

***The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
2009 Alpha Alpha State Convention***



**First General Session
Alumni Ballroom at the Nittany Lion Inn
State College, PA
June 13, 2009**

I. Call to Order

Alpha Alpha State President, Carolyn Sutton, called the First General Session of the 2009 Alpha Alpha State Organization of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International to order on Saturday, June 13, 2009, at 8:10 AM. She thanked Alpha Sigma Chapter President, Stephanie Fulena, and Vice President, Rose Ann Fulena, mother and daughter, for the Presentation of the Flags. The session opened with the Pledge to the Flag led by Suzanne Long, Alpha Alpha State Parliamentarian, followed by the singing of *The Star Spangled Banner* and *America the Beautiful*. The group singing was led by Barbara Rankin, Alpha Alpha State Co-chairman of the Visual and Performing Arts Committee.

The Keynote Speaker, Charles Youngs, was introduced by Suzanne Long. In keeping with the theme of the convention, Charles focused on the stories of our lives as teachers, titled "Stories Told Together." A copy of his address is included at the end of the minutes.

II. Welcome and Introductions

President Carolyn welcomed all members to the First General Session of the 2009 Alpha Alpha State Convention. Carolyn then introduced the following members seated at the head table: Susan Stamm, Alpha

Alpha State First Vice President; Cindy Reynolds, Alpha Alpha State Recording Secretary; Patricia Shedlock, Alpha Alpha State Corresponding Secretary; Linda O'Connor, Alpha Alpha State Treasurer; Wanda Keller, Alpha Alpha State Finance Committee Chairman; Barbara Gasperini, Alpha Upsilon Chapter President; Suzanne Long, Alpha Alpha State Parliamentarian; Charles Youngs, Distinguished Educator and Keynote Speaker; Jeannette Thomas, Rules Committee Chairman; Louann Shrader, Alpha Alpha State Second Vice-President; and Dr. Lyn Schmid, Alpha Alpha State Immediate Past President and Leadership Development Chairman.

Immediately following the introduction of the head table, President Carolyn introduced the Past State Presidents in attendance: Marion Miller, Dr. Irene Murphy, E. Margaret Gabel; Rebecca Place, Terri Stetler, and Louise Garverick.

Committee chairmen were then introduced by President Carolyn, and members of each committee present were asked to stand when their committee chairman was introduced. Committee Chairmen present were Royce Boyd, Northeast Regional Conference Coordinator; Lucretia Page, Expansion; Nikki McWilliams, Personal Growth and Services; Monique Lautenschlager, Research; Dr. Patricia Kardambikis, US Forum Liaison; Carol Goodman, Historical Records; Karen Ball, Photographer; Tracey Dusch, Projects; Barbara Clark, Communications; Judith Schaffer, Professional Affairs; Janet Lee Hay, Scholarships; Haddie Weber, World Fellowship; Pat Arnold, Convention Coordinator; Barbara Tobias, Convention Treasurer; Dee Stout, Protocol; Dr. Kate Sillman, Protocol; and at their positions, Visual and Performing Arts Co-chairs, Donna Houser and Barbara Rankin.

III. Convention Theme, "A Tapestry of Stories," and Rules Committee Report

In keeping with the convention theme, *"A Tapestry of Stories"*, President Carolyn noted that the reflections throughout the convention are named "Once Upon a Time." She then introduced Barbara Gasperini, Alpha Upsilon and President Carolyn's Chapter President. Her reflection told the story of a teacher she idolized, her membership in Alpha Upsilon and forty-two years later, serving as

president of that chapter. She ended by saying that each member's story unfolds as she lives happily ever after.

President Carolyn then shared her secret. The Keynote Speaker, Charles Youngs, was born when she was a senior in high school. He is her little brother and their mother would be so proud to see both of them on the same stage together.

Suzanne Long, Alpha Alpha State Parliamentarian, reviewed the Rules for the convention as printed on page 11 of the program booklet. Suzanne read them to the assembly and asked whether there were any questions.

IV. Roll Call of Chapters

Cindy Reynolds, Beta Rho Chapter and Alpha Alpha State Recording Secretary, conducted the roll call of the chapters. Forty-seven (47) chapters out of sixty-three (63) chapters were represented. A total of 249 members from these chapters were present for the First General Session.

V. Report of the Convention Registrar

Barbara Tobias, Nu Chapter, Convention Registrar and Convention Treasurer, reported that there were 273 registered for the convention, representing forty-seven (47) chapters.

President Carolyn declared a quorum present for the meeting.

