



**Alpha Xi 2020-2022 Executive Board Meeting
via Zoom
July 14, 2020**

Present: Paulette Hemmings, President; Melissa Costantino-Poruben and Phyllis Jenny, 1st Vice Presidents; Jeanne Vendeland 2nd Vice President; Darlene Farrell, Corresponding Secretary; Melody Hannegan, Recording Secretary; Marg Foster, Treasurer; Terry Klein, Parliamentarian; and Faith Jack, Past President

Paulette called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. She reported having attended 8 Zoom meetings of presidents' training by the state. Each meeting lasted an hour and a half. They will meet again in October.

Announcements: A state award was given to Melody for the Alpha Xi newsletter. Dede Rittman received the Album of Distinction Award for promoting literacy globally with her book, Grady Gets Glasses.

Alpha Xi has become an affiliate of the Heinz History Center and so our website is now linked to the History Center's website.

Discussion ensued concerning the website as we experienced a compromise through our website and/or the state website, which contains our newsletter and a link to our website. Melody proposed paying for an upgrade to our Weebly account so that we might have more protection. This upgrade would give us the ability to have members-only pages where our personal information would be safer. The cost is \$144.00 annually.

Finance: Marg reported that the membership has declined to 39 members (35 active and 4 reserved). Deborah Steinmetz, Theresa Scroth, and Diane Goff resigned this year. We have only 2 active teachers in our membership, well below the 70% retired and 30% active makeup at the state level.

Marg explained the proposed budget. We have a balance at hand of \$5,526.14 which has an increase of over \$100 over last year's amount. We saved money this year in that the program committee stayed well within its budget and we had no expenses for conventions. Paulette suggested that we look to trim the budget in the future since our membership is declining. The scholarship line was questioned. Marg explained it is a \$1.00 per member assessment by the state for the PA scholarship fund. Paulette mentioned that during her training, it was clarified that reserve membership could not be used for members who are snowbirds.

The board agreed to make the following changes to the proposed budget:

1. Remove the line for new convention attendee - \$50.00
2. Remove the line for woman of distinction - \$50.00
3. Reduce the amount under international/regional convention – from \$200.00 to \$150.00
4. Add a line for the website - \$150.00 (for the aforementioned upgrade to the Weebly account)

Discussion occurred regarding the lack of appeal for young teachers to join DKG. Melissa said that they are very stressed by the multiple demands put on them by their jobs and many are starting new families. Melody suggested that we target teachers in the 15-20 year range of their career, as they are more established in their jobs and families.

Program: Phyllis and Melissa reported that the committee began meeting (via Zoom) in early June. The committee consists of the 2 chairs, Barbara MacDonald, Karen Beemiller, Sallie Fisher, and Paulette. Terry sent a digital folder to Melissa and Phyllis via email of prior forms and information from the 2018-2020 program committee. She will also send the folder to Paulette. Melissa and Phyllis said that all decisions made for this year's calendar were based on considerations for our safety and are to be determined by recommendations/mandates made by our state and local governments.

Meetings –

Monday, September 14, 2020: at Trinity Lutheran Church on Brandt School Road. A boxed dinner will be provided by Jason's Deli. Installation of officers will occur and initial business meeting of the new biennium. The program will consist of a get-to-know-each-other-better game. The Shaler teachers will sponsor this meeting and provide the raffle basket, since it was made for the canceled meeting of last year.

Tuesday, October 20, 2020: at the Heinz History Center in the Strip District. We can tour the Portrait Gallery of Pittsburghers prior to 5:00 p.m. as guards are not available past that time. Then Bob Stakely will introduce us to the exhibit on the Women's Suffrage Movement, celebrating its 100th year. A boxed dinner will be provided by Cooked Goose Catering. (Addendum: Paulette discovered that the caterer wanted a non-refundable deposit of \$100. She therefore has contacted Two Louie's Deli in the Strip District as a possible option.)

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 – Luciano's in Seven Fields (tentative location with Olive Garden as back-up). The speaker will present a program on human trafficking, the women in our area who are being helped, and the connection with the Repurpose Store on McKnight Road.

Saturday, May 1, 2021 – Diamond Run – same menu and price as were quoted for 2020. Dede will be presenting a program on her books.

In light of our current situation, the committee felt it was best to plan four meetings this year instead of the usual six.

