



Seguin, Texas

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THETA KAPPA

October 2020



Theta Kappa, Chapter 202, Area 7, Texas State Organization
of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

Mission Statement: The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.

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Up and Coming

October 8

First United Methodist Church, Christian Life Center (CLC), 5 pm. Use the parking lot behind the church. Hostesses: Beth Parker*, Rhonda Westerfield**, Karen DePalermo, Janice Harvey, Olivia Avitua, and Pam Colvin. Invocation by Rhonda Westerfield. **Program: Catching up on Chapter Business. Backup up format if needed:** On-line with Google Meet.

We will not have un-raffles this year. Hostesses do not need to bring prizes. In lieu of fundraisers, the chapter voted to ask members to contribute \$20. Cash or check is fine at in-person meetings. Make check to Theta Kappa. Or mail to Diane Gesick, 636 Royal Sage Dr., Seguin, TX 78155. We will continue to have door prizes and birthday gifts.

The chapter voted to continue the toiletries donations. Please bring travel-sized shampoo, conditioner, lotion, bar soap, toothpaste and toothbrushes to in-person meetings.

November 12

First United Methodist Church, CLC, 5 pm. Hostesses: Beth Gerhardt*, Rita Mantooth**, Barbara Effenberger, Gloria Osborn, and Marj Peters. Invocation by Rita Mantooth. **Program: Make Your Own Christmas Cards** presented by Beth Gerhardt.

The Presidents Note...

2020, the Year of Change

As we wait and hope for our lives to get back to normal, we reflect on this year of change in Delta Kappa Gamma. In January, we never envisioned cancellation of chapter, state and international gatherings and changing to on-line contact, even into September.

Change is still with us and we must be prepared. During the September meeting, most members voiced a preference for an in-person meeting. First United Methodist Church just granted permission to use its Christian Life Center for our meetings this year. See additional information in the Up and Coming section of this page. Please check your email often next week in case we need to notify members if a change to on-line should become necessary.

Long-time members may recall the years when the November business meeting was set aside so the time could be used for our annual fundraiser. It was a live auction, complete with auctioneer, microphone, and loudspeakers. Then we changed to silent auctions at the November meetings, then to garage sales, and then to the un-affle to generate funds. Now we ask each member to contribute \$20 and that will be our fundraiser for this year.

Many past newsletters showcased the exotic and beautiful places to which our members traveled. An offshoot of travel is collecting hotel toiletries which we turned into a service project by donating them to a family shelter. With current travel limited, our service project continues, but may be scaled back since most toiletry donations will have to be purchased.

We will continue to meet challenges as they arise.

Your Co-Presidents,

**Beth Gerhardt
and
Beth Parker**



Vision Statement: Leading women educators impacting education worldwide.

Theta Kappa Website: www.thetakappatx.weebly.com

When we last met...

September meeting brings on-line experience

From the minutes of **Karen DePalermo**, *Recording Secretary*

The Theta Kappa Chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International met Thursday, September 10, on-line using Google Meet. **Beth Gerhardt**, Co-President, called the meeting to order. Invocation was given by **Theresa Casey**.

Twenty-one members were in attendance on-line.

Treasurer, **Diane Gesick**, reported a balance of \$3,084.39. Members dropped are Jeannie Smith, Linda Fritz, and Karen Huff.

Lynna Kraus requested to change from active to reserve status. **Pat Villeneuve** moved and **Rhonda Westerfield** seconded the motion to grant the request. Motion was passed.

Iris Lamme, Finance Committee Chair, presented the 2020-2021 chapter budget. It was approved as is.

The Area 7 workshop was attended by eight members on-line. **Dawn McMillan** shared some information from the program session. Those doing refreshments could be responsible for a theme and program. A suggestion for a service project is to give supplies to young moms at the high school.

Thank you notes were read from the Guadalupe Valley Family Violence Shelter, **Grace Thompson**, and **Pat Bischoff**.

Service projects approved for 2020-2021 will continue to be toiletries collection and assist with decorating for Teacher of the Year Luncheon if held in May, 2021.

Chapter voted to have only one fundraiser for the time being. Each member is asked to contribute \$20 for the year.

Pictures in Mystery Member Contest were **Deanie Knight**, **Beth Parker**, **Bobbie Maddox**, and **Beth Gerhardt**. There were no winners.

Olivia Avitua was awarded the Chapter Achievement Award by **Deanie Knight**. She was given a James Avery rose charm. **Anna Bergstrom** presented a Yeti travel mug to outgoing Co-President **Olivia Avitua**.

Janet Wolber installed the 2020-2022 chapter officers.

The October 8 meeting will be in person, if possible, at 5 p.m.

Sammy Pooley-Means awarded the traveling angel to both presidents.

Sharon Johnson, **Bobbie Maddox**, **Marty Keil**, and **Karen DePalermo** contributed to ring-a-bell.