VI. Review of the Minutes

The Alpha Alpha State Recording Secretary, Cindy Reynolds, presented the minutes of the First General Session held on June 14, 2008, from the 2008 Alpha Alpha State Convention. Cindy had tried to send the minutes through e-mail but because of computer difficulties, had copies distributed and available at the convention. Hearing no questions on the minutes, President Carolyn declared the 2008 Alpha Alpha State Convention minutes for the First General Session filed.

The committee to read and approve the minutes for the First General Session of the 2009 Alpha Alpha State Convention includes Bonna Cafiso, Sigma; Nikki McWilliams, Lambda; and Lynn Sibley, Alpha Theta.

VII. Correspondence

Patricia Shedlock, Nu Chapter and Alpha Alpha State Corresponding Secretary, read the following items of correspondence:

- ✓ The first letter of correspondence was from Jensi Souders, International First Vice President. She explained with regret that she was unable to fulfill her commitment as international guest at the convention due to the death of two very close family members. The funerals are on Friday and Saturday.
- ✓ The second letter was from Linda McCrary, a member of the Board of Trustees of the Educational Foundation, announcing that Donna Winch had received a Lucile Cornetet Individual Award to attend the World of Possibilities in Music Conference to enhance her professional expertise in music.

VIII. Report of the Executive Board

Cindy Reynolds, Recording Secretary, announced the following actions taken by the Executive Board at the evening session on June 12, 2009:

- ✓ The budget for 2009-2010 was reviewed and will be acted on at the Sunday Morning Session.
- ✓ The Executive Board voted to accept the dissolution of Alpha Pi Chapter.
- ✓ The board endorsed the HOPE initiative that was recommended by the Membership Committee for the next two years.
- ✓ The Board accepted the recommendation from the Alpha Alpha State Achievement Award Committee to make a change in the award guidelines. The State Achievement Award will be given once a biennium, in the odd-numbered year.

IX. Report of the Treasurer

Linda O'Connor, Omega Chapter and Alpha Alpha State Treasurer, reported on the financial status of the State Organization. Currently State funds are separated into five different areas, Available Funds,

Scholarship Fund, Visionary Fund, Serendipity Fund, and Permanent Fund. She then went through the income, sources of income, and the expenses in each area.

Included in her report was the Excel sheet listing all Certificates of Deposit as of June 4, 2009. The last two pages of the report were the information from the printout from International, which included individual chapter contributions to each of the following: the Emergency Fund, The Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Foundation, the Golden Gift Fund II, World Fellowship, and the Scholarship Fund. The chapters were listed, the amounts of their contribution, and if the money donated was in memory of someone, that name was listed. Linda stated that she does not get a listing of individual contributions in any of these areas. Therefore, if anyone makes an individual contribution, they need to notify Linda when they make the contribution. The report also had a listing of contributions to State Organization Funds, including State Scholarship Fund, UNICEF Teacher Training in Afghanistan, Ethiopia Reads and Visionary Fund.

President Carolyn called for questions on the Treasurer's report. Hearing none, she thanked Linda for the fine job she had done and declared the report filed for financial review.

X. The Report of the Finance Committee

Wanda Keller, Iota Chapter and Chairman of the Finance Committee, recognized her committee members for their work. They met in Bedford in May 2009, to do the financial review which included a review of the wording. She then presented the Report of the Finance Committee. Evaluations for the Alpha Alpha State Treasurer, *Keystoneian* Editor and Webmaster are the responsibility of each chapter's first vice president and about half of the expected number were submitted. All evaluations were fine. Wanda explained that the evaluations are rotated so that chapters only evaluate each position every three years.

Wanda Keller stated that the Finance Committee supported the recommendation of the Achievement Award Committee for its

proposal to give the award once a biennium, in the odd-numbered years. The proposed budget for 2009-2010, copies of which had been distributed, was then presented. President Carolyn called for questions on the report from the Finance Committee. Hearing no questions, she announced that a vote on the budget will be taken during the *Second General Session* on Sunday morning. Wanda and her committee members were available throughout the convention to answer questions. She expressed a huge measure of gratitude to Wanda for completing two four-year terms as chairman of the Finance Committee. She then announced that Wanda will serve as the *Ways and Means Committee Chair* for the NE Regional Conference in Hershey in 2011.

