the best of environments for constructive change.

The converging streams that met in OPALGA and seemed to burst fully-blossomed onto the local scene, had begun years earlier. OPALGA made a triumphal entry onto the Oak Park stage. It was as if the audience had been waiting, and the players, too long waiting in the wings, were prepared to play.

Up until 1989, Oak Park hardly seemed to have recognized the gay and lesbian movement that was causing so many waves in cities around the country. Although the village harbored a large gay population, none were visible in public life in Oak Park. Gay issues were never a part of the public dialog, never mentioned in local news articles, never included in public policies, never frankly discussed in schools. Gay people were simply absent from all areas of public life. The silence was deafening, but it was a silence that had been taken for granted by gay people until that time.

It's hard for us today to remember how fearfully we lived in those days. Activism, "gay pride," open relationships: those were things most gay people saved for the city, for somewhere else...somewhere where no one knew us and we could be the people we wanted to be. To be openly gay in our own neighborhood, in our own community, was unthinkable. No one could guess the consequences of living openly as a gay man or

OPLGA/Update

Newsletter of the Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association May 1989 Vol. 1, No. 1

Lesbian and Gay Association Formed

The Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association (OPALGA) was formed on March 17, 1989. It is the first of its kind in the area. The group was formed by a group of people who were tired of being invisible and wanted to be seen. They wanted to create a safe space for themselves and others. The group has since grown and now has over 100 members. They have been successful in many ways, including the formation of the first gay and lesbian community center in Oak Park. They have also been successful in getting the village government to support their efforts. The group is proud of what they have accomplished and looks forward to continuing their work in the future.

Gay's in Holocaust Memorial

The Holocaust Memorial in Oak Park is a place of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust. It is a place where we can learn about the horrors of the Holocaust and the importance of human rights. The memorial is a powerful reminder of the need for tolerance and acceptance. It is a place where we can honor the memory of those who were persecuted and killed. The memorial is a source of inspiration and hope for all of us. It is a place where we can find strength and courage in the face of adversity. The memorial is a testament to the power of the human spirit and the importance of standing up for what is right.

Civil rights for Oak Park gays

The Oak Park Village Board has passed a resolution supporting the civil rights of gay and lesbian residents. This is a significant step towards equality and acceptance. The resolution states that the village government will not discriminate against anyone based on their sexual orientation. This is a positive message and a step in the right direction. We hope that other villages will follow suit and support the civil rights of all their residents. We will continue to work for equality and acceptance for all.

Volume 1, Number 1 of the OPLGA (at that time Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association) Update.

Table of Contents

OPALGA Contacts	2	Ask Aunti Vi	5
Calendar	2	Volunteer of the Quarter	7
Quip of the Quarter	2	Musings	8
Prism Task Force Report	3	Gotta Go to the GALA!	9
Let's Pet	4	Membership Form	11
Spilling the Beans	4		

(cont. on p. 3)

OPALGA Contacts

OPALGA:
(24-hr information and message machine) **708/848.0273**
FAX: 708/848.7544

Officers: (through 6/99)

Co-Chairs
Helen Bishop 771.4673
Steve Glickman 848.6426

Secretary
Jane Anderson 484.1547

Treasurer
Ray Johnson 386.4851

Board Members-at-Large

(through 6/99)

Sam Halferty 383.5268
Julie A. Kreiner 358.1530
Merle Shapera 524.2663
Rob Ward 524.3386
Mel Wilson 848.7934

Committee/Task Force Chairs

Public Policy
Alan Amato 386.4178

Social Activities
Sam Halferty 383.5268

Prism Youth
Betsy Stith 848.0553

Spectrum Youth Drop-In Center
Rob Ward 524.3386

Communications
Merle Shapera 524.2663
Mel Wilson 848.7934

Membership
Gerri Albright 524.3319

Fundraising
Helen Bishop 771.4673
Jim Kelly 524.2542

Nominating Committee
Phil Bellerive 524.9433
Pamela Freese 383.3747

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

May 1998 – July 1999

May 25
OPALGA Annual meeting, 6:30–9 pm at the Andersen Center at the corner of Hayes and Division in Oak Park. Food and refreshments will be served. New Board members will be elected by current OPALGA members.

Nominees for 1999 OPALGA Board Elections are: Officers: Co-chair, Helen Bishop; Co-chair, Ray Johnson; Secretary, Jane Anderson; Treasurer, Sam Halferty
Board Members-at-Large: Alan Amato; Ethel Cotovsky; John Dames; Chuck Huffman; Jim Kelly; Julie A. Kreiner; Alan Maresso; and Mel Wilson

June 4
Pride Month OPALGA pot luck at Jim and Bruce's, phone 708/524.2542 for more info.

June 18
OPALGA's 3rd Annual OPAL GALA on Friday, June 18th, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Mar-Lac Banquets in Oak Park. Tickets are \$75.00 and include dinner, dancing to a live orchestra, open bar, silent and live

auction, valet parking and more!
For tickets, stop in at Barbara's Bookstore (Oak Park or Chicago on Wells) or Val's Halla Records (Oak Park). Or, contact the OPALGA office at 708.848.0273.

June 26
Chicago's Gay Pride Parade starts at 2 pm. Interested in marching with OPALGA? Phone 708/848.0273.

