

# The Reporter

*The Delta Kappa  
Gamma Society  
International*

*Epsilon Kappa  
Chapter #130*

*Texas State  
Austin, TX  
Area 7*

**International Mission:** Delta Kappa Gamma promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education

**International Theme:** DKG: Leading Women Educators, Impacting Education Worldwide

**State Theme:** Bridging Yesterday and Tomorrow

**Chapter Theme:** Be Progressive

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*Editor*

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## President's Message

What an exciting start to the new biennium and school year! The start of the fall semester at UT is always full of excitement and energy. And this year included the new challenge of scooters taking over campus. But that could be a whole other article in itself.

Our September meeting included many members from Area 7 chapters joining us to hear Tim Lee outline "The Changing Landscape of Retirement." On the next Saturday, ten of our members attended the "Building Bridges in Area 7" fall workshop. We attended training sessions for chapter officers, committee chairs and members along with spearheading a successful fundraiser for ASTEF. I attended additional Presidents' training given by Marilyn Gregory, Judy Mezick, Stacy Arnold and Karen Duke. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to learn from our TSO leadership and hear ideas from the other chapters in our area.

We have an upcoming orientation and hope to have fantastic educators to be inducted at our October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. Cathy Daugherty, international DKG president, will be our October speaker. She will tell us "what's new" in the Society, including Headquarters organizational teams and next year's international conferences. Cathy is an excellent speaker, and she will motivate us with her knowledge and dedication to DKG. You don't want to miss it!!

Members of the Educational Excellence Committee have planned interesting, relevant programs for 2018-19! In November, we will hear from Maria Arabbo on how we can meet the needs and better assist asylum/refugee families and their children in Central Texas schools. Then in December our own Hilda Diaz and Cara Hamlin will provide the program "Hands-On Technology – Integrating STEM, Robotics, Coding & Motivating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner."

I am so honored to be the president of this AMAZING chapter. Please make plans to attend the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting at DKG Headquarters to meet our new initiates, hear our international president, and celebrate our members.

Be Progressive,

Cheryl



## September Meeting Highlights

Our first DKG Epsilon Kappa meeting of the year was a huge success. Since other DKG chapters were invited to hear from our prestigious speaker, Charlotte Brown and I had fun greeting everyone with our chapter-created musical instruments as they drove into the parking lot.

We had a full room to hear from Tim Lee, the energetic Executive Director of TRTA, about the Changing Landscape of Retirement: Updates on TRS, Social Security, and Retirement. He didn't mince words that this is a pivotal year for active and retired teachers to fight for our rights to a pension and benefits at retirement. We were deeply moved by Tim's speech and many had questions for him at the end of his presentation.



*Greeters at the Sept Meeting*



*Members of Austin-area chapters listen intently to Tim Lee's presentation*

Epsilon Kappa members were joined by 23 guests, including DKG members from Alpha, Nu Alpha, and Kappa Lambda chapters.

The business meeting began with installation of Cheryl Lane as our new chapter president. Cheryl was unable to attend the April meeting when other officers were installed.

The September Green Hospitality Team – led by Recording Secretary Ann Lilie – provided great refreshments.

Submitted by Norma Jost



President Cheryl Lane receives her chapter president's pin from Nominations Chair Earin Martin. The pin was previously worn by Dr. Natalie Barraga.

## TRS—Two of the Issues

### 1) TRS Defined Benefit (DB) pension plan or Defined Contribution (DC) plan

- The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) has provided its defined benefit (DB) pension plan to retirees since its creation in 1937. During that time, TRS has never missed a payment to its annuitants, and it has stood as a testament to stability through times of great economic uncertainty.
- The defined benefit plan teachers in Texas pay into is a source of great pride, and it is one of the true upsides of participating in the teaching profession. As many private companies have pivoted away from defined benefit plans, TRS has stayed true to its slogan of being “the forever fund.”
- However, some Texas lawmakers and outside interest organizations are pushing to replace the DB plan provided by TRS to a defined contribution plan. Defined contribution plans move the burden of providing retirement benefits away from the employer and onto the employee.
- The best way to help is by joining the fight. In the upcoming weeks, TRTA will be providing new TRTATV episodes on how to lobby your legislators and work with legislative aides. Additionally, you should join a TRTA local unit to stay up-to-date on the latest legislation and be sure to vote in the November General elections.

