



# galanews

THE  LETTER

Serving members and friends of  
Community of Christ

December 2012  
Volume 23 Issue 3

## It's Easier to be Green in Community

A Reflection on the 2012 Annual GALA Retreat

by Stephen Donahoe

This year was my first GALA Retreat—you could say I was green to the experience! It was a fun-filled and inspiring weekend. The best part wasn't the talent show or the extravagant "It's Not Easy Being Green" banquet, although those parts were really fun (and funny!). For me, and it seems most people that

participate in the GALA Retreat, the best part was sharing openly in authentic, open community.

It was so powerful to hear people's stories of struggle, perseverance and joy. To be honest, I struggle with my role in the Community of Christ. I

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# GALA

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Visit us on the web  
at:

**galaweb.org**

# President's Message

by Saundra Merth

## Unity in Community

GALA as an organization has been around nearly 30 years. I wasn't there in the beginning in the Midwest with the group that first came together and formed this wonderful bond. Not being there and not knowing the minds of those present it's hard to know exactly how the name GALA came about. I would sincerely hope that if you are bisexual or transgender you would excuse us that your 'letter' is not included in our name but back in the day, as they say, gays and lesbians were more widely discussed and understood (or misunderstood). Bisexuality would come onto the horizon years later and transgender even later and as an organization we have tried to always be clear that ALL are welcome at this table – and that includes allies.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not implying that there weren't any bisexual or transgender Community of Christ members in the '80's – far from it! I don't think there was much awareness, discussion, or attention to these two important groups until later. And if you check out our website – [www.galaweb.org](http://www.galaweb.org) – you'll read right at the top of the page our tag line starting with "A Community".

Someone at the annual retreat this last September suggested we create a pin for World Conference that simply states "Unity in Community". At first I didn't realize until I got home how simple yet powerful that statement was. Looking at the word community you see the word unity inside it and it just made a world of sense to me then. So I emphasize that GALA is a community first and foremost. The rest of our tagline reads – "welcoming gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons and allies". I hope that everyone can find their place here in GALA and not feel like they are left outside.

I have felt for some time that GALA can be a blessing to those Community of Christ members who find themselves in intolerable situations of misunderstanding and mistrust or members that just don't feel at home anymore where they are. GALA can be a haven where they can come and be in a community of people who are welcoming and understanding – not always agreeing with each other – but open and accepting. That GALA has been a pathway back into the Community of Christ has been the truth for so many of us.

Knowing that there are many of us who have stayed and worked within to bring understanding and acceptance in our own communities has been a surprise to some. This gift of giving is vital to our existence as an organization and will continue to be even

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# Canada National Conference Recommends Policy Changes

## First Presidency and Council of Twelve Will Have to Approve before Implementation

The Community of Christ Canada National Conference was held June 16. After years of study, dialogue, and prayer, members connected through technology from 15 sites across the nation to address two issues: whether to permit ordination of people in same-gender marriages; and whether to allow priesthood to perform same-gender marriages.

After hearing multiple perspectives, including views from international representatives, the Canada National Conference, by more than the required two-thirds majority, made the following recommendations to the Community of Christ First Presidency and Council of Twelve Apostles:

- There be a change in policy to allow Community of Christ priesthood to perform the sacrament of marriage for same-gender couples in Canada (same-gender marriage is legal in Canada); and
- There be a change in policy to allow the sacrament of ordination for individuals in same-gender marriages in Canada.

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*(President's Message Continued from page 2)*

after next year's conferences.

Regardless of the outcome, we will need to stand strong in our resolve to be there for those who don't understand who maybe can't see the value of "Unity in Community" or the need for such diversity. I don't know who W.H. Auden is but I came across his quote in a selection of quotes on diversity which reads "Civilizations should be measured by the degree of diversity attained and the degree of unity retained." I am hoping that the Community of Christ as a civilization can measure well at the top when all is said and done. And I hope that every individual who

**The First Presidency and the Council of Twelve will need to approve the policy revisions recommended by the Canada National Conference. To develop, approve, and implement interim policies can take up to one year. Any policy changes will pertain only to the nation of Canada. Other nations will continue to abide by existing church policies.**

There are nearly 60 Community of Christ congregations spread throughout Canada. While we are united around the world in Christ's mission, because of our broad expanse of cultures there are some issues we address in national conferences.