More theater to come in June! Look for an OPALGA night around Pride Week at the Bailiwick Repertory Theater featuring Larry Kramer's "Just Say No," starring Greg Louganis and Alexandra Billings.

July 23–25
Joint OPALGA/BUNGALO camping trip to Stoughton, WI. For more details, phone Laura at 708/795.4258.

August 1
Joint OPALGA/BUNGALO picnic at Grove #3 on 26th between Des Plaines and 1st Avenue. Site has 20 picnic tables and covered buildings.

We have a new column in the monthly *OPALGA News*, where we answer questions, or respond to thoughts and ideas from members about our organization.
Thanks for your continued interest and support of OPALGA!
Here's to rockin' into our second decade of commitment!

TOM MURPHY

Baird & Warner, Inc.
Real Estate Agent

708.771.1855 or
708.771.7855

Real Estate agent who understands your needs. Can help you buy or sell anywhere in the country. Specializing in Oak Park, Forest Park and River Forest.

Donald A. Woolf
M.S.W., L.C.S.W.

is pleased to announce the formation of

Counseling For Results

Where Psychotherapy is More Than Talk

(708)383-1636

Convenient Chicago and Oak Park locations
Most major insurance accepted

Prism Task Force Report

We are happy to report that a working plan has been received from the Prism Task Force, and passed unanimously by the OPALGA Board on April 20, 1999. This work has evolved from all the monumental amount of time, combined efforts, and tremendous dedication of this Task Force to strengthening and enhancing the Prism program for the future. OPALGA extends a heartfelt thank you to the Task Force for their commitment and for always keeping their eyes on the goal of an exemplary youth drop in center.

The Prism Task Force has been appointed by the OPALGA board as the steering committee, described within the proposal.

We present the Task Force letter and accepted proposal below, in it's entirety. Due to space constraints we will have the "Letter to OPALGA" column in the Bulletin but keep sending those letters and emails.

April 15th, 1999

Dear OPALGA Board,

Subject: Prism Task Force Group Process

We wish to take a moment in our busy process and extend to you our thanks for constituting us as a working group of the

Board. It has been and continues to be a challenging and inspirational experience to work with this group of competent and committed people in the service of our sexual minority youth. Various group members since the first meeting have noted the capacity of this group to consider and respect differences and to work with maturity and efficiency.

Our group process has been spirited, lively and perhaps at times contentious. We have considered hundreds of possibilities for resuming the services of Prism. We have explored many programs, which are similar to Prism in the Tri-State region, and placed under consideration the many different ways they have operated and the many recommendations they offered. Thanks to the maturity of the group's members and the monumental importance of our task, we have been capable of reaching consensus and moving forward each step of the way. We could probably commit several hours to reviewing and documenting our discarded options and the many dead ends we explored. However, we decline to do so in favor of pushing forward toward a re-opening of the youth drop in center as soon as humanly possible.

We appreciate your indulgence and commit ourselves to represent any

minority opinions should they form.

Sincerely,

The Prism Task Force:

Jane Anderson, Board Member;

Ray Johnson, Board Member;

Joy Culver, OPALGA Member at Large;

Vivian O'Dell, Youth Advisor;

Chris Mitchell, Program Evaluator;

Nathan Linsk, Parent;

Betsy Stith, Parent, Secretary Task Force

To: OPALGA Board

From: Prism Task Force: Ray Johnson, Jane

Anderson, Nathan Linsk, Chris Mitchell, Joy

Culver, Vivian O'Dell, Betsy Stith

Date: 4-15-99 / Revised 4-20-99 and

approved by Board

RE: Recommendations for Action at next Meeting

Items:

Purpose of Program; Non-discrimination Policy; Age Policy; Governance and Structure of Prism; Program Director Position Description; Steering Committee Description; Youth Advisor Requirements

Purpose of Program:

OPALGA affirms the basic purpose of Prism as a non-therapeutic youth resource program for sexual minority youth.

Non-Discrimination

The program is open to all youth

(cont. on p. 5)

OPALGA's First Decade . . .

(cont. from page 1)

lesbian in Oak Park. We told ourselves we had our lives, but they were private. No one had any business knowing what we did in private. And, nobody cared.

Nobody cared as we went about building our private lives - private lives that grew larger as we developed our own gay networks, social circles, clandestine

relationships, organizations and alternative media. Nobody noticed or cared as we shared our joys, courted, fell in love, swore commitments, built our homes, nursed our loved ones in sickness, and grieved for our lost loved ones in silence.

By the late 1970s, the force of Stonewall had begun to reach Oak Park's gay residents; and many were starting to take action to assert their presence within their own community institutions. Most significantly, many gay people were beginning to speak out in church. By speaking out against mindless bible-based anti-gay repression, church activists made significant progress from within a handful of Oak Park churches, most notably Euclid Avenue Methodist Church, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, First United Church of Oak Park, Grace Episcopal Church of Oak Park and Oak Park and Beacon Unitarian



OPALGA and Lavender Bouquet march together at Gay Pride, 1989.

OPALGA Co-chairs
May, 1989–May, 1999

Mel Wilson	Bekah Levin
Phil Bellerive	Ethel Cotovsky
Jim Kelly	Pamela Freese
Steve Glickman	Helen Bishop

Universalist Churches. By speaking out in church, establishing supportive church-based groups within congregations and continuing open dialog, church-based activists built the foundations for progressive change in the community as a whole.