### 2) TRS-Care Funding

- TRS-Care is the health insurance program more than 260,000 retired Texas educators rely upon. The program is provided by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS), the state agency responsible for running teachers’ retirement pensions.
- During the 85th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature, TRS-Care faced a \$1.1 billion budget shortfall. If nothing had been done by the Legislature to address this issue, retirees’ premiums would have skyrocketed (even tripling), and the program could have closed within two years, leaving many without a quality health care option. The Texas Legislature made changes to TRS-Care funding for the program to remain solvent.
- In 2016, the Legislature held an Interim Study Committee, which studied the issue of rising TRS-Care health insurance costs. The committee put forth two proposals, both of which required retirees to pay the entire shortfall. Read TRTA’s full review of the study on the website listed below.
- Texas retired educators live on a fixed income. The average retiree receives \$2,035 per month from the TRS pension. Ninety-five percent of Texas retirees did not pay into Social Security during their careers, and those who do receive Social Security are often harmed by federal provisions called the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset.
- Retirees cannot afford to pay for the entire TRS-Care shortfall. Before the election, we need to ask every politician:
- What is their spending philosophy on me, as an active/retired teacher and public education?
- Will they commit to fund our TRS-Care Shortfall and give retirees a raise?

More info at: <https://trta.org/our-issues/>

Submitted by Norma Jost



## Area 7 Workshop

Ten Epsilon Kappa members attended the Area 7 workshop held on Saturday morning, September 15. Chapter members participated in numerous ways. Earin Martin coordinated the ASTEF raffle and silent auction and presented a breakout session; Deb Acevedo-Tamminga and Norma Jost led the music and presented a music breakout session; Marilyn Gregory assisted with Leadership for Chapter Presidents and presented a breakout session about the TSO Women in the Arts Committee.



L to R: Earin Martin, Ann Lilie, Marilyn Gregory, Evelyn Barron, Marcia Kirkland



L to R: Cheryl Lane, Deb Acevedo-Tamminga, Norma Jost, Pam Kelly, Cindy Gruner



President Cheryl Lane and Past President Pam Kelly listen as workshop begins

## Area 7 Workshop continued



Epsilon Kappa members Deb Acevedo-Tamminga (at microphone) and Norma Jost (right) lead opening music



ASTEF Vice-President Earin Martin tells about the various hats (roles) of ASTEF



ASTEF raffle -- area chapters donated items for lucky members to win



Cindy Gruner (seated), Pam Kelly, and Evelyn Barron handle ticket sales and money



Cheryl Lane shows "Springtime Sentinel," an original painting donated by Debbie Sansom's mother for the ASTEF silent auction

Submitted by Evelyn Barron and Marcia Kirkland

## Singing with DKG

What can I say about loving to sing? I love the sound of women singing and I have been so fortunate to gain confidence by singing with Tapestry Singers, The Austin Women's Chorus. So, when Deb Acevedo-Tamminga asked me to sing in the TSO Chorus 2015-2017, I jumped at the chance. She is amazing!!



TSO Waco Chorus



Tapestry Singers singing at the DKG International Market Place

In Summer 2017, I was asked to join the TSO Music Committee, and I have had so much fun. Also, at the 2018 TSO Convention in Houston, I mentioned to Joan Hester that Tapestry Singers could perhaps sing at the DKG International Convention.

Summer 2018 was amazing:

- Singing as a State Music Committee member at TSO Waco
- Getting Tapestry Singers to sing 5 songs in the DKG International Market Place
- Singing with the DKG International Chorus (over 140 members!)



DKG International Chorus - Over 140 members!

This year is starting musically because Deb and I presented a music session on making a musical instrument at the 9/15/18 Area Workshop.

