



ALPHA PHI INFORMER

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EDITED BY
LIN MARTEN AND SHARON
MCMAHAN

IN THIS ISSUE:

President's Note	1
Website	1
Member Updates	2
February Chapter Meeting	2
Xi State Legislative Symposium	3
Meeting Calendar	4
Other Calendar Items	4
Chapter Rules	4
Joy Hudson in Cleveland Paper	5
Barbara Northcut Remembers Melba Whittacre	5
Chapter projects and Community Support	6
Birthdays	6
Lena Engstrom's "Fullness of February"	6

A Note From the President



January has come and gone! Valentine's Day has come and gone! President's Day has come and gone! Where has all the time gone?? I know your year has been busy, but I hope you'll take a minute and review this newsletter. It is full of great information! Also, remember to check our website from time to time to see what is new!

We had a great meeting in February. The two most important items that came out of that meeting: our new slate of officers for the next biennium was chosen (they will be installed in the March meeting) and our new chapter rules were approved. We owe a lot of thanks to both Sharon McMahan and Jensi Souders for the work on the rules. It has been years since we updated our rules, and now we are consistent with both International and Xi State. Go to our website and click on the "Rules" tab to see the newly approved rules.

PLEASE come to the March meeting and help us install the new officers: president, Jensi Souders; first vice president, Sandy Smith; second vice president, Jeanette Underwood; secretary, Danita Clark; treasurer, to be appointed by new president (it's Susie); nominations chair, Patsy Woodham.

Our next chapter meeting is March 13th at Bright School on Hixson Pike at 5:30 P.M. It is BUNKO night, and I know many of you love to enjoy that game! Susie Westbrook is organizing the game for us. It will be a great time for fellowship and fun. You can plan on dinner, courtesy of the retired teachers of Alpha Phi. I believe we are having soups and salads. I hope I will see you there!

— *Lin*



Website

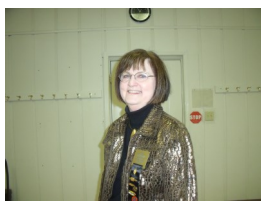
www.alphahidkg.com

Member Updates

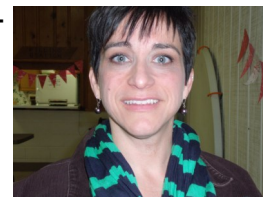
- ⇒ Congratulations to **Sandy Smith** who became a grandmother for the very first time! Grand daughter, Lillian Parker King (nickname, Lola) was born February 14, 2014.
- ⇒ **Sandy Smith** has also been appointed to the Mayor's Council on Disabilities. She has also been hired to tutor 16 and 17 year old girls in an after school program to prepare them for college. She will be a busy lady.
- ⇒ **Amy Wright** missed our last meeting because she was in Auburn to watch husband Tracy direct the Auburn Honors Band.
- ⇒ **Joy Hudson** has been interviewed twice by the Cleveland Banner--once concerning Common Core and then again on inclusion of Sp. Ed. students in the regular classroom. Her articles are available through our website and were forwarded to Orlean Bauman at Xi State.
- ⇒ **Lin Marten** has had surgery again. She is recuperating at home from surgery to repair a hernia.
- ⇒ **Pat Hartline**'s grandson, Heath, has won a 4H competition in Rome, GA in public speaking in the safety category. His topic was football helmet concussion awareness. Heath has been accepted, **with scholarship**, to Baylor School. Congratulations!
- ⇒ **Jensi Souders** will go to Mexico City March 18 as Society Representative. She is hoping to give her entire speech in Spanish, as she did in Panama two years ago. Fingers crossed (shhh—she doesn't speak Spanish)!
- ⇒ Please send cards to **Faye Hitchcock**, **Karla Riddle**, and **Joanne Smith** who have had challenges with their health this year.



February Meeting



Our chapter meeting was held on February 8th at Hixson United Methodist Church. Decorations were provided by Cami Mitchell. Agenda items included a beautiful devotional by Lena Engstrom (see it later in this newsletter or on the website), the



Treasurer's Report by Susie Westbrook, an absolutely beautiful tribute to Melba Whittacre by Barbara Northcut, election of new officers, approval of new rules by Sharon McMahan, and a quick review of our chapter profile and strategic action plan by Jensi Souders. Minutes of meeting on website.

