

# EPSILON CHAPTER NEWS

## The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

Rowan County, NC  
Volume III, No. 4

Region VIII  
March 2007

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



Jean Reid, Region 7 Director will be our featured guest on Thursday, March 8, 2007, 3:30 p.m. at the Waterworks Visual Arts Center. Our speaker for the evening is Dr. Judy Grissom, Superintendent of Rowan-Salisbury Schools, Inc. and a member of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International.

### A MESSAGE FROM EPSILON

#### Michael Makes a Difference,

By Gerrie Blackwelder

Teachers' hearts must look like patchwork quilts. Each student who leaves the classroom takes with him a tiny piece of the teacher's heart, but importantly enough, each leaves a little something of himself in its place. Several years ago I was given Michael who filled a place in my heart.

I realized that Michael was special the instant I saw him confidently stride into my classroom. He had GQ good looks, a smile that lit the darkest day, and could move me with his command of such vocabulary as honor, integrity, nobility. He understood the heft and breadth of such words.

That November, I began a powerful lesson on the contrast between exceptional men and common men, a subject well drawn in Robert Bolt's magnificent play, *A Man for All Seasons*. But it was Michael who brought the lesson to a culminating clarity.

Over the years, I have come to analyze my teaching habits and know that I tend to stand firmly on the opening of a piece of literature, building what influence I have for my students to recognize the author's essential foreshadowing point. Then, I stand back and allow my students to unpack the remainder of the piece for themselves.

As I taught *A Man for All Seasons* that semester, I spent time on the opening soliloquy by the Common man and discussed with my

classes his potent line, "The Sixteenth Century is the century of the Common man, like all other centuries". This man of questionable character relates the line all the while drinking wine directly from Sir Thomas More's silver pouring pitcher! His face registers delight at the quality of the exquisite wine, and he turns up the pitcher for a second gulp.

My students marveled at the man's lack of manners, his subtle theft, and I took the opportunity to point out that the Sixteenth Century in England is the Renaissance; man's peak in intellectual growth, a time that inspired Shakespeare's genius and a queen called Glorianna, a time that demanded the growth of the Protestant faith...a time of great change in man's history.

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#### Directions to March 8 Meeting at Waterworks Visual Arts Center

From I-85: Take Interstate 85 to Exit 76. If coming from the south (Charlotte area) turn left at the bottom of the exit ramp onto Innes Street (Hwy. 52). If coming from the north (Greensboro area) turn right at the bottom of the exit ramp onto Innes Street (Hwy. 52). Make a right on Main Street (downtown Salisbury), make a right just past the F&M building onto Liberty Street. **Free Parking**  
Free parking is available on North Lee Street and East Council Street and in the "Depot Lot" at the corner of East Council Street and Depot Street. All free parking is within two blocks of the Waterworks. During non-business hours free parking is available in the F&M Bank lot which adjoins the Waterworks. To access the F&M Bank lot please use the Liberty Street entrance and pull slowly up to the automatic gate.

## President Leatherwood Seeks Support for Denmark!

Eta State President, Lynne Leatherwood has thrown support behind the incorporation of a new expansion effort to Denmark on March 4, 2007. Eta has the opportunity to financially support this new chapter by sending a gift of an Official Scarf at \$275.00. The purchase price of the scarf is an element of support as well as an extension of the basic pur-

poses of the International Society.

With this gift, a new chapter is warmly welcomed into the fold of Key Women Educators and into the spirit of educators all over the world. Perhaps the members of Epsilon will assist Eta State with this endeavor by pledging to give donations at the March 8 meeting. The money will be collected and forwarded to the

ETA offices on behalf of the Danish expansion and a note will be sent to Denmark on behalf of Epsilon Chapter of Eta State welcoming our new sisters into the union of professional women who *promote professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.*

*Graduation day is tough for adults. They go to the ceremony as parents. They come home as contemporaries. After twenty-two years of child-raising, they are unemployed.*

**Erma**

**Bombeck**

*“We must teach our children to dream with their eyes open.”  
Harry Edwards*

### NEWS WE CAN USE!! Committee Announces New Benefits for Members

Member benefits now include savings on auto and home insurance! The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International member benefits now include savings on auto and home insurance! The Society has teamed with Liberty Mutual to offer our members Liberty Mutual Advantage TM. This unique program allows you to purchase high-quality auto, home and renters insurance at preferred rates through the convenience of automatic checking-account deductions (if you wish). If you are interested in the new benefits packages available, please see [www.deltakappagamma.org](http://www.deltakappagamma.org) or contact Gerrie Blackwelder for information to be sent to you.