Our Enduring Principles guide our national conference interactions. These gatherings offer opportunities to experience the Blessings of Community as we explore how to uphold the Worth of All Persons, respond to the understanding that All Are Called, and celebrate Unity in Diversity.

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comes to GALA feels a welcomed part of our community. Which brings me to my other favorite diversity quote - Friedrich Nietzsche says , "At bottom every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth; and by no extraordinary chance will such a marvelously picturesque piece of diversity in unity as he is, ever be put together a second time."

May we all recognize what a "marvelously picturesque piece of diversity" we as individuals bring to the tapestry we know as GALA and Community of Christ.

Shalom – Sandra



# Celebration Time! Guy Edwin Frizzell, Jr

by Lisa Meyer

So the elections are over and many of us were involved in one way or another in trying to advance the cause of LGBT rights through the political process. It is, indeed, a time to celebrate! When all the votes were in and counted, we have three more states that are implementing marriage equality, and they are due to a popular vote, which is a first time. We have the first openly gay U.S. Senator and more LGBT members of Congress than ever before. We have re-elected the first U.S. president who supports gay marriage. And all of this was done despite huge opposition from those who want to ensure that LGBT persons remain second-class citizens.

It is also a time of celebration in the church. The National Conferences held in Canada and Australia have approved LGBT related resolutions related to marriage and ordination. GALA, particularly the GALA board, have worked hard to create, publish, and promote a second book of stories by LGBT persons within the church. More and more church members are recognizing that LGBT persons and families are an important part of the body of Christ.

Yay us! It is definitely a time to take a week or two off to celebrate! But after our (short) celebration, we have to get back to work, because there is so much more work to be done. The USA National Conference is coming up in April 2013, and we need to keep telling our stories in preparation. We need to be attending our Mission Center conferences and asking to be elected a delegate to National Conference. We need to be educating people in our local congregations and throughout our Mission Centers on who we are and why we are important. We need to lean on each other for support when things get tough, when we are rejected, and when we are criticized. But then we need to get back in the fight and try again.

We CAN do it! LGBT persons are God's children, and our families and ourselves are essential to the life of the church. Jesus loves us, God created us, and we have a place in the Community of Christ!

## Guy Edwin Frizzell, Jr

October 5, 1940-July 28, 2012

Referring to Guy "Skip" Frizzell as the Music Man is not a new concept, but doing so fully encompasses the vibrant and driven music enthusiast that he was with every breath he took. He was so much more than a director, he was a mentor who encouraged some of his students to find their true song while providing the



opportunity for so many to experience the joy of musical performance. Skip brought music to life in his community, warming the spirits of countless others during the holidays through his "Singing Christmas Tree" that was truly one of a kind. With wife Ann by his side, Skip took in so much of the very best that life has to offer, reminding us all that each day is a gift to share with those we love. He would say, "For it is in giving that we receive."

He shared a marriage of 48 years with Ann, whom he called his beloved. They did everything together. They travelled Europe, did shows and raised a family together. They were almost inseparable. And yet, he was trapped in his own skin being a gay man. The last few years of his life after Ann died were also very happy years for him because he was able to live his life in his true self. He was able to make very close friends with other gay men who held his friendship very close and that was very comforting to Skip. He would never have traded his wife and family, but was very thankful he had those last few years as a gay man.

A man who inspired so many through his music, his teaching, and his love, Guy "Skip" Frizzell was a true blessing in every way. His passion for music was easy to see, and his devotion to his students was unmatched. Skip's gift of music to the school and community he called home for several years will long be remembered as well as his role as a father, foster Dad, son and brother.

For all the lives he touched, all of the love he gave to others, all of the memories he helped create, all of the stories that have gone untold today, I'm sure he has been told upon his crossover to the next life – "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

# All Are Welcome!

by Clyde Phillips-Frey

What is GALA? Who are eligible to be members of GALA? Can allies be members of GALA? Why should I become an active member of GALA?

These are all questions that we may have heard and certainly are some that were posed by new members to the GALA Board of Directors on a recent call.

GALA is a non-profit corporation, "...an association of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons, and their families and friends..." (corporation Bylaws, Article I: Name found: [www.galaweb.org/Bylaws](http://www.galaweb.org/Bylaws)) . GALA membership is open to everyone! Our membership is comprised of those in the LGBT community that are single, married, partnered, and with families as well as the strong support of our allies, those family and friends that provide support in our lives.

