



# Wings

...Those who wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 [NRSV]

Vol. 6 Issue 3  
No. 23



For, By and About PHUMPS  
(Physically Handicapped United Methodist Persons)



Winter  
1996

[FROM "VIEWPOINTS" IN THE JUNE 1995 ISSUE OF THE MS SOCIETY MASSACHUSETTES CHAPTER NEWSLETTER]

Webster's New World Dictionary includes the following in its definition of "gimp":

*gimp: n. (colloq) Fighting spirit, vigor;  
gimp: n. (colloq) 1. a lame person, 2. a halting, lame walk*

On Dec. 16, [1994], my "gimp" or fighting spirit was put to the test. On that evening, Mark and I were meeting some friends at Dick's Last Resort on Huntington Ave. in Boston . . . .

As we entered, a bouncer/employee of Dick's stated in a fairly loud voice, "We have a gimp in the house tonight!" (I should mention that I walk with a cane.) He certainly wasn't referring to my fighting spirit! I was shocked! . . . .

Being referred to as a gimp made me angry and triggered outrage near violence. I wanted to hit him with my cane! I later questioned the use of the "g" word? Is it derogatory like the "n" word? Was this just a comical way to greet me? I certainly wasn't laughing! I certainly wasn't going to stay . . . .

When I called Dick's manager the next morning, he apologized. . . .

. . . I later discovered that Dick's gimmick is to banter back and forth with the patrons, tell off-color jokes, etc. But, as Mark aptly pointed out, when the banter makes someone the object of humiliation or ridicule, it has gone too far . . . .

The next day, I called the Boston Human Rights Commission. . . . A hearing was held and the young man who had made the comment attended (even though he had been terminated from his job at Dick's). It was a real catharsis for me to retell the story with everyone present. I was quite emotionally affected by the ordeal . . . .

Within the next month, Dick's management agreed to provide a sensitivity training session for its staff. While this is just a small step in ending discrimination, we felt proud for following through and making the extra effort so that someone else won't have to experience what I did at Dick's.

- GAIL FINESTONE -

mosquito.

If I had been her, I would have told the employee in a voice loud enough for all to hear what an insensitive dolt he was and have expressed the hope that in the future he would be a tad less cloddish. With my head held high I then would have gone to my table, perhaps giving him a little poke with my cane a la Charlie Chaplin as I sailed by.

Okay, to tell the truth, I probably wouldn't have done any of this being the shy, retiring little flower that I am. I would have written about it in this column—which is one of the major perks of having your own newsletter.

Actually, a more interesting question than what ought to be the appropriate response to politically incorrect salutations is this: Why did Finestone get so emotionally charged up in the first place, even to the point of nearly committing mayhem?

Was it perhaps because she was in some kind of denial in regard to her disability? Here was this guy making it loudly clear that she wasn't 'normal' like everybody else, that she had—a limp—and had to use—a cane! Was she trying to pass for 'able-bodied' ('no, no—just sprained my ankle doing the Lambada') only to have this lout dump reality all over her? On the other hand, maybe she was just having a bad hair day and 'gimp' was the final straw.

Oh well, I guess we should be grateful that Finestone has made the world a little better for us gi—, uh, crip—, uh., physically challenged,

mobility limited folk with handicapping conditions.

But I still wish that Finestone and others of her ilk would

get on their white steeds and charge full tilt at things potentially more devastating to our lives than what we are called: Like the current backlash against the ADA—a backlash unfortunately caused in part by the trivial pursuits of some of our more humorless disability crusaders.

## FROM WHERE I SIT By Jo D'Archangelis

After reading a copy of the above article sent in by an alert reader (Dave Barry's not the only one with those), I wondered: Is this an example of a gimpy or just a grumpy reaction? I mean, does anyone with any real sensitivity actually believe that the 'g-word' has the same derogatory force as the 'n-word'?

In fact, it's totally cool in some in-your-face disability circles to refer to yourself as a 'gimp' even if you're in a wheelchair and can't walk at all with or without a limp (possibly because of its 'feisty' definition).

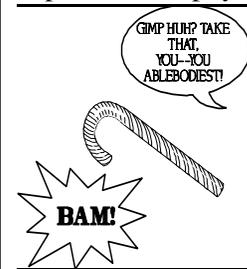
This doesn't mean that every lame person takes pride in being called a 'gimp'. Some find definite negative connotations in the word. Indeed, most of us who are disabled have heard appellations that make us grit our teeth (my personal non-favorite is 'cripple').