Xi State Legislative Symposium

Lin Marten and Sharon McMahan represented Alpha Phi at the 2014 Legislative Symposium held in Nashville. The panel members answered questions submitted by DKG members. At the end of the panel discussion the moderator opened the floor to questions from the audience. The following is a brief summary of the major points presented by the panel.

Members of the panel for this year were State Representative Raumesh Akbari; Dr. Kathleen Airhart, Deputy Commissioner Tennessee Department of Education; Antoinette Lee, TEA Government Relations Office; Ron Pendergrass, Executive Director TN Retired Teachers' Association. Teresa Brown of Beta Kappa served as the panel moderator.

Airhart stated that the Tennessee Department of Education anticipates that the first year of testing on the CORE will result in lower scores. No accountability is tied to computer assessments. Since 2001 the State of Tennessee has not increased testing, but school systems have increased their data assessments. Regarding teacher evaluations, co-evaluations may be a possibility to avoid a wide disparity in evaluations.

Akbari was asked how can vouchers and charter schools make improvements in education to all schools. She stated that the benefit of vouchers has not been proven. Vouchers should not be given to every body, but only those who need it the most—those students from low socio-economic backgrounds. On the subject of teacher pay, she stated that the state needs to keep salaries competitive in order to avoid losing teachers to neighboring states.

Lee informed the audience that there was a bill sponsored by State Congressman Hill to prohibit the use of test scores tied to teacher licensure. Lee also stated with the decrease in benefits that a new hire will be paid \$19,000 less. It is a parent perception that we are teaching to the test. As teachers we need to share with legislators how the schools in our area are being affected. Legislators also need to hear from parents their concerns about testing. TEA is still representing teacher concerns. It is available for collaborative conferencing between teacher and administrator. On Tuesday, March 11th, there will be a TEA rally on the Hill. We need to speak out for ourselves rather than waiting on others to speak for us.

Pendergrass stated that new hires after July 1, 2014 will be on a different retirement plan. To receive full retirement you must be 65 or have 35 years of service. It may require more tax dollars eventually. Tennessee is looking to “fund education on the cheap.”

The speaker for the Wednesday morning breakfast was attorney Chuck Cagle who specializes in education law. Twenty-five percent of bills in the state legislature concern education. He thinks that an automatic revocation of license is unconstitutional.

After the breakfast members of DKG visited the offices of their local representatives in the legislature to discuss issues.



L to R: Lin Marten and Sharon McMahan

Meeting Calendar

March 13th 5:30—7 pm Bright School on Hixson Pike
Please note the meeting is on a Thursday night
Co-hosts: Susie Westbrook and Ann Moore
Program: Installation of Officers and a serious game of Bunko
Menu: Soups and Salads (no cost)

April 26th Founders' Day
10:30—12:30 at Brainerd United Methodist Church
Hosted by Chattanooga Area Council
Brunch Catered: \$(TBA) per person
Money to Susie Westbrook by April 15th (this is your reservation!)

OTHER CALENDAR ITEMS

Founders Day Planning: March 11th at 11:45 A.M.

Our chapter is in charge of the table decorations and printing of the program. Susie Westbrook has the lead. She will need our help. Anyone who is able can attend the planning meeting above at the Wendy's on Highway 58. If you can't attend the planning meeting, but CAN help, please contact Susie Westbrook.

Xi State Convention: June 5th—7th at Sewanee.

Registration for the convention can be found on the Xi State website, www.xistate.org, or in the Xi State news.

DKG International Conference: July 28th—August 1st in Indianapolis. Registration and information can be found at www.dkg.org or in the DKG newsletter. Our chapter will pay the registration fee for the in-coming president for both conventions.

Chapter Officer Training: Following are the dates for the spring chapter officer training.
East TN: March 29 / Middle TN: April 12 / West TN: April 26

If you are a member of the new slate of officers and have not contacted Jensi to let her know which training you will be attending, please do so as soon as possible.