The purpose of GALA is to affirm the dignity and worth of all persons without regard to gender, race, sexual orientation, or religious affiliation in an atmosphere of love, understanding and confidentiality. GALA is committed to exploring the issues of spirituality and justice through dialogue, education, and action. Part and parcel of our 'job' is to see that everyone is treated fairly, each voice is heard, all stories are respected, while seeking the guidance of the great comforter.

Allies, like mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, exes, neighbors, friends or whatever label may be used as a

descriptor, are welcome! During times of sharing stories, singing hymns, worshipping, dialoguing, playing games, taking walks, swimming, or whatever activities are taking place, these are the times that we get to know one another and bond in friendship. One of the greatest gifts in life is to make a friend with whom we can share our lives. The lives of our allies are important to the total picture that is GALA; we **are** family!

I like to cook from time-to-time; my spouse says I am an 'experimental' cook. He says this because I take recipes found online or that are given to me and I sub (substitute) in and out various elements. Because I am well aware of our particular tastes as well as ingredients that one or both of us will not eat, I can change the ingredients so the end product will be something that we can both enjoy. When I think of GALA, I am impressed with all of the ingredients, the various members, their gifts, talents, and strains of thoughts. There are times when someone makes a suggestion that I'd never even considered before and it enables us all to broaden our horizon of thought as well as our considered activities and those we serve.

GALA is the place for those that want to respond to the call of ministering to those that have been disenfranchised. GALA is the place where everyone can grow in understanding and love.

***GALA is the place for everyone!***

## Just in Time for Christmas

**GALA announces a SALE on Polo's**

**While they Last:**

**S—XL \$23.00**

**2X—3X—4X \$25.00**

**Order at [galaweb.org](http://galaweb.org);  
click on "Merchandise"**

If you plan  
on making a  
purchase  
from  
Amazon,  
don't forget



to go to the GALA website first, then click on the Amazon logo. GALA receives a percentage of all purchases this way. Here's a trick; create a bookmark for Amazon and then go into the properties of the bookmark and change the address to the GALA website.

# Calling All Allies

By Cindy Campbell

I am a straight ally and I am writing to you because of my experiences attending Gala Retreats. When I first heard about GALA Retreats, I wasn't sure I would be welcome there ( Perhaps it was for "members only.") I didn't realize yet what an ally was. Back in the '90's, I went to the retreat at Deerhaven Campground in Florida because of my then estranged gay brother and because I love those campgrounds. I was curious and sensed a call to attend. I walked into the main building that dark and stormy September night and didn't know another soul in the place. I was surprised at that, and instantly felt out of place like I didn't belong. I felt different. I thought I had made a mistake in coming. This had nothing to do with the warm welcome that was given at the door. It was about my expectations that I would know a lot of people at my own campgrounds who were like me. I ended up learning a lot.

Last year we Floridians had a Florida GALA Retreat at Deerhaven. As invitations went out, I heard folks wonder if the retreat was only for LGBT persons. I felt surprised and recognized the question as the same one I had had years before. I was thankful someone had asked it and that we still had time to assure them that the retreat was inclusive for straight allies as well as LGBT persons. Maybe it has to do with our name, GALA for Gay and Lesbian Acceptance. PFLAG doesn't seem to have that problem, but then their acronym stands for Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays so you know from the start who is included.

Both of these retreats were rich in fellowship and ministry. At both of them everyone, allies and LGBTs, shared their sacred stories and played and worshipped together. At both retreats, I felt accepted, included and needed. At both retreats, in one short weekend, we became the body of Christ, and if straight allies hadn't been there, a leg would have been missing from the body. I grew to understand how much we can support and advocate for our LGBT loved ones.

We need each other, and one way we can pursue

peace on earth and end suffering is to be there for our LGBT loved ones. Straight allies, please join us at the next GALA retreat and consider joining the GALA organization itself. We need each other's presence and giftedness.

Anyone on our mailing list can receive the newsletter and we encourage you to forward the newsletter to friends and family who do not yet receive it. It is a tool for education, outreach and ministry.