But isn't Finestone's reaction a bit over-the-top? After all, the remark apparently wasn't intended to be denigrating. It seems to have been just

part of a whole atmosphere of jokey-type 'insults' directed at all the patrons in general (and in that case, hardly discriminatory). It was the 'trash talk' type of humor that some comics or even close friends take perverse delight in using.

But even if offensive, did the use of the 'g-word' warrant Finestone walking out of the restaurant, complaining to the club owner, getting the employee fired (although not explicitly stated, it is implied), contacting the Human Rights Commission for a hearing, and demanding a sensitivity training session for the restaurant staff? No way.

Sure, if the 'g-word' had been accompanied by the guy's knocking the cane out from under her whilst laughing in demonic glee, then I could understand her ardent pursuit of truth, justice, and the American way. But in my not-so-humble opinion, Finestone used a sledgehammer to swat a





## LISTEN UP! DEAF MINISTRIES NEWS

### I. Resolutions On Deaf Ministry Proposed For General Conference

The United Methodist Congress of the Deaf and the National Committee on Developing Deaf Ministries Within the United Methodist Church are preparing resolutions to be presented at the 1996 General Conference. Proposed resolutions in summary form are:

**United Methodist Seminaries:** Course work in ministry to persons with special needs shall be provided for UM clergy and diaconal ministers; deaf, deafened, and hard-of-hearing persons shall be recruited for training as clergy and diaconal ministers.

**Annual Conferences:** Requirements for ordination (clergy) and consecration (diaconal) shall include course work and/or equivalent experience in ministry to persons with special needs; all clergy and diaconal ministers shall take continuing education courses in ministry to persons with special needs; workshops or other educational opportunities shall be provided to help equip laity who are interested in working with persons with special needs; real time captioning or computer assisted notetaking shall be used at all annual conference sessions.

**United Methodist Boards and Agencies:** All UM resources shall be made accessible to persons with special needs by the year 2005; information about ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) shall be included in all publicity concerning

UM communications; information from UM catalogs and resource lists pertaining to persons with special needs shall be combined into a single listing and format and distributed annually to the pastors of all local churches, to annual conference staffs, and to national agency personnel.

From the United Methodist Congress of the Deaf Report to General Council on Ministries, April 22-26, 1995, Houston, Texas.

### II. Cal-Pac Deaf Ministry Sets Goals

Meeting at Hope United Methodist Church in San Diego this past fall, the California-Pacific Conference Task Force on Ministry with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing set several goals for the new year. Among them:

1. To make United Methodist services available to the deaf and hard of hearing in the Los Angeles area, where currently no such church programs exist.
2. To continue scholarship funding for Deaf Ministry at Claremont School of Theology and to make students aware of it.
3. To publish a list of speakers to visit local churches and explain the necessity of providing services and programs for the deaf and hard of hearing.
4. To establish a lending library of books and videos pertaining to Deaf Ministry for all churches.
5. To provide sign language interpreters for youth camps when the need is known.
6. To set up beginning sign

language classes at the District level throughout the Conference.

Seven members of the Task Force were reported to have attended a class on religious signing taught by Dr. Kathy Black at the Claremont School of Theology last summer.

For further information about the Deaf Ministry Task Force and its goals, contact Dixie Zimmer at (805) 648-7642 or Nancy Burns (619) 765-1027.

Based on an article, "Ministry with the Deaf Sets Goals for Upcoming Year", in *Circuit West* [Oct. 20, 1995].



**FOR SALE**  
**3-wheeled cart, Lark model 4351 RWD, 2 batteries, charger, excellent condition.**  
**Marian Grubbs**  
**619-755-6268**



**Wings** is a quarterly newsletter published by and for United Methodist adults with physically disabling conditions and is available free of charge.

**Founder/Editor**  
**Computer Layout/Graphic Design**  
Jo D'Archangelis

**Wings Needs the Following From You**  
Ideas and suggestions for articles  
Original stories, poetry, cartoons  
Personal essays and anecdotes  
Appropriate items from another source  
The name and address of someone who is dying to be on our mailing list  
A change-of-address notice if you are moving and want to continue receiving Wings

**Send All Correspondence To**  
Jo D'Archangelis, Editor, Wings

**Church Address**  
Fallbrook United Methodist Church  
1844 Winterhaven Road  
Fallbrook, CA 92028  
Telephone [619] 728-1472

**Home Address**  
592 West Ammunition Road, Apt. 1  
Fallbrook, CA 92028-3102  
Telephone/Fax: [619] 723-2668  
[Fax Mon.-Fri. 1-4 p.m. Pacific Time]

**E-Mail Address**  
DARLIS@aol.com

**Mailing Fund**  
If you're inspired to send something tax-deductible for the mailing fund, please make it out to "Fallbrook UMC" and mark it "Wings Newsletter".