### NEW MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

There have been three great highlights in my professional career: I had the opportunity to tread the boards as a “player” in Shakespeare’s Macbeth, received in 1999 a treasured letter of congratulations having become a Nationally Certified teacher, and, in 2003, opened an

invitation to join Epsilon Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma through Cindy Pope.

To many of us, the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International invitation to membership is a great honor and it becomes an enormous privilege to serve others as a committed and

valued member.

If you have not yet done so, please take the time to look around you at the potential Delta Kappa Gamma Key Women Educators in your life. Fill out the form found on the international page or call Sharon Deal for a copy to be sent to you for a

recommendation to the prestigious Epsilon chapter of women teachers, dedicated to helping each other and promoting teaching.



How can such a golden moment in history be thought of as the time of the Common man I asked. Students rightly suggested that during all history there are more common people than exceptional men... Bolt's point exactly.

Then, Bolt's stage direction has Sir Thomas More enter stage, walking down steps to enjoy a cup of wine by a fire in the library of his Chelsea mansion. He asks this seemingly loyal servant if the wine is good, and the Common man's reply is "Bless you sir, I don't know". Thomas More chuckles, nods, and says, "Bless you, too, Matthew."

My students thought such base behavior was funny for a time and when I asked why More didn't fire his servant for stealing and lying, they pondered, bounced ideas off of one another, and finally told me that if More fired one common man, he would surely only replace him with another of the same ilk. Why bother with punishing such petty, insignificant things, they questioned.

At the time I was pleased with my work and felt that I had sufficiently introduced Bolt's clear characterization of More as an exceptional man whose high standards and purity of faith did not allow him to condemn other men for personal moral failures, but I neglected to recognize the potential that my students have to apply literature to life.

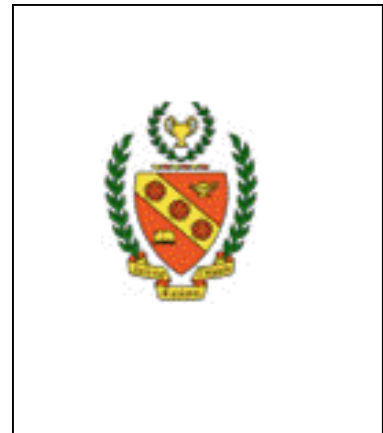
Working on the final project for the text, Michael brought in a set of 33 highly eclectic CD's that he cherished. He had tucked inside the cover of the case a picture of his father and himself, bare chested, standing waist deep in a Florida swimming pool. Mike's dad is a Floridian and they see each other only rarely. The picture was a great treasure to Mike and he called his classmates' attention to the photo while passing around his collection to friends who were attempting to select one of the CD's for the opening musical piece for a news show in which he and his group would unfold the story of Thomas More's martyrdom.

I, too, admired the photo, looked through the collection of CD's, embarrassingly enough recognizing only a very few. Two hours after class, Mike returned politely to ask if I had found his CD case, which he assumed had been lost. We searched the room carefully, turned things upside down in an attempt to find the picture and disks, but no luck. It was a difficult week for Mike, a senior athlete who was playing his final game in uniform, and we talked only briefly prior to a short vacation. During the next two teacher workdays, Mike practiced with the football team for the state playoffs, and the CD case took a second seat in his listing of priorities.

On Monday, Mike asked if he could address the class; talk to everyone for just a moment before I began instruction. I

agreed, then wondered if I had used good judgment. The class had gelled nicely over the months that we had been together and I was not prepared for unsettling the group. Michael rose before his peers and stated, "I just want to thank everybody for the support that you all gave to the team on Friday night and all week long last week! The spirit was great and we really wanted to win. Sorry that we lost, but I think that the team played a good game and was lifted by your support, so thanks." Michael looked right into the eyes of classmates and did not condemn, he did not accuse, he realized....exceptional men do not condemn others for moral failure, they simply maintain high standards for themselves.

*Since graduation, Michael has served two tours of duty in Iraqi and Kuwait on behalf of the American people. (Previously published in The Salisbury Post)*



## Dates to Remember

April 27-29  
ETA State Convention, Charlotte University Hilton  
May 3, 2007  
Final Meeting, John Calvin Presbyterian Church  
July 22-27  
International Convention, Hyatt Regency  
O'Hare, Rosemont, IL

From Don Coryell, ex-San Diego Chargers Coach:  
Teachers  
  
The country is full of good coaches. What it takes to win is a bunch of interested players.



