

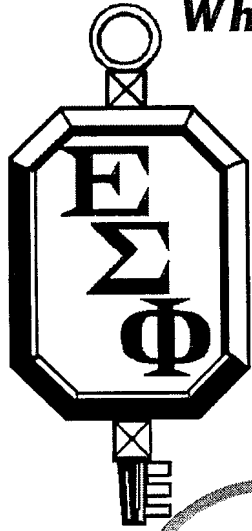


2007
ANNUAL REPORT
OF
EPSILON SIGMA PHI
PI CHAPTER

The mission of Epsilon Sigma Phi is to foster the standard of excellence in the Extension system and to develop the Extension profession and professional.

Epsilon Sigma Phi

Why would you join Epsilon Sigma Phi?



Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) is a unique organization that promotes life long learning and a spirit of fellowship among present and past Extension employees.

With recent changes in Extension, membership in ESP is more important than ever!

Being a member of ESP has many benefits and opportunities. You can:

- Stay up-to-date with state/federal legislation that affects Extension programs and benefits plus be part of the *strategy* to maintain a strong Extension Service.
- Stay up-to-date through professional publications that address *timely needs and challenges* of members.
- Participate in *fund-raising events* that grow the Minnesota Extension Worker's Scholarship (MEWS) Fund.
- Apply for and receive a *scholarship* for professional development through the MEWS Fund.
- Participate in annual meetings, special programs, and a calling tree that facilitates ongoing member *communication*.
- Be *recognized* for your outstanding work and performance for the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Epsilon Sigma Phi.

Epsilon Sigma Phi – Pi Chapter Annual Meeting
Monday, September 8, 2007 – 10:30 a.m.
Earle Brown Heritage Center, Brooklyn Center, MN
AGENDA

Call to Order – Glenice Johnson
Appointment of Timekeeper and Parliamentarian
Additions, Approval of Agenda
Introduction of Guests

Minutes of 2006 Annual Meeting – Andrea Ruesch
Treasurer’s Report – Sheila Craig

Highlights of President’s Report – Glenice Johnson
Acceptance of Committee Reports as printed in Annual Report – Kay Stanek
Awards and Recognition – Cindy Bigger
Global/International – Larry Zilliox
History/Archives – David Pace
Legislative & Benefits– Jeanne Markell/Liz Templin
Membership – Kia Harries/Diane Damerow
Newsletter – Sara Croymans/Kathy Olson
Nominating Committee – Janet Beyer
Professional Improvement – Neil Broadwater
Retiree – Gwen Gmeinder
Scholarship – Roselyn Biermaier
Silent Auction – Colleen Gengler

Old Business

Retirees Directory and Communication – Gwen Gmeinder
MN Extension Centennial Celebration, 2009 – Jeanne Markell

New Business

2007-2008 Election of Officers – Janet Beyer
Audit Report and Recommendation – Phyllis Onstad & Janet Beyer
Proposed 2007-2008 ESP Budget – Sheila Craig
Proposed By-Law Changes – Glenice Johnson
National ESP meeting report–Kay Stanek/Glenice Johnson
Tim Besigni Memorial – Liz Templin
Other business

New Member Initiation – Membership Committee
Awards Presentations – Cindy Bigger
Memorial Service – Gwen Gmeinder

2007-2008 ESP Leadership Team Announcement/Installation – Janet Beyer
Announcement of 2007-2008 ESP Committee Chairs – Kay Stanek
Other announcements: ESP Dollar Auction, ESP/MAEE Banquet; 2008 JCEP; Galaxy III (2008)

Adjourn

2007-2008 PI CHAPTER OFFICERS

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Retiree/Life Member:

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Roselyn Biermaier

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Epsilon Sigma Phi – Pi Chapter Annual Meeting

Wednesday, September 27, 2006

4:45 p.m.

Extension Regional Center – Andover, MN

There were 39 members present.

Members were presented with an Annual Report and asked to review the committee reports as they would be presented in written format only.

Call to Order – President Janet Beyer

President Janet Beyer called the meeting to order at 4:45 p.m.

Chuck Schwartau was appointed Timekeeper and Shirley Anderson-Porisch was appointed Parliamentarian
Cindy Petersen, Sue Meyers and Sheila Craig volunteered to be minute reviewers

Rosi Heins/Shirley Anderson-Porisch moved and seconded to approve the agenda as proposed. Motion carried.

Gwen Gmeinder, Extension Administration working with retirees and communication, was introduced as a guest and we're pleased to announce she joined ESP!

Minutes of 2005 Annual Meeting – Secretary Andrea Ruesch

The minutes are pages 6 – 8 in the Annual Report. Bruce Schwartau/Cindy Petersen moved and seconded to approve the 2005 Annual Meeting Minutes. Motion carried. A sign-up sheet was passed around for attendance.