You may ask, "What do I get out of joining GALA and paying my dues every year?" Well, there are several benefits. By connecting with the LGBT community in this way, you support newsletter publication, national and local retreats, a booth at World Conference, Temple flower plantings in the large pots outside the Temple, and a GALA invitational booth at local Pride celebrations. You also help provide scholarships for retreats and World Conference. You have voting rights to elect GALA Board of Director members, you can be on Board of Directors, you have a voice in retreat planning and spreading word for gay rights, you provide outreach. As a straight ally, your voice may be heard differently and by different people than the voices of LGBT folks. Your voice may be heard as open and affirming.

## GALA Treasurer's Report

October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012:

**Beginning Balance—\$9,860.79**

**Total Income—\$10,545.36**

**Total Expenses—\$10,563.54**

Cash on hand:

**\$9,842.61**

# A Time to Remember by Clyde Phillips-Frey

Before we know it 2012 will be but a fleeting memory and we will be launched head long into the year 2013; where has the time gone?

In the last year we have undergone a change in the leadership of GALA, launched a book of vibrant stories, *Touched By Grace* (available from the GALA website at [www.galaweb.org](http://www.galaweb.org)), and brought rain to a drought stricken Midwest during the GALA Annual Labor Day Retreat (I suppose that was really just a coincidence, or perhaps timing).

In the year ahead we will participate in the discernment process leading up to and encompassing both spring events of Community of Christ, World Conference and the first ever USA National Conference. These events will be an opportunity for each of us to share our stories as we interact with those in attendance that we only get to see once every three years as well as with new friends that we shall make along the journey. The commitment of our volunteer base will be the a most precious gift and a blessing during this dynamic time.

I'd like to encourage GALA members to begin now to discover creative ways to invite others to join in membership so we may strengthen the organization with the talents of those that seek to serve, grow in our understanding of what we can do to provide spiritual guidance for all our members, and recognize the movement of the good spirit in our organization and in our church.

Perhaps something as simple as requesting an appeal in the congregational weekly bulletin announcements or even in a 'blast' that goes out electronically to folks in the area congregations or Mission Center would provide a spark to generate

membership growth. Newsletters, whether from local congregations or Mission Centers, are often soliciting articles, maybe they would include an article about GALA that incorporated a 'call to membership'. Now might be the time to brainstorm with some friends, those familiar with the area in which you reside and over which you may have some sphere of influence, about ways to invite others to become involved in GALA.

We encourage everyone to join! LGBT folks, allies, friends, relatives, neighbors, members of Community of Christ, members of another denomination, or those that have no religious affiliation. Sometimes all we have to do is ask! It is when we are vulnerable to the grace of God, when we are willing to open our lives and selves to the leading of the good spirit, when we ask **and** listen that we grow and provide effective ministry and provocative witness.

Membership and our fiscal year will be on a calendar year basis beginning in 2013. The 2013 Membership Dues Invoices shall be mailed the first week in December, 2012; kindly remit dues payments early. The end of 2012 is approaching and with it the end of the tax year. We invite everyone to thoughtfully consider making a tax deductible donation to GALA before the end of December which will assist in covering expenses associated with the two upcoming conferences in 2013, can be designated to fund retreat scholarships or any other event or activity, or can be donated to be used where there is need.

2012 has been an interesting year! We look forward to an exciting 2013 and ask you to participate in GALA in the areas of your giftedness!

# GALA Board Update

by Sandra Merth

As of January 1, 2013 the GALA Board of Directors will have a new Vice President position filled by Clyde Phillips-Frey (Buffalo, NY) who graciously agreed to step into the new role. Since Clyde was confirmed by the membership at the annual retreat to this new position the board needed a new Secretary. Cindy Campbell from Gainesville, Florida agreed to fill this role and was also confirmed by the membership at the same meeting and we are truly blessed to have them both in these new roles. Cindy has been heavily involved with the creation of the Florida Affiliate and the retreat held this past February at Deerhaven (read the article in the previous newsletter for more details). We look forward to having her as a new addition to our team along with our other new board member, Nathan Phillips-Frey (Buffalo, NY) as the newest member-at-large.

There was quite the competition for the member-at-large position on the board and Nathan won by a hair. We want to thank the other GALA members who also ran, Michael Hewitt (Missouri), Della Mowrey (New Mexico), and Mike McFall (Michigan). All were more than

willing to serve and give of their time and talents to this great organization and by one vote Nathan won the coveted position! No one can remember when we had so many people interested in being on the board at the same time or such a tight race. Thanks to all of you that voted – your support is greatly appreciated. Please consider to continue to show your support by returning your ‘invoice’ that you will receive shortly asking you to renew your yearly GALA membership for the upcoming 2013 year which promises to be a pivotal one.