## Mission Statement

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

## THE JOYS OF SUBSTITUTING

(or Having Your Cake and Eating It Too) by Joan Ashley

When you answer the phone at 5:45 AM a deep male voice purrs, "This is SAM." The first time I heard it I slammed down the phone. If you hold on, SAM will tell you to punch in your identification code and press the star key. Then you have the option of pressing 9 or listening to an available job. How nice to have options!

Let's say you take the job, get instructions and a job number. Then you have to find some clean clothes, pack a lunch, do something about your bed hair, eat breakfast (I hope you have cereal or instant oatmeal), and scrape the windshield. (No, you shouldn't have stayed up till 3:30 finishing that novel.) But remember, this was your option. And at the end of the day you won't have to do the ton of paper work or go to a meeting or call parents, or make plans. I like to check papers, tidy up and leave a note for the teacher. But after that, I can just turn off the lights and walk away.

One morning, as I was walking in from the parking lot, I heard a student tell her parent, "See that woman? She used to be a real teacher." I really like to stick to one or two schools, because I like to be recognized as having been a real teacher. And it's nice to be greeted by name.

Once in the classroom you can expect a variety of reactions. Older students like to be recognized too, so they usually smile and give you a warm welcome. On my first day in a particular kindergarten class, students looked bewildered and some downright frightened. "Where's my teacher?" "My stomach hurts. I want to go home." It takes a little while to convince them you can sing "Eensy-Weensy Spider\*\*" and know when to go to the bathroom.

A student told me he likes for old people to come because they know all about the old days. (The days when you had black and white television.) When I showed a class the map area of Kentucky and Indiana where Abe Lincoln lived, I men-

tioned that I used to live there. A student asked, "Were y'all good friends or just neighbors?" In fact, I like to play the age card, telling them that old ladies are apt to be very grumpy when annoyed, and that too much noise causes me consternation and chagrin. (Hey! Whatever works!) I am often asked why I keep coming to school if I'm retired. I ask them, "How would you like to spend your whole day with people my age?" (Chorus of oohs!) Just today a little girl looked up at me and asked, "Are you getting old?" I answered that I surely was. Then she said, "Well, my mama said you were probably getting pretty old, 'cause you were kind of old when she was in your room."

Age doesn't necessarily enhance credibility. I told a class of fourth-graders studying magnets that the earth was a giant magnet. They were not impressed. But later I was vindicated when the video they were watching said the same thing. One boy admitted, "Well, you said that, but I didn't believe you."

I love seeing the really amazing people who work in public schools, and I love the art work and the interesting things going on in classrooms. But what I enjoy most are the things kids say: "We're not supposed to have work on Thursday." "Let's all get something from the Treasure Box!" "We're supposed to play outside two hours." "My Sweet-Tarts are okay for snack because these are special ones made out of fruit." "Every morning Annie poops on the couch and licks her butt." "(?) "I'm not supposed to drink milk because I have a bump on my finger." "Teacher, my milk is broke." "I can't drink this milk. It's not even ripe yet!" "My daddy's in big trouble! I told him not to put cheese on my sandwich and he put cheese on my sandwich again!" "Last night my feet were itching and I didn't even know it! I found out because when I woke up, my feet were scratching each other."

And I do love what students write! "There was once a girl named Keesha. She was very beautiful. She had four friends and a personality." "The four seasons are baseball, football

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football basketball, and I forget the other one." "The seasons are salt, pepper, garlic, and symonum." "When I saw all the stuff under the Christmas tree, I thought Santa Claus must like me a lot." "She was quiet as a flower." "I was smiling so big my gums were showing."

Sometimes it's what teachers say. After a particularly wild day last week, while walking the students to the buses, one little fellow stretched out his arms and shouted, "I'm free!" A teacher near me mumbled, "I don't care if they are free, I'm not taking one home."

July sub pay-off comes when, at the end of the day, the students ask, "Will you come back tomorrow?" Once four little girls approached me to say, "Mrs. Ashley, we talked it over and we decided you really ought to think about being a teacher. You already kinda know what to do."

All right, I'll think about it.

*Joan Ashley is Past President, serving now as Epsilon Treasurer and Parliamentarian. She continues to entertain us with her sharp observations of teaching and learning. We are sure that she will some day be as famous as Erma Bombeck!*