FYI: Tapestry Singers Fall Concert, *Here on These Branches*, is on November 17, 7:00 p.m., at Northwest Hills United Methodist Church, 7050 Village Center Drive, Austin, TX 78731.

Tickets will be up soon at <https://www.tapestrysingers.org/>

Submitted by Norma Jost

## Join Us at Upcoming Epsilon Kappa Meetings



Cathy Daugherty

Our next chapter meeting will be Thursday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, at Society Headquarters, 416 W 12<sup>th</sup> St. At this time we will induct new members; remember Maria McPhail and Margaret Wallace, long-time members whom we lost in recent months; and celebrate the 60<sup>th</sup> birthday of Epsilon Kappa Chapter. Cathy Daugherty, our 2018-2020 DKG international president, will be our featured speaker for the evening. Many of us met Cathy and were present at her installation at the recent international convention. Join us at 6 pm for an evening of fellowship, celebration and inspiration.

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In November, we will learn about **Asylum/Refugee Families and their Children in Central Texas Schools**. How can we meet their needs and better assist them?

Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, at 6 pm  
 Hatlen Room, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, 1100 W 45<sup>th</sup> St.

Maria Arabbo is Refugee and Asylee Coordinator for both Austin and Pflugerville ISDs. She will tell us what is happening with these families and how we can support them in our schools and community. Ms. Arabbo is also on the board of the Multicultural Refugee Coalition. This coalition seeks to provide enterprises where refugees can make a sustainable living doing work that is relevant to their skills/talents. Here is a link to the website: <https://www.mrcaustin.org/>



Maria Arabbo

Also, as we prepare for the holidays we may decide to sponsor a couple of families and if possible give monetary donations to the Multicultural Refugee Coalition. These families need blankets, gift cards, and other household items. Items can be gently used.

We plan to collect items at the Thursday, December 6<sup>th</sup> meeting at Pillow Elementary, or call Luisa Hernandez (512.689.9690), who will pick up any donations.

Submitted by Luisa Hernandez and Marcia Kirkland

## Another Volunteer Organization

Some of my Epsilon Kappa friends have been wondering why I have been missing our meetings lately. Just so happens I am currently serving as President of my United Methodist Women (UMW) unit at St. Mark UMC. Starting 150 years ago, women in the church have been organizing for mission and ministry worldwide. Our focus is on women, children, and youth.

- We work to develop women leaders in their home communities.
- We provide educational opportunities for children/youth.
- We advocate for climate justice, maternal and child health, economic inequality and fight against criminalization of people of color.
- We study with a yearly reading program.

Recently I have been elected to be the program resource person for the Capitol District that includes five counties. So I am juggling schedules, as all of us must do. I hope to see all of you at an Epsilon Kappa Chapter meeting soon.

Submitted by Bernadine Eaton

## Mentoring Can Bring You a Blessing

Exactly how did I become a mentor to a student? After 32 years of teaching art, I retired. The first year of retirement was spent cleaning closets, watching movies and shopping on QVC and HSN. I decided I needed structure and purpose again in my life. Round Rock ISD was looking for mentors to give of their time to many of their students who needed extra guidance, attention, or just a friend. I went to the training and became the mentor to a sweet little second-grader, whom I will call Blessing (not her real name because of privacy rules).

Blessing loved art; she loved to create it. I'm sure that is why they paired her with me. The first year she was very quiet, almost a recluse. By third grade she was opening up to me as I became more of a stable presence in her life. By observation, I found out she did not have any friends and wasn't often happy. In fourth grade she became more accepting of me and we actually laughed a lot. I told her about the different art masters, such as Picasso, Monet and Matisse. She loved creating art similar to theirs. By fifth grade she began confiding to me that she had no friends except for me. My heart broke but I told her I was happy she included me as her friend. We joked and ate lunch together and we both looked forward to our Wednesday visits. At the end of fifth grade I asked her if she wanted me to continue mentoring her because after all, she was going to middle school the next year. And to my delight she said, "Oh yes, you are the best!"

