

The Alpha Xi Messenger

April 2020 (The Stay at Home Issue)



The President's Message



Hi, ladies!

Hope this finds you all safely tucked into your homes and doing well. By this time, we all have a new vocabulary centered on the virus: "Social distancing" and "flattening the curve", to name a couple. These uncertain times have brought a new era in public education - distance or eLearning. With many school districts going to online learning, our teachers and students are being asked to navigate new modes of delivery. For many teachers, this is all while balancing working from home with homeschooling their own children. Teachers are a resilient bunch, but please don't assume they are all okay. They will rise to the occasion I am sure, but sending an encouraging word or a phone call checking in with them would mean a great deal.

I want to take this time to thank the officers, committee chairs and members for their dedication and support over the last four years. It has truly been a learning experience and an honor to be Alpha Xi's president. I count all of you among my blessings.

During the past years, we have accomplished a great deal. Our projects of Busy Boxes (formerly known as Jared Boxes) and the Dress For Success clothing drives have been most successful. Most recently, the inception of the Teacher Enrichment Grant has given the chapter an avenue to support area teachers and students. We have enjoyed many wonderful programs ranging from creative to informative but always enjoyable. A big thank you to Darlene for all her preparatory work and leading us in crafting at the March meeting! We were a small group but had a wonderful time visiting as we made cards, note holders and felt roses. The Secret Sister initiative has encouraged socialization across the chapter, and your camaraderie has been a joy to see. Let's continue to be secret sisters until we next meet, probably in September. It's more important now than ever to occasionally receive a kind word.

I know you will continue to be involved and will support Paulette Hemmings and her new board. It is unfortunate and disappointing that we will not meet again before summer. Rest assured that the chapter will be in good hands going forward. When the stay-at-home order is lifted, my executive board will meet with Paulette's to transfer information and materials.

Stay home. Wash your hands. Be well.
All my best,
Faith



To Date, the state and international conventions have not been canceled.
PA State Convention: June 12-14, 2020, The Nittany Lion Inn (includes chapter officer training)
DKG International Convention: July 7-11, 2020, The Philadelphia Marriott Downtown
(Because we are a host state, we can volunteer for a variety of jobs.)
Information can be found on the [state](#) and [international](#) websites and registration forms for the state convention can be found in the Keystonian.

PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT -

Terry Klein

This spring has been the most challenging of any I can remember. As we try to avoid contagion by isolating at home, we are all missing so many canceled social and cultural events.

Sadly, our annual brunch at Diamond Run is another event that we must cancel out of a fear of gathering in a group.

If you have already sent a check for this brunch to Marg Foster, she will gladly shred it for you and thus save the club postage. If you absolutely must have the check returned, we will see to it. In either case, let Marg know your wishes.

(margfoster4@gmail.com)

I sincerely hope the COVID19 threat is behind us by next fall. I look forward to seeing all of you then.

TEACHER ENRICHMENT GRANTS

As I checked out the monies we have taken in this year through raffles and donations for the Teacher Enrichment Scholarships, I can see that if we had our last meeting in April, we would probably have around the same amount to give for the scholarships next year. Since we won't be able to have that last meeting with the last raffle and the last donation period, I am asking that each of our members look to see if they could possibly donate \$5 toward that scholarship fund. If that would happen, we would be able to again give the same amounts out in scholarships this coming year. If this works for you, please send a check for \$5 made out to DKG to Marg Foster 200 Goldsmith Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Thanks for your consideration, Marg Foster,
Treasurer

P.S. Your donation can be included with your dues in one check!

DUES REMINDER

Just a reminder that the new dues collecting process that went into effect last year will continue this year. Dues are no longer paid in the fall. Please see the timeline below that I received from our state treasurer. Dues will remain \$85 for active members and \$35 for reserve members. They are due to me by **June 1st** at the latest. Checks should be made out to Delta Kappa Gamma. Please mail your check to me at: Marg Foster 200 Goldsmith Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237. If you have any questions, please email me at: margfoster4@gmail.com or call 412-486-7672.

- **April 1** – Dues Collection opens for 2019-2020 collection process for the state and international. Alpha Xi Chapter will begin to collect dues checks on this date.
- **June 1** – All dues are due to the Alpha Xi Chapter.
- **June 30** – Member dues collection due in to the state and international.
- **August 1** – Automated notices are emailed from international to members whose dues have not been paid.
- **September 1** – Second automated notices are emailed to members from international whose dues have not been paid.
- **October 1** – Members who have not paid dues will be dropped from the membership rolls.

DKG International News: Members are now able to print their own cards from their MyDKG Account on the international website.

**DELTA KAPPA GAMMA
ALPHA XI CHAPTER
2020-2022 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

OFFICERS:

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

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Finance: Ruth Wilson
Nominations: Faith Jack
Communications: Darlene Farrell
Subcommittees:
Yearbook: Barb MacDonald
Newsletter and Website: Melody Hannegan
Historical Records: Karen Ulrich and Jade Leung
Membership: Jeanne Vendeland
Educational Excellence/Program of Work: Melissa
Costantino-Poruben and Phyllis Jenny
Scholarship/Grant (Ways and Means): Jeanne Vendeland
U. S. Forum: Melissa Costantino-Poruben
Visual and Performing Arts: Pat Bauer
World Fellowship: Karen Ulrich

**A WORD FROM OUR NEXT
PRESIDENT**

I just wanted to check in with you and wish you well as we get through the issues that currently confront us. I'm sure that we're all looking forward to the time when things will return closer to normal. Soon we'll start making plans for the next school year, so if you have any suggestions for venues or programs, please send them to Melissa Costantino, Phyllis Jenny, or me. There is also a need for a few volunteers to serve on two committees: programs and teacher grants. Even though we're faced with challenges every day, we still would like to look to the future and plan for a rewarding and productive DKG year ahead. I'm hoping that every member gets involved in some capacity.

Take care and be healthy.

Thanks, Paulette
paulette.hemmings@yahoo.com
412-298-5371

BUSY BOXES

Hi, DKG Sisters!

Hope you are all sheltering in place and that this message finds you healthy and catching up with some leisure time activities. So sorry to have missed the March meeting! I heard it was fun and a great chance to chat with each other as you made the crafts Darlene had planned.

I wanted to let you know that, now that we will not be seeing each other in April, it seems best for our Busy Box Project to be placed on hold until the fall. We need to touch base with Children's Hospital to find out when and if they will be accepting them. So, please, store your prepared Busy Box(es) until further notice. I will let you know as soon as I have more information. I have 6 extra boxes, if anyone wants to pick up another one when we are finally free to go about "business as usual". You can call or text me at 412-874-0479.



Alpha Xi Chapter Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
General Meeting Minutes
Shaler North Hills Library
March 12, 2020

The meeting was hosted by the Shaler sisters with greetings and a raffle basket with an array of gift cards and lottery tickets. It was decided that we will hold this raffle until our next meeting.

We collectively enjoyed an Inspiration by Jade Lueng, "Dirt on My Shirt."

After our box/bag lunch we prepared to take part in our general meeting.

Faith Jack President called the meeting to order. Following our meeting our creative sister Darlene Farrell, led us in a fun evening of crafting.

RECORDING SECRETARY - Shari McGill

the minutes from January 16, 2020 were approved with a correction made: Jeanne Keys is retired from North Allegheny and also taught earlier at North Hills.

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY REPORT

Darlene Farrell sent out two newsletters.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Melody reported for Marg Foster that our balance on hand as of January 16, was \$5,754.67. The total in was \$163.39; the total out \$560.66, leaving a balance of \$5,357.40.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Sandy Werderitch reported we might have a possible new member, Jeanne Keys.

PROGRAMS REPORT

Faith reported for Terry: Our next meeting is at Diamond Run, SUNDAY April 26, 2020 @ 11:30-Noon, Lunch is at 12:15-1:45 and is \$25.00. Installation is 1:15-2:15.

****COMMITTEE REPORTS**

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEES

Paulette is becoming our new President; therefore, she will no longer head the Ways and Means Committee. As the 2nd VP, Jeanne Vendeland will chair the committee along with Membership. Also, there is concern about money available from fundraisers this year for the Teacher Enrichment Grants.

FINANCE REPORT

Continue to bring in wrapped change!

SOCIAL REPORT

Paulette, for Phyllis, reminded everyone of Secret Sisters and we will reveal April 26.

(continued on page 5)



Proud crafters: Paulette, Jade, and Faith



(General Meeting Minutes continued)

PROJECTS REPORT

Peg Maser sent a message on the “Busy Boxes” project that Karen Ulrich will take what boxes are brought in and will turn them over to Peg. Be sure that everything fits inside the boxes. The labels are at the end of the boxes; be sure the age and gender are in clear view. A few other reminders: do not gift wrap, no toys that promote violence, no handmade items, no food, no personal shampoo, or personal care products and do not decorate the boxes.

Shari McGill reported that we are collecting gently used clothes for Dress or Success again this month. DFS really looks forward to our donations and appreciates our work. Bring items to the parking lot before or after the meeting. *****I am hoping to be at the April meeting, so I will accept a little help from our sisters transporting the donations.***

NEW BUSINESS

We have a need for Social Committee Chair as well as members for the Program Committee and ideas for programs.

There will be a double Board Meeting. (out with the old and in with the new!)

State College Pennsylvania Convention June 12-14, 2020. Nancy Penny will be honored in the “Celebration of Life.”

Faith reported that the International Convention is in Philadelphia in July (the 7th through the 11th); volunteers are needed.

Faith encouraged members to take advantage of benefits offered by our state and national organizations.

JOYS AND CONCERNS

Melissa Costantino-Poruben is running for the PSEA/NEA DIRECTOR at the state level. The VOTING is in MAY; BE SURE TO GIVE HER YOUR SUPPORT!

Jade Leung gave a presentation at Duquesne University’s Bayer School of Natural and Environmental Sciences. The focus was for high school seniors and their parents, entitled “My Life after Graduating from Duquesne University.”

Marg’s husband Herm has had transfusions; keep him and her in your prayers and thoughts.

Shari McGill had surgery to remove a foot of her colon and had it re-sectioned.

Faith announced that it’s official: she’s retiring at the end of this school year!

Meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Busy crafters: Barb, Jeanne, Sallie, Jade, Faith, and Shari

Master Crafter: Darlene

I erroneously thought I wouldn't be able to fill the newsletter with chapter business, so I reached out to you for brief responses to a series of questions. To my joy, you answered with your full personalities; I could hear your voices ringing through from your homes to my computer, snail mail and phone! This exercise doesn't replace a face-to-face meeting, but it comes close. I hope you all will enjoy! Fondly, Your Newsletter Editor

THE QUESTIONS

1. Let's assume that all of us would probably answer this one with loved ones and friends, so give a different response: What or who do you miss the most in staying at home? (examples - haircut, cultural events, group exercise)
2. What book(s) have you read?
3. What project(s) have you completed (or you're working on now)?
4. What TV show or movie have you discovered and liked (that you had not seen before)?
5. What TV show or movie have you revisited during this time?
6. What is your go-to music?
7. How have you connected with other people?
8. What has been a good meal that either you or your loved one or a take-out restaurant has prepared?
9. How are you keeping active?
10. What is your dream place to visit (planned already or not-yet-planned) when all of this is over?

from Peg:

#7 Sent cards by USPS; talked on the phone (landline and cell) and sent email messages. I also went to my neighbor's door and talked to her through the storm door... the old fashion way of face-timing ;>)

#9 Walking. Some days I just walk up and down my driveway multiple times. Pretty boring! Other days I have gone to North Park and walked; more interesting and sometimes a challenge to stay the proper distance from others who are also walking.

#10 I hope to be able to travel to Bar Harbor, ME to celebrate my son's 50th birthday in July!

from Paulette:

1. I definitely miss our Broadway Series, Speaker Series, Avonworth's spring musical, concerts (the Rolling Stones concert for June was postponed; hopefully we'll see them in the future!), and shopping!
3. Luckily, we've been busy with our grandsons. Since their activities have been cancelled, we've been helping to keep them occupied, so my husband and I have become "kindergarten teachers" of sorts! I help them with their language arts skills and math, while my husband has been doing science experiments with them. And we've all done indoor and outdoor scavenger hunts, which they love; it's helped to keep us active!
8. Usually we're so busy that I don't have a lot of time to cook, but I've got out my old cookbooks and recipes, and have made some of our family favorites: Swedish meatballs, turkey tetrazzini, ham barbeque, pulled pork. (Going for walks has also helped us avoid gaining a lot of weight during this time at home!).

from Sue P:

1. I miss getting my haircut (**and colored!**). Also, my husband and I miss going to the symphony concerts and out to restaurants with friends.
2. TWO recent books I have read are The Dutch House by Ann Patchett (recommended to me by Debbie McMullen) and Dear Edward by Ann Napolitano.
3. TV shows - Ozark, The Great British Bake Off, Jeopardy, and Judge Judy
4. I have connected with people by calling on the phone (fancy that!) and some internet thing where you see many people at a time. We did that with my husband's family from all over the US and Bach Choir did that last night. It is wonderful to see everyone and see how they're doing. Also, my Bible Study does a conference call each Thursday morning.

It's times like these that we appreciate people and activities more. I have taken so much for granted!!!

from Barb Rankin:

- #1 - I miss the Pgh. Symphony.
- #2 - I am reading the Louise Penny Inspector Gamache series. Fortunately I had taken out 3 of them before they shut down our library.
- #3 - I am working on Cross Stitch Wedding samplers for 2 "great nieces", but I am not putting the dates on them yet; one is May 30 and the other Aug. 22.
- #6 - WQED-FM

We are not quarantined but the campus is closed to outsiders. All activities are cancelled and they are now delivering our dinners to us. I guess we can still socialize at the center as long as we observe social distancing. I was out to Giant Eagle today. They take out temperature before they let us in. I have the cross stitch, knitting, reading to keep me sane and of course there is always cupboard cleaning, etc.

from Jeanne:

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Greetings from my living room!

1. I'm missing going out for lunch and movies.
2. I've just finished two great books, *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates and *Pachinko* by Min Lin Jee. Currently I'm working on Sue Grafton's *W is for Wasted*, which I somehow missed when it came out.
3. Some TV shows I'm enjoying: *New Girl*, *Outlander*, *High Fidelity*, *Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee*, *100 Humans*, *Hunters*, *West World*, *My Brilliant Friend*.

Many of us will remember the energy crisis of the 1970's when the governor closed the schools for a month in the middle of winter. At that time we had no cable, 3 TV channels to choose from, and no internet. If we could survive that, we can make it through these strange days.

from Ellen:

Well, we are staying in our Florida condo, especially since my immune system is weak. The thing I miss the most is getting together with friends. I just started a food drive at our complex, and after it is collected, we will take it to the Harry Chapin Food Drive. And before the virus appeared, we got to meet Kenny G. after a concert. I was supposed to play Louise Nevelson, the sculptor, in a Play Festival, but it was cancelled. Sigh! It would have been a chance for this vertically challenged actor to stand in the middle of the stage and shout..."I am big!! I'm bigger than life!!" SIGH!!

One of the positive things to have developed as a result of this confinement is a greater appreciation for nature. From our lanai, we can watch ducks and turtles in a large pond. We definitely have been focusing on enjoying the "little" things in life.

And I have done lots of reading. My list includes too many books and plays to list. (*Melody has the list, if you're looking for recommendations.*)

We have no idea when we will return home, but we will probably drive. (We have a car down here, so we have flown back and forth for the past few years) And my dream vacation? To visit the Greek islands, especially Santorini. A girl can dream! Take good care of yourself!

from Jade:

Here's a pic... I had a gift card for Barnes and Nobles and ordered a craft kit and learned to sew mini plush animals. I've had it 2 days and have made a zoo!!!!



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from Darlene:

I have been working on fabric face masks. Picture of my most recent batch. Had to get creative to include a picture!!!!

Stay safe and healthy!



from Nancy:

Since it looks like we are going to be in this for the long haul, I have resurrected my vcr/dvr recorder from storage. I have high hopes of converting all of my home movies to dvd format. I don't know if I am being overly optimistic, but I am going to give it a shot.

When we see the end of the tunnel, I so look forward to going to Wildwood Crest with my daughters and their families in August! It's been our family vacation spot since 1987, the year my youngest daughter was born.

Stay home, stay safe.

from Barb Mac:

1. I just miss being out and about square dancing, exercising eating out. I missed 2 vacations already. I feel like I am now happy when things are canceled. I may decide I like hibernation.

3. I have been doing some things I have wanted to do around the house: cleaning out my jewelry box, organizing papers, etc.

9. I have been walking and doing my wii fits activities.

from Sallie (via a really nice phone conversation! These answers are short, but the conversation was not, which was great.)

What does she miss: Dining out! She really enjoyed getting breaks from cooking!

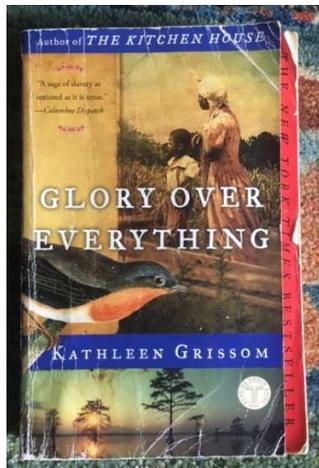
What has she been doing: Going through old photos – sorting to give to family and friends.

What movie has she revisited? *Driving Miss Daisy* (*Can you hear Sallie's voice saying that just as Daisy might?*)

She has enjoyed connecting by phone and snail mail with people lately.

from Deb Mc:

When I am not out walking....have been cleaning/organizing drawers/closets/ pantry/ kitchen cabinets. Looking forward to warmer gardening weather! Reading many books....pictured below, *Glory Over Everything* is about slavery/underground railroad. Had enough leftover supplies to felt a scarf using a silk base and wool yarns etc. Meeting virtually with two Zoom groups weekly....fun to catch up! Stay safe!



from Faith:

1. Miss - record store, concerts and eating out
2. Children's titles: *Among the Hidden* by Haddix, Adult: *A Fall of Marigolds* by Susan Meissner
5. What TV show or movie have you revisited during this time? Vera season 10 on Britbox
6. What is your go-to music? Stevie Nicks, Melissa Etheridge and Grace Potter
7. How have you connected with other people? Texting, facebook, phone
8. Food: Steak from Applebees
10. What is your dream place? Cornbury Music Festival in Oxfordshire England in July, hopefully!

from Karen U:

What have I been doing? Well, one day I changed the furnace filter, put a different wreath on the door, and read a magazine. Another day, I worked in the garden to clean up after winter. One really exciting morning my husband and I and 2 neighbors spent an hour chasing my runaway dog.

What do I miss: Being able to get my hair cut - and, it'll be another month...look out! I'm going through bowling withdrawal. And, I'm missing all the events that have been scheduled during the quarantine that have to be cancelled or rescheduled for who knows when!

Reading: I finished The Girl on the Train and am starting Where the Crawdads Sing.

As far as TV – so much is reruns. Right now I'm trying to figure out when Festus replaced Chester on Gunsmoke.

I have been able to continue volunteering at meals on Wheels twice a week and at Family House when needed. Be safe and keep sane, everyone!

from Melissa:

During this time, I have had daily classes with my students - Avonworth didn't skip a beat, using each Monday for in-service and having students complete lessons each day. Since there is no timeline, and students are to only log on each day, my days are filled with waiting by the computer for students to ask questions, submit work, or finally just asking for kids to turn in work. While doing this, I have listened to *Carnegie's Maid* by Marie Benedict, *The Husband's Secret* by Liane Moriarty, and *The Woman Who Smashed Codes* by Jason Fagone. Violet begins school tomorrow, so we have decided that my husband will teach from the kitchen, I will have the living room, and Violet will learn from the kitchen, with both parents within 10 feet away!

I believe my election for NEA Director has been postponed until December. I had a very busy February and March campaigning in Harrisburg, but unfortunately, I could not complete my tour of PA. Looking forward to seeing you all again very soon!

from Phyllis:

I miss my family, my cultural outings with friends, and my daily water exercise. To keep busy I've been doing different things: walking outside weather permitting, dancing to music from the 50's and 60's, cleaning my house and closets, calling a different person who lives alone as well as my 96 year old aunt in a nursing home every other day, doing crosswords and word searches, coloring and playing solitaire, watching TV. I haven't been able to concentrate enough to read my books, but I'm hoping this changes soon.

I celebrated my birthday with a safe distancing visit from Paulette and Wes, as well as a one from my daughter and grandkids. I love the live streaming of my church services and live chats with Pastor Doug. My book club will soon begin having a meeting via zoom. I had a video visit with my PCP this morning in place of the appointment coming up in April. Isn't technology amazing?! Stay safe everyone and remember "This too shall pass".



from Diane:

Sue Swick (*a friend from church*) put me on to a mystery writer who lives right here in Pittsburgh. Her name is Edie Claire. She has written several series but the one I'm reading is the Leigh Koslow series. They're not real intense but just fun. The best part is they are set right here in Pittsburgh! Leigh lives in Ross Township, rides up McKnight Rd., goes to Riverview Park (which is a mile from where I grew up!) and mentions many other Pittsburgh areas. It's just fun reading.

A TV show we have begun to watch and enjoy is *Call the Midwife*. I know we are really behind the times but we just got Netflix recently so we can watch it from the beginning!

To entertain us and Julia we have begun a little game on Facebook messenger with her. We sent her a picture of a small bag in which we hid something she would know from our house. She had to ask yes or no questions to try and figure it out. Yesterday it took almost all day but she got it and this morning she wanted to know when we were sending the next bag picture. It's not too original but it is fun for us and for her and keeps her connected to us since we can't get together right now.

from Pat:

Believe it or not, I've been subbing for General Music online, and will be doing so until school is back in session. I also play for my church's online church service. Check us out on Facebook at clc Millvale on Sunday morning at 9:30. (or on YouTube).

Stay home, stay safe and wash your hands!

From Karen B:

I have read Women in the Castle and Why Kill the Innocent. I had three boxes full of photos to be organized and placed in albums. I have put this off for YEARS!!!! Now I know why. It has taken the two weeks that I have been in the house. Wow, I am finished and just realized that probably my son will just throw them all out when I am gone!! Yesterday, I started to paint a picture for my granddaughter's birthday gift. The attic cleaning is about half way finished.

As for TV, I have been viewing the series called Outlander which I really enjoy, and the movie I liked was "Harriet".

Each day, I make a point of calling a friend and checking to see how they are doing. It has been wonderful connecting with old friends that I have not heard from in a while. We both share our experiences and relate the recent high points in our lives.

Each day, I take a walk through the neighborhood. It helps me keep upbeat and motivated. Right before we were required to stay home, I was fortunate to take my son, his wife and my grandchildren to Disney World. It was my wish to be able to keep up with the family! I did and had a wonderful time.

I pray everyone in DKG is healthy and keeping busy. I appreciate so much all the health workers in our country.

I hope you've enjoyed reading all of these thoughts and well wishes. We truly belong to a wonderful group of women!

My responses? Well, I miss my water aerobics classes. Because one of our instructors had back surgery in January, I had been teaching four classes a week – grateful to have had the extra time in the water, but sad for the abrupt halt! I miss the cultural outings, too! However, I especially miss seeing my dad face-to-face! We talk every day and I know he's getting some personal contact and good care, but it's still hard.

I've more and more weaned myself from the darker TV shows and movies. So, the old and new Mary Poppins movies, Fantasia, and Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist have entertained me.

I'm enjoying the world of Zoom and Duo for connecting with friends and family in video chats.

The first project (other than this newsletter) which has been consuming some of my time is this counted cross stitch piece, which will ultimately say "A Woman's Place is in the Revolution!"

One month from today, Terry and I were supposed to go to Sicily and Rome! It's not to be right now, but hopefully, we'll make it there soon!

In unison with your voices, I say, "Be well! Be safe!" Melody