CHAPTER RULES

Xi State Rules Committee has approved Alpha Phi's revision of our chapter rules. The major changes to the rules are listed below:

- the chapter may vote by paper ballot and/or electronically
- the Sandra Allen Black scholarship has been changed to a mini grant for early career educators
- the chapter president may appoint someone to fill an officer vacancy during the biennium
- the program of work is no longer. We now have the Committee on Educational Excellence

The complete revision of the rules will be included in the 2014-2015 yearbook and can be found under the "Chapter Rules" tab on our website. If you have any questions please contact Sharon McMahan.

Joy Hudson Published in the Cleveland paper

(see our website for the complete articles)

Students with Disabilities Prepare for the PARCC.



Cleveland City has implemented inclusive practices at every school. Teachers are actively involved with the co-teaching model and common planning time. Both general and special education teachers provide instruction to all students in the general education classroom, regardless of disability. In the classroom, Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are taught with rigorous grade-level content expectations in mathematics and English language arts. CCSS involve teaching students to think and problem solve. The instructional shift provides students with skills needed to be successful in college and careers. To evaluate the effectiveness of the standards taught in the classroom, a new test, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness of College and Careers (PARCC), will be administered in math and ELA content areas. Therefore, all students, with the exception of those with significant disabilities, will take the PARCC assessments in the 2014-15 school year.



Barbara Northcut remembers Melba Whittacre

At the February meeting Barbara Northcut gave a wonderful tribute in memory of Melba Whittacre. Melba was initiated in 1986 and was a very active member until she became ill. Barbara gave a very moving description of Melba's warmth and character. Those of us who knew her were able to recall fond memories. Those who are new to the chapter felt Melba become real through Barbara's words and to regret not knowing her in person. Our Xi State Convention will be held at Sewanee at the University of the South June 5th--7th. On Saturday morning in All Saints Chapel, we will hold the Ceremony of Remembrance. Melba will be recognized at this time. We would like for as many chapter members as possible to attend the convention. The registration form is on the Xi State web site. If you are unable to attend the entire convention, please come for the ceremony at the chapel and the closing breakfast activity. You will be blessed by the experience.



Chapter Projects and Community Support

Kids on the Block: For CKOB, we wrapped Christmas presents for several days at Hamilton Place Mall. This fundraising effort raised almost \$19,000 for CKOB to continue its mission of educating children on social concerns and differences and giving them skills to stay safe and healthy! **You** make a difference!

Ronald McDonald House: We save pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House. RMH takes the pop tabs to the recycling company. The funds are then used to purchase needed necessities for the families that stay at the house. Our March meeting is a great opportunity to bring the tabs. There will be one other opportunity in April if you plan to attend Founders' Day. Some teachers have asked their students to bring pop tabs. Some chapter members have asked other community organizations (like church groups) to help out as well. Sharon McMahan will deliver the pop tabs to RMH.

Chattanooga Food Bank: We collected food items at our Christmas brunch for the Chattanooga Food Bank. We received a thank you note indicating that our donations provided a gift to them of 45 pounds of mixed canned goods. **You** make a difference helping to feed our hungry neighbors!

The Cottage: The children's shelter of North Georgia was the recipient of excess food from our last meeting. Their thank you note said, in part,: "The kids thought it was wonderful! We appreciate your thoughtfulness!" Again, **you** make a difference!

Happy Birthday to our Members

February

3rd Mary Starnes
3rd Teresa Wilhoite
9th Marjorie Ogle

March

3rd Dianne Kelehear
3rd Patsy Woodham
18th Laura Belue
26th Sharon McMahan
29th Danita Clark

Lena Engstrom's "Fullness of February"

I never longed for February,
Its wretched sludge or its bitter cold,
Bereft of merriment of holidays,
And void of promises to keep.
It never tempted me to know its mysteries,
Or haunted me to plunge its depths.
It was fallow, dormant and indiscreet.

But then the moon that blankets my room
And etches shadows of the trembling trees
Makes a palette of my bedroom walls,
And the owls sing their mating calls outside my window.

I pull up my cover
And find my place in the sacred march of life and time.

I bless green shoots beneath the ice,
The bursting buds of the tulip tree,
The yellow bells of the forsythia bush,
And the golden faces of the daffodils.

And then I know that February seals the deal!
Between the pregnancy of fall and the birth of spring.