XI. Report of the Nominations Committee

Dr. Lyn Schmid, Immediate Past President and chairman of the Nominations Committee, was introduced. She presented the following slate of officers:

Alpha Alpha State Officers

- *Susan Stamm, Lambda, for President*
- *Louann Shrader, Omega, for First Vice President*
- *Kay Stuart, Pi, for Second Vice President*
- *Patricia Shedlock, Nu, for Recording Secretary*
- *Tracey Dusch, Psi, for Corresponding Secretary*

For Finance Committee:

- *Royce Boyd, Alpha Beta*
- *Joyce Kerrick, Alpha Zeta*
- *Joan McGreevey, Alpha Beta*

For Nominations Committee:

- *Susan Tonzetich, Sigma—absent and represented by her chapter presidents*
- *Patricia Crouse, Kappa*
- *Patricia Zinger, Theta*

After presenting the slate, Dr. Lyn Schmid, Nominations Chairman, recommended that the candidates be voted on en masse.

President Carolyn Sutton announced that only the Executive Board (Officers, Past State Presidents, Chapter Presidents or their designees) may vote. Alpha Alpha State By-laws, Article VI, Section 5.B states that there is only one vote per chapter. She then called for additional names and/or discussion on the slate. Hearing none, President Carolyn read the slate again and called for a vote. The candidates for each office and the elected committee positions were accepted.

XII. Report of the Rules Committee

Jeannette Thomas, Nu Chapter and Rules Committee Chairman, presented the proposed changes for the Alpha Alpha State By-Laws and Standing Rules and thanked the members of her Rules Committee. These changes were published in the Spring 2009 *Keystonian*. Jeannette announced that the committee had reviewed the State By-Laws and made corrections to bring the document into agreement with current practice and previous convention votes. There is no fiscal impact and it does not require a vote by the membership. These changes go into effect immediately.

The International Constitution Committee recommended changes to the Alpha Alpha State By-Laws to bring the state By-Laws into compliance with the International Constitution. There is no fiscal impact and they do not require a vote by the membership. These changes go into effect immediately.

She then referred to the amendments, proposed by the Historical Records and Leadership Development Committees, to the By-Laws and Standing Rules that were published in the Spring 2009 *Keystonian*. The Rules Committee recommended the membership vote on the amendments to the By-Laws and then the Standing Rules en masse.

President Carolyn called for discussion on the proposed amendments to the Alpha Alpha State By-Laws. Hearing none, she called for the question. The motion was successful, and the following amended changes to the Alpha Alpha State By-Laws will go into effect immediately:

ARTICLE IX, Section 2, E.

Each biennium, the Alpha Alpha State President will name a

member of the Beta Xi (State College) chapter to the Historical Records Committee.

ARTICLE IX, Section 2, F

Each biennium, the President of Alpha Alpha State will provide to the Archives of the Paterno Library a list of those members of the Society who have permission to temporarily remove historical record items from the Archives.

ARTICLE VII, Section 4, A. B. and C. is eliminated.

ARTICLE IX, Section 3, B. Leadership Development (Assist chapters in area meeting planning and implementation.) is eliminated.

President Carolyn then called for discussion on the proposed amendments to the Alpha Alpha State Standing Rules. Hearing no discussion, she called for a vote on the proposed changes. The motion was successful and the following change to the Alpha Alpha State Standing Rules will go into effect immediately:

ARTICLE VIII, Area Meetings A. B. C. is eliminated.

President Carolyn thanked Jeannette and her committee for their work.

XIII. Report of the Membership Committee

Louann Shrader, Omega Chapter and Alpha Alpha State Second Vice President and Membership Committee Chairman, gave a brief update on membership. She referred to the vote at Friday night's Executive Board meeting to continue to endorse the H.O.P.E. initiative for the next two years. She then referred to the line graph poster displayed in the lobby that will track membership through 2012 when Alpha Alpha State will celebrate its 75th anniversary. The dues increase from International last year affected the membership. She also said that the H.O.P.E. brochure, created and distributed by the Membership Committee, was given credence by the International "Shoe-In" Membership Challenge. This initiative will recognize chapters that maintain same number of members, increase membership or invite someone from another area. A suggestion made by Louann to help achieve this goal included initiating more than once a year. She recognized and thanked her committee members. In an effort to attract younger members, Louann announced the reception

for the "Under 40" group would be held prior to the banquet on Saturday evening for fellowship and networking.

President Carolyn thanked Louann and encouraged the 40 First Timers in attendance to come back next year and bring someone with them.

XIV. Report of the Projects Committee

With excitement and pride in the members of Alpha Alpha State, President Carolyn introduced Tracey Dusch, Psi, Projects Committee Chairman for her report. Keeping with the "Once Upon a Time" theme, Tracey told the story of the Ethiopia Reads Project. She thanked Judith Schaffer for her help in the production of the Friday Fun and Fellowship Night on the previous evening, which raised money for the project. She thanked her committee and everyone for helping to raise funds for the project to build a library in Ethiopia. The total raised for the project would be announced at the banquet on Saturday evening. She reminded the membership that author Jane Kurtz would be autographing books from 3:30 to 4:30 PM in the Atrium. All monies raised would go to the project to plant a library in Ethiopia.