At the same time, Oak Park was home to a number of lesbian and gay social and

(cont. on p. 6)

Let's Pet



Dear Dr. John,
If I give heartworm preventative to my dog every month, every summer, why does she need to be retested every year?

Bob, Forest Park

Dear Bob,

Good Question! If everything in this world were perfect and happened exactly according to plan, there would be no need for annual heartworm testing in dogs.

Alas, we live in a world of human error, natural selection and other uncontrollable variables which allow a window of opportunity for those ever diligent heartworm larvae to survive and prosper.

Heartworm is a very serious disease in dogs (and some cats) which leads to congestive heart failure. It requires a mosquito vector to transfer from one animal to another, so, logically, we should only need to keep our pets on HWP (heartworm preventative) during the Spring, Summer and Fall. The

preventative kills any larvae which have infested the animal in the previous 30-35 days. It only kills the early larval stages and not the adult heartworms.

Should your pet receive its monthly pill too late or not at all, microfilaria (baby heartworms) are allowed to get a foothold. Also, some owners stop giving the HWP too early in the Fall before a few hard frosts, when mosquitoes may still be active on warmer days or in a warm and humid part of the home. I have seen mosquitoes flying around my basement laundry room in mid-January!

As with any vermicide, there may be some lines of worms which have developed some resistance to HWP over the years.

Any of these occurrences leave your pet exposed and so its essential to test annually. Some owners prefer to give the HWP year-round. Just for the convenience of a routine and for extra assurance of protection.

Spilling the Beans: Experiencing food in the Oak Park Area

Brookhart

Tutto Tapas
Bistro Bar and Grill
7407 West Madison Street
Forest Park IL 60130

Light and lively! Those two words capture the Tutto Tapas dining experience. This Forest Park treasure departs from traditional Tapas bars in substance: it offers pasta, pizza and Antipasto along with some traditional Spanish favorites. In Spain, tapas bars are defined not only by their often unique, regional food, but by also their essence: light food, good drinks, and wonderful conversation. Tutto Tapas captures this lively aspect of the tapas experience well.

We were seated in the smoking section almost immediately upon arriving. It was a busy Friday night, so we requested a table in smoking rather than wait 15 or 20 minutes for a non-smoking table. The dining rooms reverberated with happy sounds: people eating, conversing, and laughing; glasses clinking; and flatware clicking. I found it invigorating and refreshing. Be prepared to enjoy a public experience that may include unwitting eavesdropping (either by you or a close table). This is not a quiet, intimate space.

We ordered four tapas, two hot and two cold, and a pitcher of Sangria. The

cold tapas came first: Patatas Ali Oli" (garlic potato salad), and Seafood Bruschetta. The garlic potato salad was good; it is a stand by at many tapas bars. The seafood bruschetta was delicious. Next came the hot tapas: a Mixed Grilled Veggie Platter, and Pollo n' Chorizo al Banderilla. The marinade for the vegetables was light and herb scented; a wonderful enhancement for grilled vegetables. The Banderilla was like a Spanish kabob: it contained cubed chicken, sliced chorizo, and roasted peppers on a skewer. A garlic mayonnaise sauce complimented the chicken and chorizo, helping to tie the contrasting flavors together. We shared our tapas at leisure, enjoying conversation and sangria between helpings. The meal was finished with a chocolate hazelnut bread pudding and tiramisu. The bread pudding is one of the best desserts I have experienced in the Oak Park Area: it wasn't overly sweet, and a the balance of flavors was beyond description for a g-rated food column. I will simply state that a cigarette after dinner would have seemed appropriate. Other tapas of note include: Contadina (Farmer's Salad), Insalata Di Pollo (A curry chicken salad), Wood-Roasted Duck Breast (served hot), and Queso De Cabra (Baked goat cheese with fresh tomato and basil broth).

The moderate prices (most tapas range from \$4 to \$9), friendly service, good food and peppy atmosphere make Tutto Tapas a great place to meet friends or plan a get together.

Bon Appetite!

Lesbigay Radio Chicago

*Chicagoland's first commercial
gay/lesbian radio show
With your host Alan Amberg*

Mon-Fri: 5-7 pm on
North: AM 1240
South: AM 1470

www.lesbigayradio.com

SPECTRUM

Young Adults, 18-25

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



Ask Auntie Vi

To Be Gay...or Not To Be Gay...That is the question. Whether tis nobler...and so on...and so forth....

What is this Gay world coming to? Auntie Vi has just heard that the Reverend Jerry Falwell has outed Tinky Winky, the teletubby, in the February issue of his "National Liberty Journal". The headline read "Parents alert: Tinky Winky comes out of the closet" Pleas note his logic:

- *He is purple...the Gay Pride Color
- *Has Boy's voice...Carries a purse
- *Triangular Antenna... Pride Symbol

With such strong evidence, how could I, your humble Auntie Vi, be surprised by his next statement: "As a Christian, I feel that role modeling the gay lifestyle is damaging to the moral lives of children." Give me a break Jerry. I mean Reverend. I mean are you crazy! We are talking about a teletubby for God's sake.