Treasurer's Report – Treasurer Sheila Craig

The Treasurer's written report is page 10 in the Annual Report. Phyllis Onstad/Naomi Fruechte moved and seconded to approve Treasurer's Report. Motion carried.

Highlights of President's Report – President Janet Beyer

The President's Report is page 11 in the Annual Report. We have had much progress on our goals and we will continue to work on them. President Beyer expressed her appreciation for the support from the Board and members.

Acceptance of Committee Reports as printed in Annual Report – President Elect Glenice Johnson

President Elect Glenice Johnson pointed out the written committee reports as presented in the Annual Report.

The reports were presented in printed format in the interest of time so there wouldn't need to be oral reports.

Members were asked if there were any questions or clarifications needed. Sue Meyers/Sara Croymans moved and seconded to accept the Committee Reports as printed. Motion carried.

Old Business

Retirees Directory and Communication - Gwen Gmeinder – one of the goals this year was to work on retiree communication. A hand-out was distributed to summarize some of the work that has been happening since the beginning of the year. Increasing communication is the overall goal. In early July a survey was sent out; results are in the written report. [We posed the following questions: how aware/informed are you about Extension today? How aware/informed would you like to be? From your perspective, are we achieving our mission today?](#) There was a discussion on what mailing lists were used and a member shared that they had not received the mailing. Response was that staff will continue to follow-up and work on cleaning up all of the addresses. Staff are working on an e-communication newsletter and anticipate there being approximately three per year. Extension will also be sending out a magazine to retirees.

Audit Report and Recommendation – Chuck Schwartau and Kathy Olson

The Audit Report is page 13 in the Annual Report. Chuck Schwartau and Kathy Olson met with Treasurer Sheila Craig to review the accounts and everything corresponded nicely. Thanks to Sheila for keeping a great set of books! Chuck Schwartau/Juanita Reed Boniface moved and seconded to accept the audit report. Motion carried.

Proposed By-Law Changes – President Janet Beyer

A hand-out was distributed outlining proposed By-Law changes. President Beyer outlined the proposed changes.

Article IV Sections 1 - 7 – Sheila Craig/Naomi Fruechte moved and seconded to approve the proposed changes to Article IV Section 1 - 7.

Section 1 - "Qualifications: Full Annual Membership in this organization is open to all county, regional, and state Extension program and administrative professionals, who have served in Extension for three or more years and support the purpose of this organization. Full membership includes membership in both the state and national association."

Section 2 - "Associate Annual Membership in this organization is open to all county, regional, and state Extension program and administrative professionals, who have served in Extension less than three years and includes membership in only the state association."

Section 3 - "New Members: Potential members, who meet the qualifications set forth in Article IV, Sections 1 and 2, shall be invited to join the fraternity by the chair of the membership committee."

Section 4 - "Life Members: Life membership shall be granted to all qualified members in good standing who have left Extension or at the time of retirement upon payment of dues specified by the executive committee."

Section 5 - "Annual Members both Full and Associate: An annual member is one who maintains commitment to the overall purpose of ESP and pays annual dues as established by the Pi Chapter executive committee."

Section 6 - "Life and Annual Members have full membership privileges including voting and holding office."

Section 7 - "Retired members, who choose not to pay the lifetime membership dues, may pay a yearly \$30 membership fee to enjoy the full membership privileges of the state association."

Discussion. Chuck Schwartau/Karen Schafer moved and seconded to amend Article IV Section 7 from \$30 to annual state dues. Vote on the amendment - motion carried. Vote on the main motion with amended change - motion carried.

Article IX Committees

Addition of Section 5 - "MAEE Liaison: The President-Elect will represent ESP on the MAEE Board to keep lines of communication open between the two organizations, plan the Annual conference, professional improvement opportunities, and other projects/programs as determined by both Executive Boards. Likewise, MAEE will appoint a representative to serve as a liaison to the ESP Board." Discussion - voting rights? Intention is no and that's why the wording of liaison was used. Tamie Bremseth/Rosi Heins moved and seconded to approve Article IX addition of Section 5. Juanita Reed Boniface/Bruce Schwartau moved and seconded to amend Article IX Section 5 from The President Elect will represent ESP on the MAEE Board to The President-Elect of ESP will serve as liaison to the MAEE Board Vote on the amendment - motion carried. Vote on the main motion with amended change - motion carried.

New Business

2006 - 2007 Election of Officers - Cindy Petersen

Two candidates for office were announced- Kay Stanek for President-Elect and Sue Fisher for position of Director (retirees).

Kay was introduced to the members and she gave a brief speech. She was a longtime Extension employee in Wisconsin and has been in Minnesota for six years. Kay was active with ESP in Wisconsin, including being a member of the International Committee. She currently is the Campus Regional Director at the Morris Regional Center.