## GOVERNOR'S AWARD PRESENTED TO ACCESSIBILITY ADVOCATE HAROLD WILKE

Almost two hundred Californians from across the state, active in disability, rehabilitation, and employment concerns, applauded 1995 Governor Award winners at a reception at the Sheraton Long Beach Hotel on October 26.

The "Professional of the Year" Award went to the Rev. Harold Wilke of Claremont, President of the Healing Community, an organization dedicated to promoting disability accessibility in churches, synagogues, and temples.

In his acceptance speech Dr. Wilke stated, "In this Year Five of the ADA [American With Disabilities Act] it is time for churches and synagogues to act on their founders' statements of God calling all people into the Divine Household, inviting everyone to ascend 'unto the hill of the Lord'."

"This should be 'Year One' for congregations in making themselves inclusive, open, affirming and accessible to all," Wilke, himself a person with a disability (double upper-arm disarticulation), stated to a cheering crowd.

Based on a press release of the California Employment Development Department.

# RAMPING THE CHURCH IS NOT ENOUGH By Marilyn Phemister

## PART II: OF LABELS AND RAMPS

A disability label is a double deception. First, it tends to cover the entire package, leaving no room for additional information. This at least implies that there is nothing else in the box. Yes, you will find a disability there. You may also find an artist, a singer, and a writer who has inspired many throughout the world. Or you may find an astrophysicist who is himself a star in the world of science. The disability label will not tell you this. It just says "Quad".

The disability label also lies, or tells half-truths at best. Take the word "invalid", which literally means "not valid". Is an individual "not valid" as a person if some disability is lacking? Then there is the word "disabled", meaning "not able". Anyone with brain waves is *able* to think and pray and care and love. The label "disabled" does not fit. Most people wearing this label have many abilities.

Some find ways to excel, often in fields they might never have explored without their disabilities. It is not unusual to find the path of greatest potential among the thorny branches of greatest difficulty.

A disability label does not recognize this potential. It carries a stigma with it that robs a person of feelings of self-worth and forms a barrier against close relationships with other people. The person under the label has the same needs everyone has to belong, to feel loved, to be needed, and to enjoy the kinds of relationships that give life its meaning and purpose. As long as this individual is considered "different", fears will keep the label in place and most of his or her needs will remain hidden, along with many assets.

Everyone belonging to Christ has assets and gifts, both natural and spiritual. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians, "To each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Ephesians 4:7, 8, *New International Version*). The phrase "each one of us" leaves no one out.

And God's gifts are given for the benefit of the entire church [or body of Christ]. It is our connection to one another as well as to Christ himself that brings about growth.

To ignore or pass over a person's gifts because of a disability label or some other perceived difference is to remove a part of the body or to deaden a nerve. The result will be disability for the church.

Ramping a church will not remove the disability of prejudice, or of prejudging someone as "different"

because of one or two characteristics. Before the person with a disability can function as a vital part of the church, God's people must also ramp their hearts. They must dismantle their labeling machines and discard the labels along with

the prejudices that go with them. They must look past the disability to see the person's spiritual and emotional needs as well as the physical ones, and to discover the gifts he or she has for the rest of the body.

Next time you see someone in a wheelchair rolling in your direction, remember that we are *all* "different" in some way. But in our shared humanity, we are more alike than we

are different. Put out a ramp to your heart and open the door to a new relationship. Smile and say, "Good morning", or whatever you would say to anyone else. If you are on a first-name basis with this person, hazard a hug—but do so gently. If you are standing, find a place to sit or kneel to eye level and visit for a while.

A wheelchair is not a chrome-plated tank armed for battle. A walker is not a Gatling gun. A disability is not a high stone wall or a barbed-wire fence. It is only a shadow. If you step across, you may be surprised to find an individual with a gift of creativity, a person with an active mind who can minister to you. And you may find just the friend you've been looking for.

Reprinted from "Ramping the Church is Not Enough", *CHRISTIAN STANDARD* [Nov. 7, 1993].

Marilyn Phemister is a free-lance writer living in Larned, Kansas.



