



# IOTA NEWS

Iota Chapter

Alpha Kappa Gamma Connecticut

Delta Kappa Gamma

Society International

Fall 2012  
Volume 1, Issue 1

## President's Message

### IOTA CHAPTER CELEBRATES ITS 55TH YEAR

**This is a big year for Iota. The Chapter celebrates its 55<sup>th</sup> year this fall. *How is Iota doing at age 55? How healthy is our Chapter?* If this summer is an indicator, Iota is going strong with no signs of slowing down. On July 25<sup>th</sup> by 6 A.M., nine Iota members were on a bus heading to New York City for the Delta Kappa Gamma International Convention. They attended a full day's events and ended the day at an Alpha Kappa State dinner before boarding the bus to head home.**

**At 55, Iota continues to be creative and open minded. The Ebay fundraising effort, which you can read about in this Newsletter, is one example. Our approach and solution to our many committees is another.**

**Most importantly, at 55 Iota knows the value of long time friends, colleagues, and traditions while showing a willingness to change and to invite others to join our organization.**

**Iota's continuing good health is dependent on each and every member. In the recent past, Chapters in CT and other states have dissolved due to lack of commitment.**

**Commitment is the key and can be shown in any of three ways:**

**a commitment of time**

**Many of our members are helping to plan programs, creating Iota's first Newsletter, attending Chapter, State, and International meetings, revising Iota Standing Rules, working to build and retain membership, awarding grants, and so much more.**

**a commitment of money**

**In addition to your annual dues, this includes the contributions you make to the Iota and AKS Grants and to the charities Iota supports each year.**

**a commitment to membership**

**Iota members unable to attend meetings or with filled schedules and too much to do are important contributors, letting Iota know by your continuing membership that you value this organization.**

**If Chapter members continue to show the level of commitment they have shown in the past and efforts are made to build membership, Iota members will definitely be planning a 2017 celebration.**

**I look forward to serving as your Chapter President for the next two years and hope to see you at the 55<sup>th</sup> year celebration at Hopkins Inn on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.**

**Health and happiness,**

**Deborah Soresino**

## Officers For the New Biennium

**President: Deborah Brownell Soresino**

**First Vice-President: Sandra Gammons**

**Second Vice-President: Eleanor Coffey**

**Treasurer: Marnee Straiton**

**Recording Secretary: Lois Weiss**

**Corresponding Secretary: Ruth-Ellen Hunt**



Iota Chapter members met in Stonington in August to plan for the upcoming year.

## Inside Stories of Our Members

This June, four Iota members retired from their teaching positions.

Nancy Nahley decided to retire to enjoy more time with her husband, and they are looking forward to spending more time with family members. Nancy and her husband are planning a move to Maryland to be nearer their younger daughters and grandchildren.

A teacher for 32 years, Nancy spent 20 years teaching 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and the last 12 were fulfilled as a Library Media Specialist. Nancy feels this was her good fortune—to go to media and achieve two careers in the same profession!

While at Northville Elementary, Nancy instituted a program which continued at Hill and Plain, consisting of authors, illustrators, and literacy nights all rolled into a week of activities. These weeks of literature included reader's theatre, reading self-written stories, songs, or articles. Some nights the overhead lights were turned off and the reading was done by flashlight! Lots of fun learning was had by all. These activities caused Nancy to engage in a number of money-raising endeavors in order to pay the literature celebrities. Fortunately, Nancy has trained many interested parties to ensure the program continues.

As well as teaching, Nancy has been involved at the non-religious Interfaith Learning Center, which is a day care facility in Danbury. "This wonderful center makes it possible for parents to work with the assurance that their children are well taken care of during the day," says Nancy. She has spent 12 years as President and at this time holds the office of Treasurer. Nancy plans to be involved in other programs wherever she goes as "I will never leave children's literature behind."



## Grants and Scholarships

Iota Chapter presents a book grant each year to a deserving high school senior who is entering a post-secondary program in the field of education. This spring two grants were awarded.

Allison Vas from Danbury High School. She will be attending WestConn in the fall and plans to major in Elementary Education.

Erin Hannagan from Bethel High School. She plans to attend Fairfield University's 5 Year BS/M.Ed program with a concentration in History/Social Studies.

Both of these students had impressive resumes, including induction into the National Honor Society, high CAPT and SAT scores/GPA's, and class rankings.

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Each biennium, the Iota Chapter Graduate Program Grant is awarded to a female student who has demonstrated professional dedication and academic excellence.

This year's recipient of the Graduate Study Grant is Carolyn Keenan, an elementary education teacher in Danbury since 2000. She is working on her 6<sup>th</sup> Year

Educational Graduate Degree at Southern Connecticut University.

## Special Reminders

- Annual Dues
- Photo release form
- Biographical update
- All due by: September 21, 2012

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow.  
Learn as if you were to live forever.”  
— [Mahatma Gandhi](#)

## Ebay Fundraiser for Iota

This is an ongoing fund raising vehicle and any member who would like to donate an item for the cause should get in touch with Ruth-Ellen to discuss whether it might be "Ebay worthy." Telephone # 203-744-0778, email: Reh35put@aol.com

Any profit exceeding \$100 on an item would be given to the donating member.