We are not on a recruitment drive for toddlers...and Lord knows I certainly do not need a new toaster oven.

Have we, the Gay community, become such a bland group that the Reverend Falwell has to go after fictional characters on a children's show to find controversy. Maybe this "Post-Gay" attitude has gone too far, and "God Forbid" maybe we are blending in too well. Auntie Vi says it is time to remind the Reverend Falwell just how special we are. Does he really think that we are nothing more than a purple attired, purse-toting group of people!!! Let us give Jerry something to really tawk about. In his honor, let us commit one outrageous act of gayness this week, each in our own way.

Tell Auntie what you did!!! share your resolutions with me. See you next year.

Prism Report . . .

(cont. from page 3)

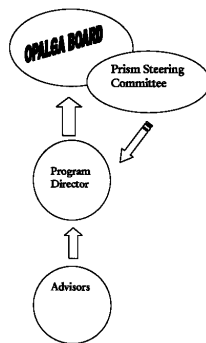
without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or physical ability.

Age Policy:

Prism youth participants shall be 14 to 17 years of age. The participants 18th birthday will mark graduation from Prism after which they shall no longer participate in Prism activities or functions.

Structure and Governance:

The following diagram represents the governing relationships



between the board; Prism's Steering Committee, the Program Director and Advisors.

Structure and Governance for Prism: Board:

- Staffs the Steering Committee, including 2 board members.
- Reviews and approves the budget for the program.
- Defines content and frequency of necessary reports.
- Responsible for facilitating collaborative process and communication between the Board, Steering Committee and Program Director.
- Hires, Supervises and Evaluates the Program Director.
- Supports Prism with fund raising.
- Acknowledges the contributions of

volunteers for Prism.

Steering Committee:

- Replaces existing PRISM/Youth committee.
- Board appointed for intermittent 2 year terms with a total 4 year maximum of continued service.
- Comprised of a total of 7-8 members, including 2 board members, professionals with expertise in youth and/or human services, Parents and other stakeholders.
- Operates the function of oversight for the board.
- Secures Resources- ideas, people, money, expertise- for Prism
- Safeguards the mission and cultivates the vision of Prism.
- Ensures ongoing development of

(cont. on p. 10)

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

Donna Karpavicius
Licensed Broker and Appraiser

Jack Carpenter Realtors

Phone (708) 383-7100

Pager (708) 626-4352

Visit me at:

www.realtor.com/Chicago/DonnaKarpavicius

Serving the gay and lesbian community for over 13 years.

OPALGA's First Decade . . .

(cont. from page 3)

support organizations. By 1989 Lavender Bouquet, a lesbian social organization meeting at Good Shepherd, could boast a membership of 200! Many of Oak Park's gay men were members of the West Suburban Gay Association which held frequent socials in private Oak Park homes. Meanwhile, the 12 + 12 Club on Madison Street was home to one of two Chicago metropolitan area gay 12-step centers.

It took the catastrophe of AIDS to break the pattern of exaggerated privacy that characterized gay life in Oak Park in 1988. AIDS came quietly into Oak Park. By 1988, eight people had been diagnosed with AIDS in Oak Park since the onset of the world pandemic. It was clear to some people in health fields and in the gay community that a vastly larger number of people, particularly gay people, were infected in Oak Park and that shortly the number of those sick would overwhelm existing resources.

In 1988, an ad hoc group of concerned citizens and members of health and social services came together to form the Oak Park AIDS Network to communicate the urgency of the crisis and to advocate for development of local AIDS action strategies. Upon completion of a preliminary report that year, Angelika Kuehn and her father Heinz Kuehn, Paul Kuehnert (a nurse in the Oak Park Health Dept.), Bryan Findlay (a PWA), and Rev. David Meyers established the community-based AIDS support agency Community Response. Assuming leadership of the effort, Angelika Kuehn set out to bring together people in the community with the widest possible range of experience and capabilities to both establish objectives and to work out strategies to support those affected with HIV. By January of 1989, Community Response had found its board of directors and was launched as an AIDS support



organization.

My partner Nathan Linsk and I were quickly recruited as additional board members.

The founding of Community Response coincided with Oak Park village board elections in 1989, and Community Response board members quickly arranged to meet with the candidates slated by Oak Park's venerable Village Manager Association (VMA). Discussions about developing supportive structures for caring for people with HIV turned into a discussion of support for gay and lesbian citizens of Oak Park and the fact that Oak Park offered no tangible protection against discrimination against gay people who would necessarily be "out" if they were to be active participants of volunteer programs serving people affected with HIV. Pushed on



Board secretary Jane Anderson, and past board members Nathan Linsk and Marsha Borders.

the subject by Bryan Findlay, Nathan and me, the gay people on the Community Response board, all of the candidates promised to support revision of Oak Park's Human Rights Ordinance to include gays and lesbians within those protected by the ordinance.



Phil Bellerive, Jim Aull, Jim Kelly, and Bekah Levin carrying the OPLGA flag at Pride March, 1993.