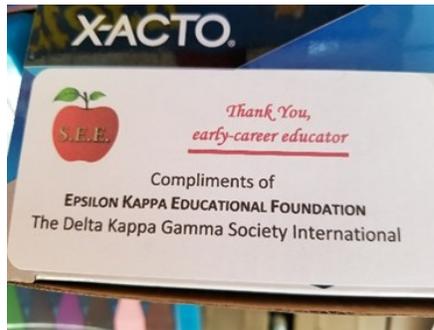
Sixth-grade year came and this really brought many challenges to Blessing. She now had to shuffle different classes in different rooms, and she had much more homework. This was the year that she also told me she was autistic. Again, because of privacy issues, I was never told this by any of her teachers or counselors. We still did art the majority of our time together and she thrived in it. Last year, seventh grade was the hardest of all. She became very withdrawn and ate only by herself to the point that she was allowed to eat in a teacher's classroom. I was asked to come more often than just once a week for her visitations with me. This was when she informed me that she hated her life, she hated school, and she wished she were dead! This really upset me. I knew we had a strong friendship for her to tell me such things. Now I was going to have to tell the counselor. When I went back the next week, the school secretary informed me that Blessing was in the hospital. For two weeks she was there getting much needed help and even more needed medication for depression.

When she came back to school, I was fearful that she wouldn't want to see me, since I was the one who "snitched on her." But as you already know, I did it out of love for her. To my surprise she was elated to see me and overflowing with information on her past two weeks in the hospital. She informed me of her medicine and how she already felt happier. Within a month she was eating in the cafeteria with her newfound friends, smiling and laughing.

This summer she texted me for the very first time. She showed me her artwork she had been drawing during the summer and she asked how she could improve on it. I gave her some suggestions and she texted me back, "Thank you." She told me she is excited to see me for the first time of her eighth-grade year and I am, too. As I look back on the last five years, Blessing may not have been her real name, but she is a blessing to me.

Submitted by Charlotte Brown

## Epsilon Kappa's SEE Project in Action



Each item has a label to identify our project

The car is loaded with all items ready for delivery



SEE mentee and Epsilon Kappa member Ashley Glidewell with her mentor Kim Thonhoff; Ashley received requested pencil sharpener and cardstock at the September chapter meeting.

Courtney Wilcox, 5th-grade teacher at Cook Elementary



Jessica Rodriguez, 4th-grade teacher at Wooldridge Elementary



Submitted by SEE Committee

## Get to Know Your President



My son Hayden is 11 years old and just started 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Henry Middle School in LISD. He actively practices Parkour. What is Parkour? So glad you asked.

**Parkour** is a training discipline using movement that developed from military obstacle course training. Practitioners aim to get from one point to another in a complex environment, without assistive equipment and in the fastest and most efficient way possible. Parkour includes running, climbing, swinging, vaulting, jumping, rolling, quadrupedal movement (crawling), and other movements as deemed most suitable for the situation. It is an activity that can be practiced alone or with others and is usually carried out in urban spaces, though it can be done anywhere. Parkour involves seeing one's environment in a new way and imagining the potential for navigating it by

movement around, across, through, over and under its features.

In the Fall of 2017 Hayden placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the regional speed competition and 2<sup>nd</sup> overall. Then in the Spring of 2018 he went on to compete on a national level in Tampa, FL. Unfortunately, his foot slipped on an obstacle; he fell and was not able to complete the competition. He is not deterred though and will be competing regionally again in October.

Submitted by Cheryl Lane

## UT Endowed Scholarship

Did you know that the University of Texas has 3 Endowed TSO Scholarships named in honor of our Founders: Annie Webb Blanton, Mamie Sue Bastian, and Eula Lee Carter?

These Scholarship Funds are restricted to eligible students pursuing graduate or doctoral degrees at one of the University of Texas System Schools.

The UT System Board of Regents has granted approval for our applicants to receive scholarships from the University of Texas held endowments for courses of study at ANY of the UT System schools. Any student who is officially enrolled at one of the University of Texas System Schools for coursework toward a degree, whether for classes offered on-site or on-line, would be eligible for support from these scholarships.