Beth Gerhardt recognized the birthdays. August--**Dinah Jaks** and **Gloria Osborn**. September--**Anna Bergstrom**, **Velma Huebner**, **Deanie Knight**, and **Janet Wolber**.

Door prizes were won by **Dawn McMillan**, **Janice Harvey**, **Sharon Johnson**, and **Glenda Shafer**.

Hostesses were thanked--**Iris Lamme**, **Theresa Casey**, **Glenda Shafer**, **Carolyn Sagebiel**, and **Anna Bergstrom**.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.



E d u c a t i o n i n t h e A g e o f C o v i d

By Bobbie Maddox, TK Newsletter Editor

Editor's note: "Education in the Age of Covid" will be an on-going column to help keep our Theta Kappa members informed of the learning situations in the Texas communities around us, and to perhaps find ways to support the changes schools and families are experiencing. If you have an item or idea you would like to contribute, please email Bobbie Maddox at maddox.bobbie@gmail.com)

Teaching and learning in the Age of Covid is a challenge that might best be described as feeling your way along a dark tunnel, hoping for that proverbial light to appear. Whether you're a classroom teacher, a parent-turned-home school-teacher, or a student in or out of the classroom, the current school year has presented everyone involved with an opportunity to think outside the box of conventional education.

Retired teachers such as many of Theta Kappa's members, are following on the sidelines, looking for ways to help and encourage, and thanking God that they are not called to this particular challenge. Toward those goals, a district reading coordinator for the Gonzales ISD, a first grade classroom teacher in the Comal ISD, and a work-from home mother of four in the Austin ISD shared some of their experiences.

A couple of things they all agreed on: It's a learning experience, and it's not for the faint of heart.

TK sister Olivia Avitua, a first grade self-contained classroom teacher, is one of those in the trenches. She said her school district, the Comal ISD, is working hard to meet all the challenges of on campus learning, even sanitizing



Well-spaced and ready for students to attend when the Covid clears, first grade teacher and TK member Olivia Avitua's classroom waits. Currently, Olivia is teaching remotely while three of her teammates are working with students face to face. She said she worries about kindergarteners who must think this is the way school always is.

playground equipment multiple times a day. She offered a saying she recently heard to sum it all up: "Teachers this year are like builders, building an airplane while it's up in the sky."

Olivia's current assignment has her teaching remotely. She said that to begin with, the biggest challenge was technology and getting kids logged in correctly. "It took some time, but I think now even the kids can log themselves in and problem solve when something goes wrong." She said her current trial involves having students do and turn in their required assignments but the reality goes far beyond technology. "The classroom experience is very sad for me to see. Kindergarteners see the changes now and may think it was always like this, but I know it must be harder for the older ones," Olivia said. Students are 6 feet apart, wearing masks, surrounded by cleaning supplies, lots of sanitizer and hand washing. Dots on the floor (indicate) where to stand. It breaks my heart to see all these changes."

As a "hybrid" teacher overseeing a reading program, April Shelnett said she and her fellow teachers in the Gonzales ISD are challenged to be flexible with all aspects of their jobs. "We have been blessed with the opportunity to have students face-to-face in our district (taking precautionary measures, of course). Our students are becoming more 'tech savvy,' but at the same time, particularly in the upper grades, teachers are now relying on the technology to teach rather than planning full lessons."

April said she has noticed with her own 11-year-old at Vogel Elementary here in Seguin, that she and her classmates are not learning in traditional fashion for some of their courses. "They are learning through a screen," she said. "My question is if they need intervention or quick feedback, how do they get it? My daughter is lucky to have a mom who is a teacher, but I'm concerned about those who are not fortunate enough to have that same advantage."

A recent national news story, highlighting Covid Age education, included the situation of a mom and three children who were faced with distance learning without the necessary equipment. Their school district was able to issue computer tablets for the students, but with no internet connection at home, mom resorted to having them sit outside a Taco Bell in order to log on to their lessons.

Education in the Age of Covid cont'd...

At perhaps the other end of the spectrum, Michelle (Maddox) Smith, a parent in the Austin ISD, is one of the fortunate moms who is able to manage having her four children learn from home. Her district delayed the start of school until after Labor Day, and then implemented distance learning for everyone.

"We are now in the middle of four weeks of online learning for all students," she explained. Starting Oct. 3, the schools will begin to phase in students who want to return to campus (in person learning)... My family is choosing to keep our kids at home doing online learning through the Austin ISD for a variety of reasons." Michelle said she and her husband are fortunate to have flexible jobs that can be done from their home.

"We feel we can support our kids and their teachers to make the online experience workable... I believe sending all students back to campus at this time puts many teachers at risk. We want to (keep our kids at home) to minimize the number of students in school and help keep our community safe."

Describing her family's distant learning setup, Michelle said all four Smith children, ages 4 to 13, have their own desks and work areas, and over the summer they practiced Zoom calls with family and started working on typing and computer skills. But even with an almost idyllic home setting, Michelle admits to challenges with the technology.