Community Response's board meetings marked the first time gay people met with other Oak Park leaders to address concerns of gay people within the community as a whole. Sitting in those meetings, we looked at each other and wondered why it took AIDS to bring us together and how we could step away from AIDS to begin to address a whole

wide range of lesbian and gay concerns. A battle for civil rights would take more than a social service agency to give it strength. Anticipating the real struggle meaningful social change would require, it was clear to us that a whole new organization was required. The election campaign in Oak Park that spring presented a window of opportunity to introduce gay



Singer Kris Williamson and past Co-chair, Ethel Cotosky at the Oak Park Cultural Arts Festival, 1992.

and lesbian issues into the public arena of community life. But we had no local lesbian and gay organization to challenge the status quo and promote meaningful social change.

In initial efforts to raise gay and lesbian issues in the election campaign, Bryan Findlay, then co-chair of the Chicago Area Republican Gay Organization (CARGO), played a vital role. Using CARGO letterhead, Findlay prepared

a questionnaire directed at all candidates, quizzing them on issues relevant to gays and lesbians in Oak Park. Findlay questioned attitudes on gay rights, public education, anti-gay violence, gay and lesbian youth, AIDS, police harassment and provision of gay/lesbian-directed social services. For many candidates, the questionnaire came as a surprise. Gay and lesbian issues were not on the agendas of any of those participating in the election, and none had anticipated the existence of a Republican gay organization in the village.

Findlay's announcement of candidate responses was widely reported in the mainstream and gay press. The CARGO questionnaire put the village of Oak Park on notice that gay and lesbian issues were subjects to be dealt with directly and with the utmost urgency.

The next opportunity to bring gay people together to speak with candidates resulted from an invitation by the Common Sense opposition political party seeking election to the village board. Invited to host a meet-the-candidates coffee in our apartment, Bryan, Nathan and I called every Oak Park gay man and lesbian we knew and asked them to bring their friends. We had to put gay issues on the village agenda, and everyone who came knew that an organization was in the making.



Past board member, Alan Amato at Day in Our Village, 1993.

(cont. on p. 7)

OPALGA's First Decade . . .

(cont. from page 6)

All of the candidates running in that election knew that an organized force was assembling, and both the VMA and Common Sense parties were anxious to be on the right side. On the day of the Common Sense coffee, local newspapers announced the VMA candidates' support of a gay rights amendment to the Village Human Rights Ordinance.

On the night of the coffee, 16 people came together to talk with candidates.

The candidates, both progressive challengers to the VMA slate, were quick to support a gay rights amendment and directed action against HIV. Following departure of the candidates, the meeting progressed to the work of forming a new organization.



Past Co-chair, Jim Kelly at OPAL GALA, 1998.

The following Saturday, OPALGA held its first meeting to develop structure and establish immediate objectives. Those in attendance at the coffee and/or subsequent meeting included: in addition to Bryan, Nathan and myself: Joanne Trapani, Phil Bellerive, Ron Rauch, Rebekah Levin, Marsha Borders, Bob Trez, Jim Aull, Mary Davis, David Mann, Vivian Larson, Helen Kalcsits, and Bruce

(cont. on p. 8)

Volunteer of the Quarter



OPALGA's Volunteer of the Quarter is none other than board member Ray Johnson. Currently, Ray serves as the treasurer of the organization, making sure we have an accurate picture of our financial

position, and keeping tabs on nitty-gritty

things like tax filings and documents. When he wants to focus on something a bit bigger than the IRS (is there anything bigger?), Ray turns his attention to the upcoming GALA, where hundreds will gather for fun and festivities at the Mar Lac House on Friday, June 18. Ray is co-chair of the GALA Committee this year, along with OPALGA stalwart Julie Kreiner, and assures OPALGA members and friends that this year's GALA will be even more fun than the last two.

Ray was one of the friendly folks who personed the phone banks during our last membership drive, so you may have heard his resonant tones asking you to renew your membership.

Ray has also been part of the task group that is working hard to strengthen PRISM, our youth drop-in center. In fact, every time an OPALGA member turns around, there's Ray!

Thanks for all you do.

REVIEW

Bi & Gay married men's support group

End the Isolation

Call Jerry at 630.627.1990 or email: ReviewGp@aol.com



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 Tuesday
1145 Westgate, Suite 106, Oak Park

708.492.2000

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

I was sitting in the tub the other night, letting thoughts pop and run through my head, sort of like the soap bubbles I was watching. I was thinking how glad I am that the Monica mess is over. Thinking about how strident, harsh, and unbending many have sounded throughout this ordeal. Those thoughts led me to thoughts of the next millenium and the Y2K end of world, Chicken Little contingent. There are great conspiracies afoot. When the calendar changes, the world as we know it will end. And then we have Jerry. Jerry, Jerry, Jerry, you've really gone and stepped in it now, haven't you. Don't get me wrong, I don't mind the rest of the world seeing how uptight, paranoid and downright dangerous you are. The problem is, you have a bunch of folks still thinking

you are smart. Tinky Winky, indeed. Another great conspiracy. Hatched on the grassy knoll, no doubt. Gawd, wouldn't Miss Hoover be in her glory if alive today! I can't wait until next Halloween. If there are any true extra-terrestrials among us, they are sure to be lured outside thinking the mother ship is about to land! Lord knows, we have gotten many laughs out of the sheer ridiculousness of all three of these situations, but there is much about each that is far from funny. Where has this paranoia and willingness to see a conspiracy in everything come from? How have we become so inflexible, rigid, unyielding, unbending? Seems to me, this isn't confined to the national stage. I've over-heard it in checkout lines, heard and seen it in friends and probably been guilty

of it myself. Are times so uncertain that we will not tolerate anything that deviates from what we have determined to be acceptable? Is it in the water? The air? We seem to have lost our center. Lost our connectedness. I for one am happy that Spring is upon us! I'm ready to burst outside and revel in the sounds of birds and colors of flowers. Ready to feel the caress of a warm Spring breeze...not like the wind on those freakishly mild Winter days we have had...days that were like a love once thought true...the promise in that first warm touch betrayed by an inner chill. I swear to you, I'm ready to dance with the druids! To find my center and be grounded in the fragrance of the fresh air join me.