XV. Report of the Program of Work Committee

Sue Stamm, Alpha Alpha State First Vice-President, reported on the Purposeful Seminar held in Erie, Pennsylvania, the last weekend in April 2009. "The Erie Experience—Environment and More," offered workshops on Saturday morning in the eco-friendly Tom Ridge Environmental Center followed by lunch in the Sunset Café. Participants enjoyed a guided bus tour around Presque Isle in the afternoon. Saturday evening's activities included a banquet with a guest speaker. The seminar concluded on Sunday morning with a musical presentation by Charles Kennedy on the life of Harry T. Burleigh and his work with Negro Spirituals. She thanked her committee members for their work on the project.

XVI. Report of the NE Regional Conference Coordinator

Royce Boyd, Alpha Beta, NE Regional Conference Coordinator, thanked the chapters for continuing the assessments to secure the funds to cover the expenses for the conference. She encouraged members to attend the NE Regional Conference in Vermont, July 22-25, 2009.

Those attending were requested to take notes on the little details that will help Pennsylvania in planning for 2011. Individuals, as well as chapter help, would be needed. Members attending were asked to sign the bulletin board at the registration desk. That way Royce would keep members informed of any needs in Vermont. We need the NE Regional Director for 2010-2012 to be elected. Members were then told to stay tuned as the story will continue to unfold.

President Carolyn then explained to the membership, that the NE Regional Conference is in the hands of the NE Regional Director for 2010-2012. President Carolyn would be Chairman of the Nominating Committee and will prepare a nomination for Dr. Lyn Schmid to be elected to that position.

President Carolyn then called on Louann Shrader, Alpha Alpha State second vice president, to explain more of the process. The number of votes that each state has depends on its membership. Louann then read the Resolution in Support of Dr. Lynda B. Schmid for NE Regional Director and moved that the membership support the resolution. A copy of the resolution is included at the end of this document. The motion carried followed by a standing ovation for Dr. Lyn.

XVII. Group Singing

Barbara Rankin, Alpha Xi Chapter and State Chorus Director, led the group in singing "Sisterhood," accompanied by Donna Houser, Kappa Chapter and co-chair for the Visual and Performing Arts Committee.

XVIII. Report of the President

President Carolyn Sutton encouraged everyone to read the packet of committee reports for Convention 2009 in their packets and to give copies to their local chapter committee chairmen. In her President's Report which is included in that packet, members will read about conventions and conferences attended and chapters visited.

President Carolyn then reminded the members that it was just a month ago, on May 11th, that Delta Kappa Gamma celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the founding of our Society noting that the story of Dr. Annie Webb Blanton and her colleagues is a success story of

magnitude. Our founders were women of vision who recognized the inherent leadership capabilities of key women educators.

In keeping with her convention theme, President Carolyn reminded everyone that each has a story to tell about her Delta Kappa Gamma journey - where it began, special ones who have joined, and significant events along the way. Each has been on a different journey but with the same destination. A special common thread is woven into each story---with commitment to each other and to sisterhood.

President Carolyn then shared a quote from Elizabeth Edward's book, Saving Graces, where she talked a bit about tapestry. She wrote, "We spend our lives weaving a tapestry of sorts. The largest ribbons of color are our family and closest friends. But a tapestry made up of just these people has gaps. The other people we weave into our lives—some only thin threads—are what give our life its texture and its strength. They fill the gaps in the most amazing ways. Their colors reflect on the ribbons and on us. Weaving them into our tapestry creates for each of us a magnificent, dense, and interesting life. And when life takes a wrong turn - as it will for all of us—that tapestry becomes a blanket that we can wrap around us, or a safety net into which we can fall."

President Carolyn shared that into her personal story are woven the connections she has made with each member. The support and encouragement has become her tapestry blanket. She said that it has been a privilege and honor to have worked with everyone as the Alpha Alpha State President the past two years. Together with the officers and committee members, and most importantly, the members, she celebrated the successes. She applauded the members for opening the world of stories to Ethiopian children and noted that that is a perfect example of the International President's theme, "*From Vision to Action.*"

President Carolyn urged members to practice lattice leadership in their chapters as Alpha Alpha State prepares for the new tapestry of Delta Kappa Gamma leadership. Utilizing this method, there is no top-down leadership, but leadership springing from all directions. She

reminded each member that she is a leader with important contributions to make to the chapter.