As we welcome the newcomers to the board we would also like to take a moment and thank Charlie Robison for being the GALA Board Chaplin for the last two years. His grace, humanity and love for all shown thru his work with us and his educational background helped tremendously during the compilation and editing of our latest book – “Touched By Grace”. Thank you for joining us on this journey Charlie you will be missed in this capacity but we look forward to your sustaining light as a continuing member of GALA.

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*(Easier to be Green Continued from page 1)*

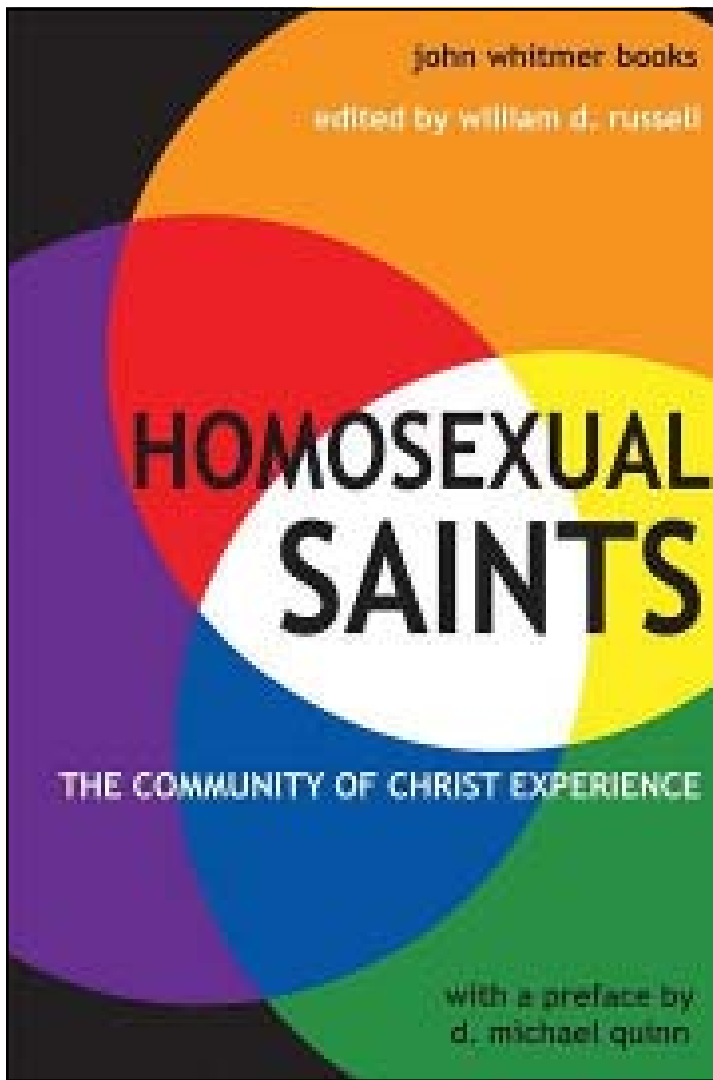
am often frustrated by the lack of authentic sharing within the traditional Sunday church model. It feels like church becomes more of a performance than authentic sharing and worship. While there were some fabulous performances at the GALA Retreat (Todd!), the weekend was one of the most authentic experiences of my life.

Everyone opened up and shared deeply from their hearts. The vulnerability of the community was palpable in some moments, especially during the session when people shared their stories. Hearing people’s stories in a small group really helped bring

people together and help people feel comfortable sharing throughout the whole weekend. I truly believe that being vulnerable to each other and being vulnerable to Divine love are deeply freeing.