Any applicant wanting to apply for one of these scholarships would have to apply for the appropriate scholarship (3, 6, or 9 graduate hours or doctoral studies) to Texas State Scholarship Committee using the current forms and designate that their school of choice to attend was one of the University of Texas System Schools. They would have to be enrolled as a student. If awarded a scholarship, the Scholarship Committee would arrange for the candidate to complete paper work specific to the University of Texas System to attain the funds.

Submitted by 2018 TSO Scholarship Committee

## Upcoming Epsilon Kappa Chapter Programs

**When:** Thursday, December 6, 2018, 6:00 pm  
**Where:** Pillow Elementary Library, 3025 Crosscreek Dr  
**Program:** Hands-On Technology – Integrating STEM, Robotics, Coding, & Motivating the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learner  
**Speakers:** Hilda Diaz & Cara Hamlin

**When:** Saturday, February 2, 2019, 11:00 am  
**Where:** Saltgrass Steakhouse, North Research Blvd  
**Program:** The value of gender diversity, why empowering women matters, and how each generation is uniquely suited to affect change  
**Speaker:** Colette Pierce Burnette (President of Huston Tillotson University)

**When:** Saturday, March 9, 2019, 10:00 am  
**Where:** Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Hatlen Room, 1100 W 45<sup>th</sup> St.  
**Program:** Mental Health Panel: How do we assist our students and children in the ever-changing world of technology?  
**Speakers:** Elementary and Secondary Counselors from different districts

**When:** Saturday, April 6, 2019, 10:00 am  
**Where:** Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Headquarters, 416 W 12<sup>th</sup> St.  
**Program:** Initiation, Awards, etc.  
**Speaker:** TBA

Saturday, May 4, 2019 – Founders Day at University of Texas Thompson Center

## Let's Celebrate!

Here is a list of birthdays to celebrate in October and November:

Evelyn Barron	10 - 09	Dorothy Baum	11 - 07
Deb Acevedo-Tamminga	10 - 12	Evelyn Bollinger	11 - 08
Pam Kelly	10 - 14	Bernadine Eaton	11 - 22
Kate Starkes	10 - 24	Erin Bown-Anderson	11 - 23
Cathy Nitsch	10 - 28	Hilda Diaz	11 - 29
Charlene Zimmermann	10 - 30	Joan Burnham	11 - 30
		Debra Wissman	11 - 30





## Newsletter Information

Please submit your articles and highlights for our next Chapter newsletter on or before Friday, Nov. 16th. You can send your submissions by email to Diane Sidoroff at [diane.sidoroff@gmail.com](mailto:diane.sidoroff@gmail.com) or to Cheryl Lane at [cheryl.lane@mcombs.utexas.edu](mailto:cheryl.lane@mcombs.utexas.edu).

During this year, members may be asked to submit articles about their reflections of meetings or other DKG activities. We want to involve as many people as possible to highlight the diversity of our chapter. Also, let us know about your Life Milestones, whether you have attended a meeting or not. News is always appreciated.

Please contact Marcia Kirkland if you wish to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, though we are trying to “go green” and send most by e-mail. Thanks, Marcia, for your help with communications!

### Epsilon Kappa Chapter The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

Diane Sidoroff  
901 Creekbend Drive  
Pflugerville, TX 78660

Chapter Website: <https://www.epsilonkappatx.com/>



## EPSILON KAPPA CHAPTER DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS October 2018

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  home  cell  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVE MEMBER DUES: \$ 90

### VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS:

EPSILON KAPPA EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (tax deductible)

Each member contributing at least \$50 will be recognized as a **Sustaining Donor**.

Phyllis Richards Endowed Leadership Fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter Foundation Projects / SEE Project \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to EPSILON KAPPA. Grand Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail by October 4th to Marcia Kirkland, 12314 W. Cow Path, Austin, TX 78727 (phone 512.250.2026)

→ Contribution forms for state and international funds may be found in the **Forms** section of the respective websites ([www.dkgtxas.org](http://www.dkgtxas.org) and [www.dkg.org](http://www.dkg.org)).

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