Member involvement in chapter life will pay rich dividends. Further focusing on each member, President Carolyn said that it works every time to count on the talents and expertise of each and every member. High levels of member interest, contributions to the chapter, dedication and commitment in meeting chapter goals and objectives, and worthwhile and interesting chapter activities will bring personal satisfaction in being a part of a notable chapter.

She continued by challenging chapters to be a notable chapter, by being diligent in honoring the legacy, by offering the gift of membership, by promoting the passion, and by envisioning the future. Utilize the state website, chapter presidents' blog and the state and chapter newsletters to continue the threads of communication. By keeping informed, President Carolyn said that we can keep focused on the vision.

During the convention weekend, The Delta Kappa Gamma epic has reached another turning point. She said that it is the end of one biennial chapter and the beginning of a new biennium with new leadership. She is excited to be a part of Susan's team with change on the horizon. The tapestry of the organization is being examined by members on all levels and she announced that an example of this would occur during the Celebration Luncheon when members would be asked for their input. She challenged the members to have Pennsylvania in the forefront of the new changes by being informed, by being vocal, and by being involved.

Dr. Carolyn Rants, International President, chose as the theme for her biennium - *From Vision to Action: Advancing the Society*. Referring to the President's message which appeared in her column in the January-February 2009 issue of *the International News*, our President Carolyn read the following quote from an unknown source: "Vision without action is just a dream. Action without vision is a way to pass time. Vision with action---you can change the world." She

ended by stating that members are a dynamic group of key women educators who are the major characters of the story.

XIX. New Business

President Carolyn called for new business. Hearing none, she moved to the announcements.

XX. Announcements

- ✓ Judith Schaffer, Alpha Alpha State Professional Affairs Chair, announced that her committee hosted the Women of Distinction on Friday evening recognizing 40 outstanding women, the largest number to date. She challenged everyone to go back to their chapters and to nominate more women to tell their stories next year. Judith explained that the special pin is for the awardees. Women recognized in the past who would like a pin can check with her as they are available for purchase.
- ✓ The members of the Visual & Performing Arts Committee then issued an invitation to the 2010 Women in the Arts Retreat under the chairmanship of Kay Stewart, Pi. She explained that the vision came from President Carolyn and Terri Stetler who started the retreat. Participation has made it successful. Dressed in hats and boas, the committee sang with audience participation. Their message was to come and change your life by discovering something new within yourself. Corrections were announced on pages 14 and 28 in the book. The correct dates are April 23-25th, 2010.
- ✓ Practice for the Procession of Presidents will be at 3:20 this afternoon under the direction of Dr. Lyn Schmid and Pat Arnold.
- ✓ Members were asked to please sign the list on the bulletin board if they are planning to attend the Northeast Regional Conference in July.
- ✓ Jane Kurtz will be autographing her books this afternoon from 3:30-4:30 in the Atrium.

✓ Pat Arnold, Convention Coordinator, asked that the members leave this session as soon as possible after adjournment so that the hotel staff can set up for luncheon.

XXI. Adjournment

Hearing no further announcements, President Carolyn, Alpha Alpha State President, adjourned the First General Session of the 2008 Alpha Alpha State Convention at 10:06 AM

Prepared by Cindy G. Reynolds (cgr), Alpha Alpha State Recording Secretary, on June 24, 2009.

Reviewed and approved by Carolyn Sutton (cs), 2007-2009 Alpha Alpha State President on July 15, 2009.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS by Charles Youngs

Stories Told Together

Your theme for this weekend is a “Tapestry of Stories,” and so let’s begin where many stories do with “Once upon a time”

Once upon a time you chose to become a teacher. Not a butcher, a baker, nor a candlestick maker. Not a doctor, a pilot, nor a computer-technician. You chose, out of the various choices before you, to be an educator. And I invite you to think about *why* for a moment. Why did you choose to become a teacher?

In America, it’s not for prestige, it’s not for pay, nor is it for popularity. As a member of the National State Teachers of the Year program, whose primary focus is to elevate and celebrate the wonderful work teachers do each and every day, I have noticed that although I think teaching is the best job in the world, I’ve notice that my media, my community, most of my students, and even some of my friends don’t share my positive perspective on teaching. So, can you form the answer to the question this morning: *WHY did you choose to become a teacher?*

As you think of this, it might help jog your memory to think of *WHO the teachers were who most influenced you in making that decision to become a teacher?* Remember them today. Can you bring their presences to mind now? And thirdly, what specific pleasurable or personally transformative experiences were most influential in your decision to become a teacher? In other words, **WHAT turned you**

on to teaching? If wasn't pay, prestige, or popularity—what was it? Could it be that the answer to that question is what still sustains your enthusiasm, and vitality today, whether you are still in the classroom or whether you are supporting teachers and learners in other essential ways. Have you got those three elements in your mind this morning? The Why, the Who, and the How you have devoted your life to the noble profession of education?