An outing is also under consideration at the Bayernhof Museum, a Saturday 10:00 a.m. or 2:00 p.m. tour with lunch nearby. \$10 per person/14 person maximum – sometime between the October and March meetings

Also, this is the year for a bi-chapter meeting with state president, Eileen Little, but we may not have one as Eileen's schedule will be tight from making up canceled visits. We may invite her to join one of our meetings – decision to be tabled till later in the year.

Membership: Jeanne looked up ideas from the website for recruitment – ideas included filling out prospective member cards at meetings and sending letters to local superintendents. We had reached out to superintendents in the past, to no avail.

Potential new members – Jeanne is going to reach out to Claudia McClelland to learn of Jean Keys interest (a guest last year) and Terry is going to reach out to Kathy Coll who is a former member of Alpha Sigma Chapter and a retired NA teacher.

Melody has updated the chapter brochure and the board members have the draft to proofread. It can be sent to prospective members. An international brochure for member recruitment is available for download from the dkg.org website. It is member protected: user name is the

member's six-digit number (on membership card). Also, membership cards will no longer be printed for distribution. We can get a copy from the international website, under MY DKG, My Account.

Other ideas for recruitment include promoting the scholarship and grant opportunities, which are available to members and described on the state and international level (Paulette). We also should focus on offering more programs of an educational/professional nature (Terry). More brainstorming can be done at the September meeting.

Paulette mentioned that many chapters in the state are experiencing a decline in membership. The three chapters in the Erie vicinity have merged and that might be a possibility in the future for us. Theta (Pittsburgh city schools), Alpha Upsilon (Eastern Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties), Alpha Phi (Southeastern Allegheny) are all local chapters.

Ways and Means: Jeanne said that we began publicizing the Teacher Enrichment Grants this time last year. Melissa had sent information to union reps and posted on her website. Marg reported that we have \$749.86 available for the grants this year – about the same as last. After discussion about the uncertainty surrounding schools reopening this fall and the pressure placed on current teachers, Melody proposed that we postpone publicity this year to after our October meeting with a deadline some time in February, a vote at the March meeting and presentations of the grants at the May meeting. Jeanne said that judges for the grants are set: Jeanne, Nancy Weixel, Faith, and Paulette.

Fundraising for the grants will continue. Members will sponsor the four meetings according to their school districts, with Shaler in September, and the others to be determined at that meeting. Marg said the rolled coin drive has been successful and Darlene offered to create hand-outs for that at the first meeting.

Projects: Peg Maser will collect Busy Boxes in the fall and we will continue this project, providing Children's Hospital will still receive them. We will also continue collecting items for Dress for Success (Shari McGill will continue to be our contact). We also talked about collecting material donations for the women in the safe house being sheltered from trafficking. We did talk about a newer organization, Care, formed in the West View Area which focuses on providing food for children in the North Hills School District and possibly beyond. We have two contact names, should we decide to pursue volunteering in the name of DKG at a later time. (Addendum: Terry shared the name of another organization, Project Period Charity/YWCA Butler, in an email following the meeting. We will keep these suggestions as options for future discussion.)

Newsletter: Melody said she would publish an August newsletter by August 14th. She will send out to all members a photo permission form to be signed. The state and international levels have directed us to have these forms on file before publishing any pictures or videos in any of our media. She will send out Word and pdf documents so that they can be returned by email. She will also have hard copies at the first meeting.

Social: Paulette announced that we still do not have a social committee chairperson. Phyllis said she would make phone calls to find a chair and also members interested in serving on the committee. Paulette said that the state leadership stressed in the presidents' training that all members should have some role in their chapter. She will provide a list of members who do not yet have a designated duty to Phyllis and also to Jeanne to form a membership committee.

Standing Rules: Paulette stated that many changes are coming to DKG including the elimination of induction ceremonies. Also, as chapters have decreased in size, chapters will need to reorganize their leadership structure. Standing rules of the chapters will need to reflect all changes. As our standing rules haven't been revised since last August, the standing rules committee (Paulette, Phyllis, and Melody) will meet again later this summer for additional revision.

U.S. Forum: Melissa is making phone calls to encourage people to vote for candidates who support sound public education. The election for NEA Director will be held on December 17th. Melissa said that campaigning has virtually been on hold.

Membership News: Darlene is offering a virtual lunch presentation through the cookie cutters group from the University of Pittsburgh International Rooms on July 24th. She will share a link for the information. Also, Paulette sadly reported that Carol Pastor passed away. Her obituary was in the Post-Gazette and mentioned her previous membership in DKG. She was our president 1996-1998.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Melody Hannegan, Recording Secretary