OPALGA's First Decade . . .

(cont. from page 7)

Broerman.

The Oak Park Lesbian and Gay Association was established that night as the first organization devoted to promoting the interests of gay and lesbian citizens of Oak Park. Founding members had reason to believe that a coordinated effort could lead to a marked improvement in the quality of life for gay people in Oak Park.

Within days, requests for public

comment and/or participation came pouring in. OPALGA was asked to provide a speaker for the village's Holocaust Memorial service at Village Hall, we were asked to present our goals and objectives at Wednesday Journal's Loop Luncheon at the Chicago Bar Association, the Oak Park police chief called to find someone to speak to gay and lesbian concerns with law enforcement officials. It was as if everyone had been waiting for someone to talk to about gay and lesbian people in Oak Park. At last, the silence was broken.

The Oak Park election brought a clean village board sweep by the VMA candidates. All had pledged support for amendment of the Human Rights Ordinance to include gay people. OPALGA, as an organization, set about immediately to put together our case for the amendment. Mary Davis quickly began efforts to identify and organize people to testify on our behalf at board hearings. I took on the task of producing newsletters to provide communication between members and the community at large.

On June 7, 1989 the Oak Park village board, following three hours of emotionally heated testimony, voted unanimously to amend the Human Rights Ordinance to include sexual orientation among those protected from discrimination in areas of housing, village

employment and public accommodation. Only three other municipalities in Illinois had previously enacted such legislation.

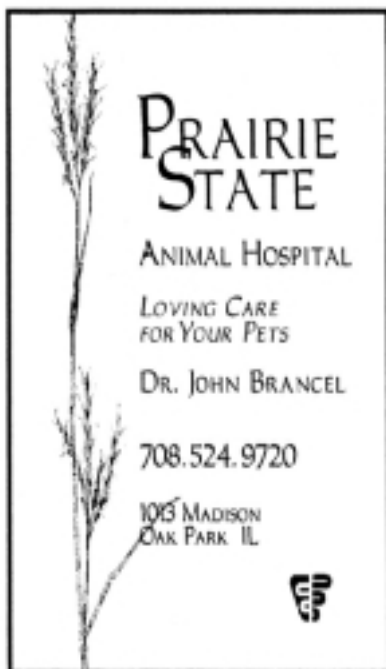
Within a week, the Oak Park and River Forest High School

District 200 board introduced a motion to amend the school's Human Dignity Policy to include gay and lesbian students and faculty among those assured the right to dignity and freedom from discrimination.

The high school board's action precipitated a widespread debate that dominated local news for the next six months. School board meetings drew ever-growing numbers of people speaking out until, in October, meetings had to be held in the high school auditorium. Opponents leaf-letted the village with anti-gay diatribes accusing OPALGA of recruitment of innocent youth. Finally in December, after six months of wavering board efforts to find consensus, the school board voted unanimously to include gays and lesbians in the dignity policy. Appalled by the wave of acrimony cast by



Jill Allread and past Co-chair Pamela Freese at 1989 Pride Parade.



Gotta Go to the GALA!

The 3rd Annual "OPAL-GALA" is just around the corner! On Friday, June 18th, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at Mar-Lac Banquets in Oak Park, we will gather for one of the OPALGA events of the year! This black-tie optional affair is always great fun!

This is our major fundraiser each year and our goals for 1999 and into the 21st Century can not be achieved without a successful evening. Without your help, our programming achievements may suffer.

Those goals include:

- Hiring a part-time credentialed Program Director for our Youth Program
- Expanded outreach to local sexual minority youth for their participation in our "Safe Places" Drop-In Center
- Improved programs to meet the needs of our community
- More opportunities provided for families of OPALGA

- Continuing our successful programs to date
- Continued funding for our Office Manager and current office space, which is used by a number of groups in our community.

We still need some help in the following areas to make our event successful:

- Buy a ticket! Tickets are \$75.00 and include dinner, dancing to a live orchestra, open bar, silent and live auction and MORE! For tickets, stop in at Barbara's Bookstore (Oak Park or Chicago on Wells) or Val's Halla Records (Oak Park); or contact the OPALGA office at 708/848.0273.
- Donate an item for the auctions! Or inquire at a business you patronize for a donation. We need more auction items!
- Get us in touch with a video company that could give us an "in-kind" donation of video and audio equipment to be used

during the evenings program

- Buy an AD! We will have a program book this year and advertising space is available for most any business.

Contact the OPALGA office with any questions or comments regarding the GALA. The phone number is 708/848.027, or the GALA Co-Chairs Julie Kreiner at 358.1530 or Ray Johnson at 386.4851 if you can help in any way.