THERE you'll find the beginning of YOUR STORY. Your thread in the tapestry of stories that you all are celebrating together this weekend. For those of you who have been with Delta Kappa Gamma for many years, your threads may overlap and interweave to form warm and wonderful images together; for those of you who are more recent members of the society, your threads add vibrant new colors and glints of energy to this tapestry. Whether you are veteran or novice, I have a hunch that very few of you are sitting here thinking "I became a teacher so that I could prep students for a standardized test," or "I have a passion for drilling down in the data," or "I have a penchant for filling out paperwork."

If you choose to share your stories during this weekend --and I hope you do, I'm sure you are much more likely to discover yourselves talking about taking risks, teaching discovery, inspiring creativity, innovating with technology, inspiring young minds, and cultivating great hearts. These are the threads of fantastic teaching, and they

make up the stunning tapestry of stories of Delta Kappa Gamma and talented educators everywhere.

Let us start this morning considering the importance of STORY with a capital S in each of our *many-storied* teaching lives. So, once upon a time you became a teacher, and that means you became a *storyteller*. Of course, some of us are responsible to teach language arts or reading, and "story" is explicit to our job descriptions. We tell great stories that have come to us through the annals of literature--of the ages from Sanskrit written in cuneiform, to elementary primers featuring Sponge Bob Square Pants or Blues Clues, to students' original poetic raps in Poetry Out Loud competitions.

Yet, when we teach social studies, there are "hi-STORY-cal" accounts to retell. The history teacher's archival tales of society give our current events critical perspective and usher us into the future. I recall oral history projects from my school days on the folks that make up our communities, as well as salt and flour maps, now perhaps based on Google Earth views of foreign countries, and research papers on famous newsmakers throughout the years are chronicled in social studies lessons.

Teachers in science, technology, and art, too, are storytellers of matter, of microchips, and of media. No matter what discipline or age level, stories shape human understanding and therefore are essential to teaching and learning. We think, we learn, and we teach in metaphor. In telling stories we model for our students how they might

tell their own. There's a LIFE SKILL you won't find boxed in on a standardized test!---the ability to tell one's own story effectively, feelingly, and forcefully. And yet it's what we teachers perhaps do all the time, from show-and-tell activities, to college application essays, to doctoral theses.

Indeed, to understand and tell stories implies being *literate*. We must ask: what will it mean to be literate by the first quarter of the 21st century? As a teacher today I try to imagine what my students and I will need to know in the year 2025. Already we live in digitally-driven, media-rich, technology-infused, and globally-networked world. Today's teachers, students, and learning communities juggle myriad demands in this socially-saturated, ever-changing society. New media and technology are combining to form new literacies. I mean things like text messages, video games, virtual realities, webquests, Google applications, Gigipan photos and ebooks and on and on

As a member of the National Council of Teachers of English, I am watching the movement from a focus on process writing that has dominated the past thirty years to a consideration of how to teach writing in the contexts of the instantaneous publishing, read/write realms of blogs, wikis, and virtual realities like *Second Life*, an online network of people interacting through avatars, idealized cartoon versions of themselves. Students are now posting their ideas to friends around the world 140 characters at a time. They are more

connected to family and friends than we were in our Ma-Bell-next-best-thing-to-being-there generation. Our youth, *virtually are there* for each other almost every moment, their cell phones are their lifelines.

One of my 12th graders this past year, I'll call him Steve, is struggling with what the doctors call terminal cancer . . . and who does Steve talk to when he's down? His computer game buddies in Taiwan and Bosnia, with whom he's developed meaningful Internet friendships over the past five years. As boys on computers, they've grown up together . They've played together and shared their lives and their stories in ways that seems unfathomable to most of us in the generation of "digital immigrants."

If the doctors are correct about Steve's prognosis, then John Donne's sentiments in his *Meditation 17* that "no man is an island" and "send not for whom the bell tolls" will ring evermore true in Taiwan and Bosnia when Steve's avatar no longer appears on their screens.