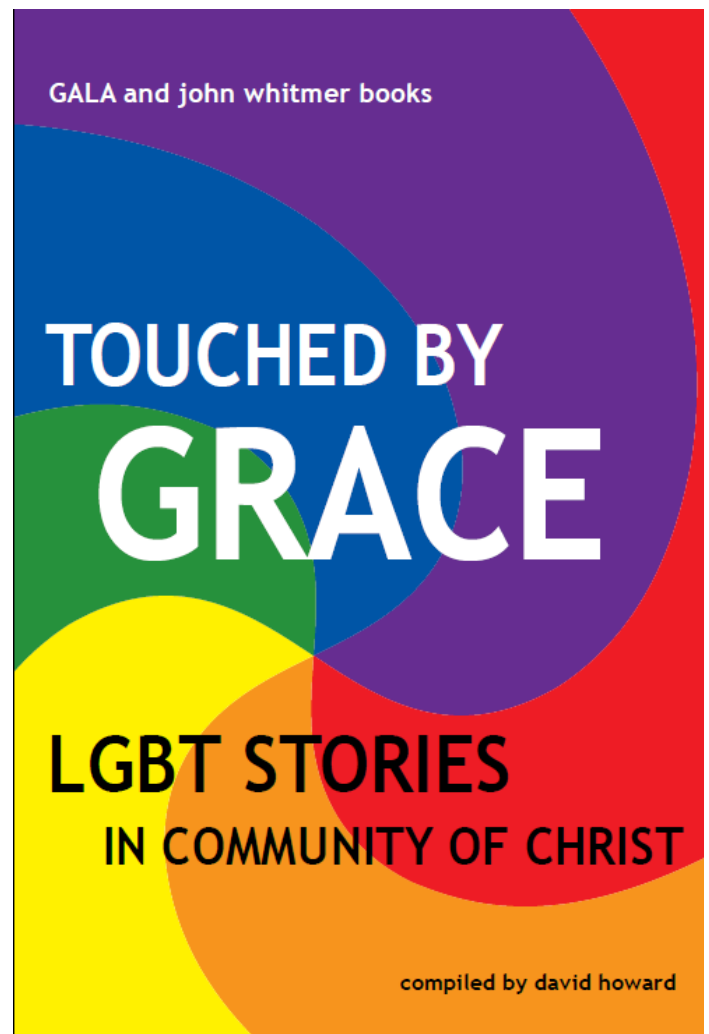
I even felt free enough to put on a green dress for the banquet! It really is easier being green when you are surrounded by a very supportive community. I invite you to join us next year, whether it will be your first GALA Retreat or your tenth, whether you come every year or you haven’t been in a while. Everyone is welcome to the retreat, whether you identify as LGBTQ or whether you are an ally. We all can benefit from fellowshiping together in community.





*Homosexual Saints* was the first compilation of life stories from GALA members, family and friends. Edited by William D. Russell, it was published by John Whitmer Books in 2008.

*Touched by Grace* is another wonderful compilation of stories from GALA members, family, friends and congregations. Compiled by David Howard, former President of GALA, after months of work collecting stories, reading stories, editing stories, designing covers, finding



pictures, the final proof reading and implementing the corrections, the GALA Board and John Whitmer Books published *Touched by Grace* in 2012.

Both books provide a valuable resource for insight and history as Community of Christ in the United States moves toward a National Conference in 2013.

Check out the GALA website ([www.galaweb.org](http://www.galaweb.org)) and order your copies today!



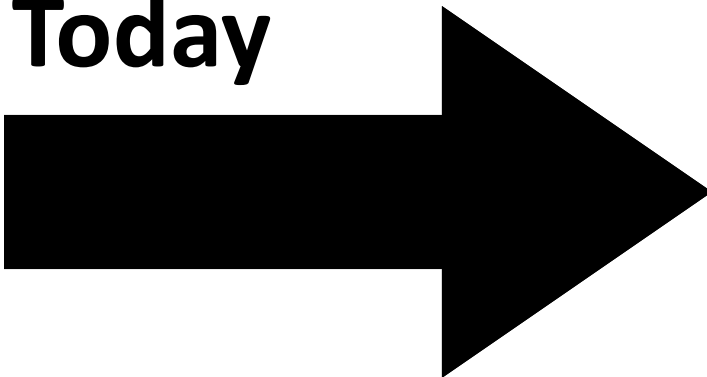
December 2012

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# Join, or Renew Your Membership Today



## 2013 GALA Membership

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

YES; send me the newsletter by e-mail

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Level (U.S. dollars):

Individual(\$25)       Family(\$40)

Limited Income(\$10)

I would like to make an additional contribution to advance GALA's outreach and educational goals:

\$50     \$100     \$200 or \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Contributions to GALA are tax deductible.*

Please return to: **P.O. Box 2173  
Independence, MO 64055**