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## Alpha Kappa State News

### **A State and International Perspective**

**by Marnee Straiton**

Ten Iota members and one guest attended the DKG International convention in NYC in July. Nine of those members came in on the bus sponsored by Iota Chapter. It was an amazing convention with outstanding speakers, informative breakout sessions, and many opportunities to learn more about our society. Members came from around the world to meet and greet their DKG sisters, including members from our newest member country, Japan. The Japanese members attended many of the formal events in their native dress, thanking everyone for their invitation to join the Society each time they began a conversation.

Besides adding Japan to our group, we adopted *SEE* as an International project sponsored by the Educational Excellence Committee. *SEE*, Support for Early-Career Educators, joins Schools for Africa as a major focus for the Society in the coming years. You can find out more about this project on the DKG website.

Dr. Beverly Helms was elected as our new International President with Carolyn Pitman as our First Vice President and Lyn Schmid as our Second Vice President. Dr. Helms has set her new theme: Strengthening Our Vision, Strengthening Our Society. You can read her acceptance speech on the website, [dkg.org](http://dkg.org), by clicking on her theme in the upper left-hand corner of the home screen. On that same page, click on photographs by Jim to see pictures taken during the convention.

On the state level, a very productive leadership conference was held in June at the Coast Guard Academy. We had the opportunity to hear many speakers from the Academy: instructors, officers, and cadets. The grounds were beautiful and the fellowship was a delight. This conference was open to all and was well received, being the most well-attended leadership conference in recent history.

## Inside Stories of Our Members Continued from page 2

Sandra Gammons, better known to us as “Sandy” and historian for Iota, is keeping herself busy as this new school year term approaches! She and her daughters are going out of state to celebrate her new retirement. As they travel, however, her youngest daughter is keeping her cell phone on in case of a last minute call to be hired as a teacher! If this happens, Sandy will be working in her classroom to assist her in getting started. “I’m passing the teaching torch onto my daughter,” said Sandy. “She also has a Masters’ of Science in Education.”

Although she plans to explore other activities such as interior design and is enrolled in a master gardener course for January, Sandy will also be tutoring two students this spring semester, one in basic math skills and the other in advanced math skills. She may pursue substituting for the school district as well.

Sandy is an active member of the Congregational Church and is a member of the Stewardship Committee.

Fellow member, Carolyn Balmer, was employed by the Ridgefield Board of Education for 20 years as an elementary teacher/librarian, delivered professional development programs, and was active in the PTO. She was also a union representative.

Carolyn was active in her church, was part of their choir, traveled to the island of Salt Cay with a team to repair a church, and taught Sunday school. For many years she chaired the Jesse Lee Clothing Drive which earned thousands of dollars for local organizations.

Also, Carolyn was a member of the Ridgefield Chorale, as well as on the production team for, “*Ridgefield, Now We’re Talking*,” an educational show for cable television. She traveled to Appalachia twice as a participant of the Appalachian Service Project and remained active on the board. She was also a member of the Stephen Ministry, an ecumenical group.

Carolyn served as the President of the Iota Chapter of DKG for many years. She is planning to divide her time between Connecticut and Colorado.

## Inside Stories of Our Members Continued from page 5

Donna Luzi, a 33-year educator who taught Spanish at Schaghticoke until 2006, when she became a high school assistant principal, retired at the end of the 2012 school year.

As for her future, Donna said she is looking forward to "doing more work in the educational field, wherever that may be." Donna said she is simply grateful for the opportunity "To serve kids, parents and staff all these years."

"I'm going to miss them," she said. (Extract from News times...)

We wish Nancy, Sandy, Carolyn and Donna all the best now and in the years to come!

### 2012–2013 IOTA Events Calendar

**October 27, 2012** at 11:30 a.m., Hopkins Inn,  
Lake Waramaug  
55 year celebration of Iota Chapter

**November 3, 2012**  
AKS Fall Conference

**December 1, 2012** at 11 a.m., Watertown, CT  
Visit to Alpaca Farm and gift shop, followed  
by lunch at Matteo's.

**January 12, 2013** at 9:30 a.m. (Snow date 1/26)  
AKS Executive Board Meeting

**March 16, 2012** at 9:30 a.m. (Snow date 3/23)  
AKS Executive Board Meeting

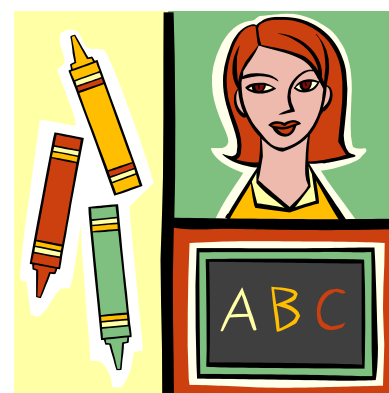
**March 20, 2013** at 5 p.m., Rocco's Restaurant,  
Brookfield  
Program details to follow.

**April 27, 2013**  
AKS Spring Convention

**May 15, 2013** at 4:30 p.m., Marnee Straiton's, New Fairfield  
Potluck dinner and auction; viewing of the movie  
"American Teacher"

**June 8, 2013**  
AKS Executive Board Meeting

**July 24-27, 2013**  
DKG North East Regional Conference, Portland,  
Maine



#### Mission Statement

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society  
International  
promotes professional  
and personal growth  
of women educators  
and excellence  
in education

#### Vision Statement

Leading Women Educators  
impacting education worldwide.

#### NEXT IOTA NEWS DEADLINE:

**October 25, 2012**

Send information to Elizabeth Ricci

38 Possum Drive

New Fairfield, CT 06812

or e-mail to <elizabeth.ricci72@gmail.com>