Speaking of computer games and cell phones, cognitive researchers tell us these technologies actually change the ways our brains, especially those of our students, are processing information. Cultural change plays a major role in tandem with technology. A teacher of mine, Marlene Barron, who is today an international authority on Montessori education, notes that our students process data in multiple ways at once. She says our students are "multi-

cultural, multi-modal, multi-dimensional, multi-platform, multi-lingual, multi-economic, multi-social, multi-media”; in other words, they think and do, as she coins it, "multi-multi." Still John Medina, the developmental molecular biologist and author of *Brain Rules*, points out that we don't really have the ability to multi-task—at least our brains don't. Our cognitive circuitry runs in sequences—beginning, middle, and end. *Like a story!*

Thus, as we change the way we think, we change how we communicate, and what it means to be a literate person changes. Certainly, being a literate person has always been defined as the ability to read and write, and now this includes reading and writing messages in a variety of forms: from music videos to audio podcasts to virtual photography to anime and to microblogs on Twitter. Our mediated culture, with its existing and emerging digital technologies, demands a multitude of requisite skills in order for us to effectively consume and produce media in order to communicate—or in other words, in order to read and to write in the 21st century. It demands this of our students and our teachers. Indeed, it's an exciting time to be alive and in the classroom. Amid the thrill of this age, at times it may seem as though there's just too much to learn and too much to teach, but there's one constant that teachers and students and others can share to make meaning of it all. Their stories. The tapestry of their stories.

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**In two weeks I will travel to Ghana, Africa as a member of a Fulbright-Hays Scholarship Group Project Abroad. I am over-the-moon excited, in part, because I know Ghanaians are fabulous story tellers. They very well might have invented story. I say this because I remember some great stories from a Ghanaian storyteller who was one of my tutors at university in England. Miso'shi is her name and she had story, she had rhythm, she had us graduate students moving and chanting and telling stories as if we had been there. "A story, a story; let it come, let is go" is how the African storyteller begins. Miso'shi, of course told us stories of Ananse, the hero whose antics are refigured in America by Uncle Remus tales of Brer Rabbit. Ananse, a trickster—who is part spider, part man—is responsible for bringing stories to the world. For he was around or when the earth had no stories. Imagine that: a world without stories! I say, a world without stories is a world without teaching and learning. So the tale goes of Ananse bringing not Promethean fire, but something we could really use: stories to our world from the Sky God, Nyame. Nyame kept them in a golden box next to his royal stool, probably because they were so valuable. Ananse wanted to buy the stories for the world and so spun a web up to the Sky and bargained with Nyame no matter how high the price. Ananse knew a world without stories was a world without teaching and learning, a world without teachers and students.**

**Our 2009 National Teacher of the Year, Tony Mullen, said in his acceptance speech this past April that he realized “that the very best teachers have one common quality: They know how to read a story. They know that each and every child arrives at their classroom door with a unique and intriguing, yet incomplete story.”**

**Of course, it’s always been our labor of love as teachers to help students shape their stories. Stories help both teachers and students make meaning of information ideas, and life itself. Perhaps you've never thought of it this way, but I think it is significant for us to consider the stories we tell our students, and how the stories we help them write. They *tell us* so much about how we are doing as teachers in preparing a new generation.**

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Story is what makes us human – the ability to tell tales, to share experience, to think in metaphor, to recall in memory, and to imagine "what if." No other species records its experience in story. Now more than ever, I see storytelling as the human element that can be our profession's bulwark amidst the blurring juxtaposition of great technological, cultural, and educational changes. That’s the power of story! Across the disciplines of academia and amidst the arenas of contemporary life we teachers, students, and parents have many, many stories to tell, to hear, to read, and to write.

And so story shapes human experience—indeed shapes teaching and learning--into meaningful whole. Even in the telling, stories reflect our ideas, feelings, and values. Even in the instant it tells us something about us. As we shape a story it shapes our thinking and that of our audience. As we organize knowledge into instructional units, we use our innate and professional talents as teachers to package information into story form so our students can grasp the package, often without realizing it. In this way, storytelling invites reflection, and what is education but *reflection*? Stories expand our reflective capabilities. Educational dramatist and storyteller Dorothy Heathcote tells us, "If you cannot increase reflective power in people, you might as well not teach. Because reflection is the only thing that in the long run changes anybody."

It is that reflective power of stories that make them so valuable in teaching and learning. As we share stories, they become our teachable treasure, and our students' inheritance. They are essential to the very process of our discovering who we are as teachers and our students are as learners, and of our all becoming the people we want to be.

Stories permeate all that we do in school. Of course, in English as I say, we have stories from the pages of Hamlet to Harry Potter. Yet, in math, too, we tell tales of numbers that structure the snowflake and the skyscraper, that measure the modest and the monumental. In consumer science, we balance budget tables that tell

pecuniary fables. Art teachers sculpt stories with clay and paint parables in oils. Scientists map anatomies and ecosystems that plot our very survival. Kindergarten teachers impart the alphabet with a lively cast of characters known as "The Letter People."