"We had to upgrade our internet so that three kids could be on Zoom calls at the same time while two adults access the internet for work," she said. "And it is a lot of starting and stopping when you try to work. Also, the lack of social connection has been hard."

Michelle said they have arranged for each child to have an outdoor extracurricular activity that provides an opportunity for exercise and social connections. For example, the 13-year-old is playing sandlot volleyball twice a week.

As strong supporters of public education, the Smith family is very aware of the equity gap that is being widened through the ramifications of the pandemic.

"The teachers my children have right now are working so hard to make remote learning work. And it is working. It isn't what we would choose under normal circumstances, but



Getting some help from her mom, Hannah Smith, Austin ISD second grader, works out a technical issue before going on to a Zoom virtual classroom meeting. Michelle Smith is a work-at-home mother of four, and she is a graduate of Seguin High School.



Even in the Age of Covid, First Day of School pictures must be recorded to document the new school year. Austin mom Michelle Smith, knows she is fortunate to be able to provide the equipment and support her children need to be successful at distance learning.

there is a sense of community with the school and our neighbors, and we know we have to navigate this all together."

Whether in a safely distanced classroom or at home in front of a computer screen, the challenges of finding their way along that dark tunnel of education in the Age of Covid is one students, parents, and especially teachers must meet.

Olivia said she is learning that no matter how hard change is, kids are strong and want to learn.

Their teachers are learning right along side them.

The Best Part of My Day

by Glenda Shafer, *TK Newsletter Reporter*

Several years ago I decided to resume my efforts to become more fit. The logical choice for me was walking down my little country road at dawn's early light. Having seen numerous pictures on social media of numerous people, places and things, I decided to give it a try. A lull in my traveling made me take a closer look at my immediate surroundings.

During my early morning walks, I realized that my senses were constantly assailed by nature. So, I started taking pictures of simple (and some not so simple) things such as bobcats and boars, cardinals and copperheads.

To convey the ever present senses other than sight, I decided to add a bit of commentary to accompany the pictures. Then came the sharing on social media... and the response.



The eastern Guadalupe County sky is awash in color on one of Glenda's early morning walks.



Equally as beautiful, is Glenda's photo of the western Guadalupe County sky at sunset.

However, it is the morning sky that has more often than not held me transfixed as I have started my day. Specifically, the rising of the sun. It seems to have become almost a spiritual experience, a ministry perhaps I share. It is gratifying to me and (judging by their responses) to those kind enough to offer amazing encouragement.

A coffee table book? Greeting cards? Lofty aspirations for me but balm on days when my ego needs a bit of stroking.

What I have found is that I do not always have to travel to exotic places to capture nature's beauty; I can find it right up the road.

An additional bit of inspiration...

May I never miss a rainbow or a sunset, because I'm looking down.

—Submitted by Deanie Knight

Alpha State Texas Educational Foundation (ASTE F) celebrates 10 years

By Beth Parker and Beth Gerhardt, *Theta Kappa Co-Presidents*

ASTE F was awarded 501(c)(3) non-profit Foundation status effective September 17, 2010. In the last decade, ASTEF funded over \$250,000 in member scholarships and almost \$50,000 to women aspiring to become educators. ASTEF supported five Leadership Seminars with the next one on the horizon in February 2021 and granted over \$200,000 to deserving members and chapter projects.

We've seen ASTEF in action. Theta Kappa received two grants totaling \$1550 for our highly successful Books for Babies projects in 2017 and 2018.

Theta Kappa sends birthday greetings to ASTEF and thanks the foundation for its support.



The ASTEF logo represents its mission of supporting scholarships, leadership and projects. Click on the graphic to link to more ASTEF information.

Area 7 News

By Beth Parker and Beth Gerhardt, *Theta Kappa Co-Presidents*



The Area 7 logo looks to the future.

Generally each statewide area workshop is funded by registration fees. In the past, chapters also contributed items or gift cards for gift baskets which are raffled off to benefit ASTEF. This year no registration fees were collected because the workshop was on-line, but there was a cost associated with upgrading the Zoom license. Each chapter was asked to contribute \$25. Theta Kappa and many other chapters contributed additional funds. Area 7 Coordinator Carole Lowe reported that \$416 of extra funds were donated to ASTEF since no live raffle could be held.

In case you didn't have time to read it in September, the *Lone Star News* Fall 2020 edition is on-line at <https://indd.adobe.com/view/122ed515-905f-4742-94d7-ce4a55040b5b>

Here is information about the World Fellowship Program for those who have served on our chapter-level World Fellowship Committee. DKG began the World Fellowship Program shortly after WWII ended to provide an opportunity for women in non-DKG countries to study in the U.S. and Canada. These women then use their degrees to work to improve conditions within their own communities.

92nd Texas State Convention
Denton, Texas
June 16-18, 2021

DKG International Conference
San Antonio, TX
July 21-24, 2021

Our Birthday Ladies

October

Pam Colvin

Lynna Kraus

Rhonda Westerfield

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