The following Corporate Sponsors have already signed up to help: Subaru, American Airlines, and the TravelTan Travel and Travel Trends of Oak Park

We look forward to seeing you at the GALA! All the teams are working hard to make this the most successful GALA yet. With your help, we can do it!

Please make a contribution of any kind. On behalf of the GALA Committee,
Thanks!

OPALGA's First Decade . . .

(cont. from page 8)

amendment opponents, the board concluded that anti-gay discrimination was a reality for gay and lesbian students and faculty in Oak Park. OPRF high school became the first public school in Illinois to include gays and lesbians among those assured freedom from discrimination.

In the first years of OPALGA's existence, the organization grew at a rapid rate as we moved to address issues of public policy, provide community educational forums, hold social events, and celebrate being gay in our community. Committed to policies of openness and inclusion, the organization fostered an environment for exploration and development of a concept of gay life markedly different from the prevailing historic paradigm of a privatized

gay community. We provided in-service training for the Oak Park police, we led discussion groups in churches, we provided sensitivity training to

social agency staffs and volunteers. We conducted workshops on gay and lesbian topics, we

established a youth drop-in center for gay, lesbian and questioning youth, we

sponsored the Oak Park Cultural Arts Festival, Gay Cabarets, and classical and popular concerts. We brought lesbian and gay

concerns to Oak Park elections. Within the past four years, we have moved into

our own office home, established the reality of gay and lesbian families, passed Oak Park's domestic partnership registry, and defeated a hostile anti-gay public referendum.

The Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association has grown in 10 years to include more than 300 members. We count among Oak Park's most respected organizations. None of us in attendance at OPALGA's birth could have imagined the richness of talent and imagination brought by those who would join this organization.

Let's celebrate the accomplishments of the hundreds of individuals who have made a difference in our community and honor the organization that has made that change possible.

We couldn't have imagined ten years ago where we would be now. Can we imagine where we will be when OPALGA reaches twenty?



Co-chairs Steve Glickman and Helen Bishop, and board member Rob Ward at HRC dinner, 1998.

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"

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

"Embracing the diversity of God's creation & celebrating our oneness in Christ"

Corner of East & Randolph, Oak Park
708.848.4741 or

708.848.2144, Jack Finney, Pastor

An affirming Congregation in the Reconciled in Christ Program of Lutherans Concerned/North America

HIV Testing Free/Anonymous

320 Lake Street
Oak Park, IL

NEW: Oral or Blood Tests

Thursday: AM & PM Hours
Call: 708.445.3340, ext. 2253
for an appointment

Prism Report . . .

(cont. from page 1)

youth programming both creatively- (enhancing vision) and financially- (fundraising)

- Assures the diversification and increase in funding resources.
- Develops a "cache" of donors.
- Participates in the introductory volunteer training for Prism.
- Provides the board input regarding the operations of Prism and the performance of the Program Director.

Note: Neither the Program Director or volunteer advisors are members of the steering committee. The board, not the Program Director, shall develop this committee.

Program Director: Position Description Qualifications:

- Masters or equivalent in human services field.
 - License Preferred.
- Accountability:
- Reports to OPALGA Board
 - Works with Prism Steering Committee: Offers input
 - Implements committee decisions.

Responsibilities:

- 5 FTE

Volunteer Development:

- Coordinates the recruitment, qualification and training of volunteers.
- Supervises, Evaluates, Mentors, Recognizes and (with the board) works to celebrate services of volunteers.
- De-briefs volunteer advisors after each meeting.

Program:

- Coordinates Programming for each meeting, fostering both youth and community involvement.
- Ensures proper staffing of youth meetings.
- Observes youth meetings on a regular basis.

Fundraising:

- Functions as Grant developer and administrator, prepares reports for grantors.

- Identifies and cultivates funding resources.
- Prepares reports for funding sources.
- Works with Steering Committee and Board on the diversification of funding sources.

Outreach:

- Coordinates the development of publications and other materials.
- Provides information regarding Prism to OPALGA and other publications.
- Engages in outreach to youth, professionals, community institutions, schools, referral resources, and others to inform and involve them in the program of Prism.
- Fosters good two-way referral relationships.
- Responds to and follows up to phone inquiries regarding Prism.

Administrative:

- Develops and employs appropriate records for the program.
- Develops regular reports to the Board, and others as directed.
- Develops program budget and monitors implementation of budget.

Other tasks as assigned.

Interim consultation agreement in lieu of Program Director

A consultative contract with another agency to staff this position on an interim basis with one or more persons will be acceptable. Such a cooperative contract will be developed by the task force and the board, and entered into by the board, with the following basic parameters:

- 3-6 month time tapered contract leading to the employment of a permanent program director.
- Fulfillment of any and all of the tasks defined above, particularly
 - Volunteer recruitment,
 - Volunteer qualification
 - Implementation of a training program for those volunteers.

Volunteer Advisors:

We recommend the following regarding volunteer advisors:

Requirements:

1. Application (re-application for existing advisors)
2. In Person Interview with Program Director
3. Background/Fingerprint Check completed.
4. Completion of introductory training.
5. Completion of ongoing training annually.
6. 6 month commitment.
7. Sign and abide by volunteer contract.
8. Responsive to supervision of Program Director.