In first grade, the story of seed, soil, sun, and water takes center stage in the shape of a cut-off half-pint milk carton in time to yield Mother's Day marigolds. Narratives of the Constitution and citizenship are debated in the seventh grade civics classes. On the playground and in the gymnasium students enact kinesthetic plots involving movement, competition, and fair play. All of these stories and many others are significant to fostering students' literacies. And shaping their own lifelong stories.

Teaching students to create, design, elaborate, envision, tell, and honor their own stories is and will be evermore essential to education and to their future success, especially in this century.

Nowadays students fashion their own stories as they design *Facebook* pages, upload videos to *YouTube*, text on cell phones, and blog in wikis. Performance is integral with audience. Digital and traditional literacies merge in students' social-networked lives. They have stories to tell, a world to create, new media to do so, and a world to share it with instantaneously.

Digital storytelling, itself, is fast-becoming a celebrated skill-based project for students, teachers, and communities. Writer Dan Pink writes in his book *A Whole New Mind*, of a revolution occurring in the

global market place that will depend on this sort of *right-brain creativeness*. He contends, that "We are our stories" and goes on to say that "...personal narrative has become more prevalent, and perhaps more urgent in a time of abundance, when many of us are freer to seek a deeper understanding of ourselves and our purpose."

To prepare our students for the global economy, we look toward what Pink calls "The Conceptual Age." I like that, *the Conceptual Age*. We know that in recent years we've been in the Information Age. Thanks largely to computers, the Internet, satellite, and cable media, we are saturated now with information. As teachers we know that data is meaningless until we put it together into a meaningful concept—or, in other words, until it tells a story.

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**And so the story of Ananse goes on. Nyame the Sky God agreed to give Ananse his stories for a very high price. He sent Ananse to bring him Osebo, the leopard-of-the-terrible-teeth, Mmboro the hornet who-stings-like-fire, and Mmoatia the fairy-whom-people-never-see. Of course, Ananse, our magical hero figures a way to capture each. He gathers them all in his sticky web the leopard despite his terrible teeth, and the hornet without suffering a firey sting and the fairy no matter her invisibility. Teachers, too, are faced with great demands nowadays. But thanks to Ananse, we have stories to teach. And as the story teller says, "This is my story. If it be sweet, or if it be not sweet, take some elsewhere and let some come back to me." When our**

**classrooms are alive with stories, we never know where our stories end and our students' stories begin. The rich tapestry is woven too tightly to distinguish individual threads one from another.**

**Indeed, our stories are our students' stories, and our students stories' are ours retold again and again. Although Story may be as old as cave drawings of Lascaux, tapping into its power is as contemporary as the technology that impacts our literacies. Teaching is an act of faith, a story that has no end. "Let it come and let it go." Today, new literacies hold promise for students to tell their stories as never before. As educators, we have a responsibility to guide, an opportunity to learn, and an ability to build these literacies, and shape a new generation. We are the stories we tell and so it is with our students. *We are stories told together.* A tapestry of stories.**

**Your own story started with becoming a teacher, a storyteller. You've been telling tales tall and small every since, and helping your students to tell their own. "Take some elsewhere and let some come back to me." Please, keep telling your stories this weekend, and happily and ever after.**

## **A Resolution in Support of Dr. Lynda B. Schmid As Northeast Regional Director**

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid is a woman of strong leadership, management, and organizational skills, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid continues to be an exemplary model of “Servant Leadership” which she used as her theme during the 2005-2007 biennium as Alpha Alpha State President, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid, as an Alpha Alpha State Officer and as State President, planned and organized two successful State Conventions, planned Purposeful Seminars, trained State Officers, and presented workshops on “Servant Leadership” and meeting Intergenerational needs, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid as Alpha Alpha State President developed, planned, and instituted a weekend of Leadership Development Training for new Chapter Presidents, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid continues to train the chapter presidents in Alpha Alpha State as the State Leadership Development Chair, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid has reached out to the future of the Society by involving the younger members of Alpha Alpha State, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid has served The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International on the International World Fellowship Committee, International Personal Growth and Services Committee, and currently as a member of the International Leadership Development Team, and

Whereas Dr. Lynda B. Schmid is respected and admired by the members of Alpha Alpha State not only for her leadership at the State Organization Level but also for her accomplishments at the International Level of the Society:

Be it resolved that the members of Alpha Alpha State of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International highly support and encourage the nomination of Dr. Lynda B. Schmid as the 2010-2012 Northeast Regional Director of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International.