President Janet Beyer asked if there were any nominations from the floor for President-Elect. Tamie Bremseth/Juanita Reed Boniface moved and seconded that nominations cease and a unanimous ballot for Kay Stanek as President-Elect be cast. Motion carried. Congratulations Kay!

Sue Fisher was unable to join us today. President Janet Beyer asked if there were any nominations from the floor for Director. Glenice Johnson/Dave Pace moved and seconded that nominations cease and a unanimous ballot for Sue Fisher as Director be cast. Motion carried. Congratulations Sue!

Proposed 2006-2007 ESP Budget – Treasurer Sheila Craig

Treasurer Sheila Craig directed members to the report on page 9 of the Annual Report. There are very few changes from last year's budget. We did reduce the amount expected from retired members. We've had very limited money for the MEWS fund through our fund, merely a transfer. The \$300 listed under the general fund auction is what we hope to get tonight, our projection for income. The major change under expenses is the fourth item under President's Workshop – it's another item that the Board is requesting to use scholarship dollars from the MEWS fund to send our representatives to that workshop. Sheila Craig/Phyllis Onstad moved and seconded to accept the proposed budget. Motion carried.

National ESP Meeting – President Janet Beyer

The National ESP Meeting will be held in Annapolis, MA. Jeanne Markell and Neil Broadwater will be representing us. Neil will be getting the Distinguished Service Award. Congratulations were extended to Neil along with a round of applause!

The call for proposals for the 2007 National Meeting is out. Those of you looking at scholarly activities, this is an opportunity. The call is open to active staff, retirees, etc. and there are poster or workshop sessions.

MN Extension Centennial Celebration – Jeanne Markell

In 2009 we'll be marking 100 years of Extension in Minnesota. Talk has started with the leadership team, things such as what we should plan for, budget, how big we make it, workload, etc. We ask that if you have any ideas, let us know! Are there any volunteers to be on planning committees? We need to tap the history and experiences of our retirees.

Other Business

The awards system was promoted as no one applied for awards on their own. We'll try to do a more planned effort for next year.

New Member Initiation – Membership Committee Diane Damerow and Kia Harries

There are four new members to welcome: Susan Hooper, David A. Nelson, Gwen Gmeinder, and Bev Durgan. We have 33 paid members as of today plus retired members. Welcome to our two new life members – Dick Kruger and Lucia Orcutt; we will get them their certificates and membership cards

Awards Presentations – Glenice Johnson filling in for Cindy Bigger

Congratulations to the following!

International Award – Wayne Schoper

Mentor Award – Cindy Petersen

Mid-Career Award – Bruce Schwartau

Administrative Leadership Award – Kay Stanek

25 year recipients – Cindy Bigger, Jan Gilman and Chuck Schwartau

Distinguished Service Award – Kathy Olson

Memorial Service – Marion Anderson filling in for Beth Russell

We recognized the work of Leonard Harkness and Richard Hanson and the spouses of Extension workers including Delos Barber, Richard Martinson, and Estelle Hanson.

2006-2007 ESP Leadership Team Announcement/Installation – Cindy Petersen

An installation ceremony was held for the 2006 – 2007 ESP Leadership Team

Glenice Johnson – President

Janet Beyer – Past President

Kay Stanek – President Elect

Andrea Ruesch – Secretary

Sheila Craig – Treasurer

Kent Gustafson and Sue Fisher – Directors

Announcement of 2006-2007 ESP Committee Chairs – President Glenice Johnson

The chairs are listed on page 12 of the Annual Report. We truly appreciate the number that agreed to serve another year!

For the Global Relations Committee, we voted at the last Annual meeting that we dissolve this committee, but we need a By-Law change to do this and we didn't propose one. Discussion.

Retiree/Life membership Committee – Ann Bosch was asked and we're looking for other volunteers; Gwen Gmeinder agreed to serve on the committee

Other Announcements: ESP Dollar Auction and NEAFCS Annual Meeting

Colleen Gengler shared that there are 21 items on the Auction including a walking pencil that was demonstrated. Treasurer Sheila Craig has change for those that need it, remember that you only need dollar bills to participate so gets lots of them! Thanks everyone for donating such great items!

NEAFCS Annual Meeting – Rosi Heins – this event will be held September 17 – 20, 2007 in St. Paul and we will be busy working on that in the coming year. We are looking for your support and will be contacting retirees to help out.

Other

President Glenice Johnson recognized the leadership and commitment of Past President Janet Beyer and thanked her for her work.

Please make sure you sign the attendance sheet and pay your dues.

Adjournment

Dave Pace/Kathy Olson moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 p.m. Motion carried.