Regarding Age of Volunteers: The Program Director will develop and implement criteria to insure that all advisors are of the maturity to provide a high quality model to youth 14-17 years of age.

Regarding Mentoring of Youth: Prism is not a mentoring program. Volunteers desiring to develop a personal mentoring relationship with one or more youth are not appropriate for Prism's programs.

Regarding Confidentiality and outside contact with youth:

Staff and volunteer leadership:

1. Are not to divulge their own contact info to youth, including email, preferred web chat rooms, places of employment, phone numbers, addresses etc.
2. Are not to acquire from any means any contact info on Prism youth.
3. Are not to give rides or money to youth, or to be in any contact with youth outside of Prism.
4. Are not to initiate contact with Prism youth in public places.
5. Will not have one on one contact with youth.
6. Will not transgress any future confidentiality policies developed for the program.

EDWARDS TRAVEL ADVISORS
807 MADISON STREET, OAK PARK

Edward Travel Advisors

**SERVING ALL YOUR TRAVEL NEEDS
 WHETHER IT BE FOR LEISURE OR BUSINESS**

708.358.2353 edwardstravel@msn.com



JAK Graphic Solutions, Inc.

FileMaker® Solutions Alliance Member

Julie A. Kreiner
*Developer / Designer of Websites
 Graphic Design and FileMaker Solutions*

821A Washington Boulevard
 Oak Park, Illinois 60302
 Phones: (708) 358-1530
 (312) 480-7579
 FAX: (708) 358-1531

E-mail:
 JAKGraphic@aol.com
 JAKGraphic@mediaone.net



Oak Park Area Lesbian and Gay Association
 1145 Westgate, Suite 106
 Oak Park, Illinois 60301
 708.848.0273

*With a paid membership, you will
 also receive our two publications:*

OPALGA News
OPALGA Bulletin

OPALGA Membership Form

Domestic partner/families may join together.

New Member/s? Yes No Gift Membership? Yes No DATE: _____

Name 1: Ms./Mr. _____ Phones: (day) _____ (evening) _____

Address: _____ City/ST/ZIP _____

Name 2: Ms./Mr. _____ Phones: (day) _____ (evening) _____

For Gift Membership Acknowledgment, please provide your gift-giver name(s):

Please contact me about participating on the following committees:

- Communications Social Cultural Arts Public Policy Youth Membership
 Fundraising Other interests: _____

Optional information that helps us raise funds..

If partners provide for both:

Sex (M/F) _____ Race: _____ Birthyear: _____

PLEASE ENROLL ME AS A MEMBER

- \$200+ Rainbow
 \$100 Red
 \$75 Orange
 \$50 Yellow

MEMBERSHIP FEE ENCLOSED: \$ _____

- \$40 Blue (Dual/Family)
 \$40 Violet (Organization)
 \$25 Green (Individual)
 \$15 Pink (Reduced Income)
 (suggested amount)

May we list your name(s) and donor level in our Quarterly Bulletin? Yes No

If paying by credit card please fill out information below:

Card (Visa, MC, Discover) _____ Name as it appears on card _____
 Expiration Date: _____ / _____ Card #: _____
 Phone (daytime/evening): _____
 Authorizing signature: _____

Please return this form to OPALGA, 1145 Westgate, Suite 106, Oak Park, Illinois 60301 / 708.848.0273

Thank you, and don't forget all contributions are tax-deductible by law less \$5 for the cost of producing the monthly newsletter and quarterly. OPALGA is an IRS 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit organization.

Advertising Space

Advertising space is available in the OPALGA monthly Newsletter at a charge of \$30 for 3 ads, \$60 for 6, \$90 for 9 (sizes are roughly 1.5x1.5"), and \$120 for 12 (size is roughly a business card). Annual subscribers receive free placement in the quarterly Bulletin. For larger ad sizes and other information, please call Joyce Daley at the OPALGA office: 708.848.0273

145 Westgate, Suite 106
Oak Park, Illinois 60301



Insurance Headache??

Call Paul Dooley for
pain relief today!!
Independent Agent Specializing in

HEALTH INSURANCE

Life/Disability/Auto/Home/Business/401K

CDC Insurance Group
1103 Westgate, Suite 205 **(708) 524-5400**

Psycho-therapy specializing in treatment for:

Sexual Problems **Grief and Loss**
Anger Management **Domestic Violence**
Relationship Problems **Coping with Change**

Pauline S. Geary, LCSW

708.861.6322

7436 W. Harrison, Forest Park, 60130



**Specializing in Leisure, Group
and Corporate Travel**

(708) 386-6363
FAX: (708) 386-6471
email: tantrvl@aol.com

**Corporate Sponsor of
1998 OPAL ▼ GALA**

107 South Marion Street
Oak Park, Illinois 60302



HOME (708) 771-7898 - FAX (708) 383-2107

AUTO - LIFE - FIRE - HEALTH

TERRY LEMLEY

Agent

(708) 383-3163

191 N. Marion
(Just N. of Lake St.)
Oak Park, IL 60301

Mon. & Thurs. 10 A.M. - 7 P.M.
Tues. & Fri. 10 A.M. - 5 P.M.
Sat. 10 A.M. - 12 Noon

SAVE THE DATE * JUNE 18th, 1999