**"God's people must also ramp their hearts."**

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY  
ATTITUDINAL ACCESSIBILITY  
COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY  
THEOLOGICAL ACCESSIBILITY



***We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.***

— *Maya Angelou* —

From 'Human Family', *I Shall Not Be Moved*.  
Copyright (c) 1990 by Maya Angelou.  
Random House, Inc.

*Editor's Note:* Lindsey was born with Spinal Muscular Atrophy and died of pneumonia at the age of eight months. According to her grandmother, Lindsey "had beautiful eyes—which she used very much—because she could not hold her head up or turn her head...She touched more lives in that [eight months] than some of us do in a lifetime." The following was written by a family friend.

### LINDSEY'S EYES By Myra McGinnis

**When you looked into those eyes,  
you could see him.  
When you saw that smile,  
you felt him.  
God dwelt in Lindsey  
as a gift to her parents  
and a smile to all others.**

**She made us all  
pray more,  
have more faith,  
all because of the gift  
God gave her through  
those eyes.**

**Her eyes spoke  
many things to us:  
beauty—  
for they were beautiful;  
joy—  
for they sparkled  
and danced;  
mystery—  
for they looked at times  
like she knew things  
we could not know.  
Yes, those eyes spoke  
many things to us,  
for God dwelt there.**



## AT THE TABLE

By George R. Graham

*[Jesus] went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up, left everything, and followed him.*

*Then Levi gave a great banquet for him in his house; and there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others sitting at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus answered, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance." Luke 5 (nrsv)*

There are other stories of Jesus sitting to eat with others. Often, this seemingly innocent act causes turmoil and upset for those in power. Jesus upsets the regular order of things and we have a glimpse of the Reign of God on earth.

I cannot think of Jesus' meal at Levi's house without thinking about the Eucharist. In my mind, Eucharist functions a lot like these other meals. In this seemingly innocent act of eating a little bread and drinking a little wine, we glimpse a new way of living. Perhaps much of the violence in the world today is due to our inability to sit down at a common table where all are fed and all are heard. We tend to want to sit at tables filled with people like ourselves, leaving no room for those who are unlike us. We do not even want to sit with them, much less feed their hungers or listen to their needs.

But the Eucharist proclaims a

different message. There we confess we are all sinners in need of forgiveness and healing. When we eat the bread and drink the cup, we proclaim anew Christ's death and resurrection until Christ comes again. By sitting at the table, we are saying that we believe there is a new reality about to be born which will bring justice and hope for all.

The vision of a new reality does not end when we leave the table. We are called to continue proclaiming this vision as we go out into the world. We are called to the hard work of breaking bread with others who are different from us, but no less loved by God. We are called to gather together around the table and talk about real solutions to real problems.

From "At the Table" by George R. Graham, *Alive Now!* [Jan.-Feb. 1995].

## ATTENTION: CALLING ALL PHUMPS— PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE!

We are having a Reunion and Rally for the alumni of and all those interested in attending a Spiritual Life Camp for the physically handicapped. Meet us on Saturday, February 10, 12 noon, at the First Methodist Church of Redondo Beach. We will have lunch, then an entertaining program of video, slides, and pictures of past camps. The church address is 243 Broadway, Redondo Beach, CA 90277, and the phone is [310] 372-8443. Contact Tom Simmons at [805] 499-6240 or Norm Stockwell [310] 374-1535 for more information or directions to the church. The 1996 Camp will be at Cedar Glen in Julian, CA, Friday, May 31 to Sunday, June 2.



[Submitted by  
Helen Stockwell,  
Camp Co-registrar]

### *Honor Roll Of Appreciation*

We thank the following persons and organizations whose gifts of time and/or money have made possible the publication and mailing of *Wings*:

Marie Morse  
Roy and Mary Klein  
Pete and Ruth Sciumbato  
Bob and Betty Jackson  
Adult 2 Church School Class,  
Fallbrook (Calif.) UMC  
Mrs. Aldon Melzian in memory  
her late husband

The Mission Commission of the  
Fallbrook UMC  
Rev. Kathleen Ross of Del Rosa  
UMC in San Bernardino, Calif.  
Health And Welfare Division of the  
California - Pacific Annual Conference  
of the UMC  
Hal and Gen Dallke



*"For Disabled United Methodists and  
Those Who Care About Them"*

Fallbrook United Methodist Church  
1844 Winterhaven Road  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Non-Profit Org.  
Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 35  
Fallbrook, CA

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED