

# The Alpha Xi Messenger

May 2020 (Stay at Home Issue #2)



Since we did not have the opportunity to meet in April and it's so important these days to stay connected, I am hoping this newsletter will give us not only a few reminders and updates but also a glimpse into each other's lives as we have made it from the red to the yellow phase. My thought as I read your responses was that we are resilient women who will weather this storm. Stay safe!

Your newsletter editor, Melody

## DUES REMINDER

**The June 1<sup>st</sup> deadline** for sending your dues to Marg is rapidly approaching. Thank you to those of you who have already paid them. For those of us who have not, remember that dues will remain \$85 for active members and \$35 for reserve members. Checks should be made out to Delta Kappa Gamma. Please mail your check to Marg Foster, 200 Goldsmith Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Please also remember that we have requested a \$5.00 donation from each member to ensure having the funds to provide the Teacher Enrichment Grants at the same level as we had this past year. You can add that donation to your dues in the same check.

If you have any questions, please email Marg at [margfoster4@gmail.com](mailto:margfoster4@gmail.com) or call 412-486-7672.

## PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Your program committee has already been hard at work and has made arrangements for two of next year's meetings. (teaser: the Heinz History Center will be the setting of one!) If you would like to contribute ideas or connections to the program committee, please contact Phyllis at [pljenny@comast.net](mailto:pljenny@comast.net)

We are still in need of a **social committee chairperson!** Please contact Paulette at [paulette.hemmings@yahoo.com](mailto:paulette.hemmings@yahoo.com)

Also, the Teacher Enrichment Grant Committee will need members – the primary task will be to judge entries.

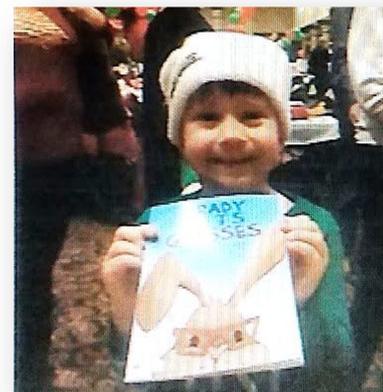
Contact Jeanne Vendeland – [bardessa@hotmail.com](mailto:bardessa@hotmail.com)



**CONGRATULATIONS to Dede for receiving an Album of Distinction Award for 2020!**

The award recognizes the “Extraordinary Entrepreneurship Ambassador” Wisdom for Kids Award from the Wisdom for Kids Foundation, which she accepted on December 31, 2019.

She will be honored at the 2021 Pennsylvania State Convention!



## Updates:

The PA State DKG Convention at Penn State has been canceled and all information that would normally be disseminated there will be posted on the state website and in the *Keystonian*. President Eileen Little will send out an email when everything is available. The motion to send out the *Keystonian* only electronically is going to be dropped for now. It will probably resurface for the 2021 state convention.

To date, DKG International has not made a decision concerning the convention in Philadelphia. The dates are July 7<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>. *The DKG News*, May/June Issue can be found on the international website and with it are contingency plans for elections of international officers and voting on the constitutional amendment proposals, if the convention is canceled.

Looking forward, **The Creative Arts Retreat** is being planned for April 23-25, 2021 in Ludlow, PA and the **PA State Convention** will be June 11-13, 2021 at the Nittany Lion Inn.

Finally, **Dolly Parton** is our newest honorary member. A nice article about her and her work is on the front page of the *DKG News*.

# Members' News

from Melissa:

In our home, we have finished six 1000 piece puzzles and I am personally on my 22nd book! Historical fiction recommendations highly encouraged! I am looking forward to school officially being done June 5!

(Editor's recommendation for historical fiction: *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates)

from Paulette:

To get a little philosophical, this time at home has been a mixture of concern but also a time of calm. Before our life totally changed a few weeks ago, my typical days had consisted of a very hectic schedule of appointments, events, and plans. Since I've been home, it's been easy to keep busy, but at a much slower pace, with less stress, healthier habits, and a chance for reflection and rest. If I don't think too much about what could happen to me and my family and just focus on today, it's been a healthy change. When things do start to return to normal, I'll have to try to remember the positives I've learned.

from Pat:

My sister and I are in a quarantine video of a Jim Donovan and the Sun King Warriors video of their song "Oolala!" Look us up on YouTube! Hope you are all staying safe!



from Barb MacDonald:

**To the women who are labeled...**

Aggressive: **Keep being Assertive.**

Bossy: **Keep on Leading.**

Difficult: **Keep telling the Truth.**

Too Much: **Keep taking up space.**

Awkward: **Keep asking hard questions.**

**Please don't shrink yourself to make people happy. Be yourself, you're beautiful that way.**

I have to say that helping others makes me very happy. I have been calling members of the Naples Senior Center to chat and ask how they are doing. The Center has online activities, a food bank, and caseworkers. I recently contacted them about an opportunity to have a robotic cat or dog to help with feeling isolated. Take a look at this short video. Take care!!!!!! Fondly, Ellen <https://joyforall.com/>

from Peg:

Hanging on...some days by a thread! However, this past week I had an experience that I would never have had if it hadn't been for the quarantine! One of my friends had her 80th birthday and was not going to be able to celebrate as she would have. Several retired Shaler teachers organized a car parade celebration which included 19 cars! We met in a parking lot, which gave us some time to visit with each other in person while maintaining social distance. Then we drove to her place, where we circled twice, honking our horns. There is a gazebo there and some of the group stayed for a while to visit. Seeing so many of our former colleagues and friends in the flesh was as great a gift to all of us as it was for the birthday girl!

Hoping everyone is doing well and that we will be able to be together in the fall!

In a phone nice phone conversation, Shari said that she is feeling better than she has in a long time. Her surgery wasn't as extensive as it could have been and this time of staying at home has given her a great chance to focus on recuperation!

from Phyllis:

I've been watching more television and doing crosswords than I ever did. I'm still not reading many books, just the newspaper.

I do enjoy the zoom meetings - my book club meets the last Monday of the month, my church women's group meets every other Wednesday at 1 pm, and every Wednesday evening is "wine down Wednesday with my family members (4 from Florida and 2 from Pa) - all via Zoom! My Oxford Court Diners Club has happy hour at 5:00 on Saturday when the weather permits. This week we each ordered an individual pizza, brought our own beverage and chair, and sat at a safe distance in the parking area. Happy Hour usually lasts 3 hours, and we all enjoy talking and laughing with our neighbors more than we ever did before.

I finally ventured out to the grocery store for the first time since March 13 and had 2 medical appointments in the offices. The "new normal" - being out with masks and gloves on, one way aisles in the stores, temperatures taken when entering office buildings and hospitals, floors marked with tape showing where to sit or stand while waiting for your appointment or for the elevator - seems very unsettling to me.

In the midst of all this uncertainty, the program committee has been working on selecting programs and venues for the upcoming year. Of course no one knows how any of this will work or what things will be like in the fall and winter, but we are making plans.

I hope everyone is staying healthy and safe and enjoying life.

I am finding out that I am good at cocooning. I fill my days with online theater and exercise classes, books, Netflix, FaceTime calls, and walks when the weather allows.

I also tutor my first grade grandson in MN three mornings a week. It is a great bonding experience for us!

I haven't been out in public, not even with a mask. My son grocery shops every two weeks for me and I don't do take-out. My daughter-in-law keeps me in line. She is an infectious diseases doctor and she worries about me. I'll wait for her go-ahead before I venture out.

I know we all have concerns. I hope you are staying safe and sane. These are hard times.

Terry

from Dede:

This pandemic has been all about catharsis for me. I went through about 7000 photos, and sent out at least 1000 photos to 20+ friends around the country. I wanted to make people happy – and from the thank you notes I received, I think I did. I saved boxes and boxes of lessons from my 37 years – I even found a lesson for DEATH BE NOT PROUD ditto papers from my first year of teaching at Penn Hills in 1974! All those papers are recycled! I also worked on condo improvement- had hardwood floors extended from my hallway and kitchen into the dining room and living room; had those rooms painted; had a retractable deck awning installed. I also have piles of clothes and other stuff to donate, and I have made about \$500 in two weeks selling stuff on Facebook Marketplace. On the other hand, I am so sad that all of my May presentations throughout the state were cancelled. Looking forward to seeing everyone!

from Jade:

What has surprised me the most is the resiliency and creativity of the human spirit. In this difficult time it is amazing to see how some people inspire hope whether on the front lines showing compassion and a willingness to treat the sick or, at home thinking of new and innovative ideas related to our way of life whether it is a new game, craft or something related to the workplace. The Coronavirus pandemic will be a historical time where decades from now people will still talk about “what did you do during the pandemic?” I know I want to answer that during the pandemic I replaced the fear of the virus with hope, love, and branched out to expand my horizons. At times I left my comfort zone but still found the beauty in each day regardless of the challenges.

from Sue Phillips

- I'm surprised how much I enjoy staying at home. There are times when I get antsy, but I'm enjoying getting certain parts of our house in order and relaxing! Also, our daughter in DC calls us every day!

- I have laughed really hard at certain parts of the Netflix show After Life that Ricky Gervais wrote and directed. It's a depressing premise, but there are some really funny parts!

- We have done takeout at the Hello Bistro and Texas Roadhouse-delicious!

I hope you are safe and well.



Jade & Shawn completed the Duquesne Virtual 5k Walk and Faith bought a new car! Retirement gift to herself???



from Deb McMullen:

Many of us live with activity packed daily schedules, myself included. The first three weeks of shelter in place were scheduled with home maintenance projects. With these now accomplished, I am experiencing a slower pace in life....and I like it! Time to think/reflect, enjoy solitude and be more observant of nature! I am also preparing a couple of dinners a week for working neighbors....passing along positive vibes.

Emiliano's in Cranberry (also one on McKnight) has fast/great take out.

Wishing continued health to you all.....Deb