**Epsilon Sigma Phi – Pi Chapter
Proposed Budget 2007-2008**

Balance in Checking 8-31-06 **\$3236.15**

Income:	Budget 06-07	Amt Rc'vd	Prpsd 07-08	
Membership Dues	\$2400.00	2805.00	\$2800	
Life Member Donations	300.00	410.00	300	
Interest	0.00	0.00	0	
Nat'l Reim Pres. Wkshp & Vote Del	600.00	700.00	600	
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0	
U of MN Foundation (MEWS)	0.00	30.00	300	
General Fund Auction		300.00	667.00 (\$200/change)	0
Total Income	\$3600.00	4612.00	\$4000	

Expenses:	Budget 06-07	Amt Spent	Prpsd 07-08	
Dues	1200.00	\$1502.00	\$1600	
To U of MN Foundation (MEWS)	0.00	30.00	300	
Organizational Communication	300.00	204.03	300	
President's Workshop	300.00	300.00	300	
Nat'l Mtg/Galaxy	300.00	405.00	300	
Operating Expenses	100.00	22.80	100	
Annual Mtg. - State	200.00	15.00	200	
Committees:				
Scholarship	25.00	0.00	0.00	25
Professional Improvement	25.00	0.00	25	
Awards	200.00	69.42	200	
Silent Auction/Dollar Auction	200.00	200.00	100	
Membership	100.00	0.00	100	
History & Archives	25.00	0.00	25	
Retired Extension Workers	25.00	0.00	25	
Legislative Efforts	0.00	0.00	0	
International	25.00	0.00	25	
Retiree's Directory	100.00	0.00	0	
Memorials	25.00	0.00	25	
Total Expenses	\$3150.00	\$2748.25	\$3650	

Balance in checking 8-09-07
\$5099.90

**Epsilon Sigma Phi – Pi Chapter
2006-2007 Treasurer's Report
August 31, 2007**

Balance in Checking 8-31-06

\$3236.15

Income

Membership Dues	\$2805.00
35 Annual Memberships @ \$60	\$2100.00
1 Annual Membership @ \$65	\$ 65.00
5 new Annual Membership @ \$67	\$ 335.00
1 new Annual Membership @ \$65	\$ 65.00
1 Associate Membership @ \$65	\$ 65.00
1 Life Membership @ \$175	\$ 175.00
Life Member Donations	\$ 410.00
Mileage Reimbursement Nat'l Meeting	\$ 400.00
Mileage Reimbursement for JCEP travel	\$ 300.00
MEWS	\$ 30.00
General Fund Auction	\$ 667.00

Total Income

\$4612.00

Expenses

Dues	\$1502.00
To U of M Foundation (MEWS)	30.00
Organizational Communication	\$204.03
Presidents Workshop (JCEP)	\$300.00
Nat'l Mtg/Galaxy	\$405.00
Operating Expenses	\$22.80
Annual Mtg. – State	15.00
Committees:	
Scholarship	0.00
Professional Development	0.00
Awards	\$ 69.42
Silent Auction/Dollar Auction	\$200.00
Membership	0.00
Retired Extension Workers	0.00
Legislative Efforts	0.00
International	0.00
Retiree's Directory	0.00
Memorials	0.00

Total Expenses

\$2748.25

Balance in Checking August 31, 2007

\$5099.90

Savings Account – Balance 8/31/06 = \$1117.04

(+ \$7.84 interest) **Balance 8/31/07 = \$1124.88**

MEWS Fund – August 31, 2006

Principal	\$106,247.86
Available to spend	\$ 13,730.67
Total Fund Balance	\$119,978.53
Awarded past year	\$ 4,713.73

MEWS Fund – August 31, 2007

Principal	\$102,758.61
Available to spend	\$ 18,018.91
Total Fund Balance	\$120,777.52
Awarded past year	\$ 4,213.51
Contributions past year	\$ 380.00

2006 – 2007 ESP Presidents Report Glenice Johnson, Pi Chapter President

The year in review...

The Pi Chapter executive board met four times during the year, two face-to-face meetings and two conference calls; committee members conducted their work either via conference call or email; and two newsletters were sent one in the spring and another this fall. Kay Stanek and I attended the North Central Regional workshop in St. Louis, Missouri in March; we also were voting delegates at the National ESP meeting September 11-14, 2007, in Charleston, SC. Jean Markell and Claudia Cody attended the PILD conference in April representing both ESP and the Extension organization. The following chapter goals were set at our first board meeting:

- Increase membership** – Last year's membership increase resulting in Pi Chapter receiving one of the 2007 national ESP awards for membership growth. We hope to welcome many new Associate Members (*open to those with less than 3 years employment*), and additional administrators and state specialists.
- Continue to increase communication and involvement with retirees/ Complete a new Retiree Directory** - Gwen Gmeinder has provided excellent collaboration between ESP and administrative offices, resulting in a new Retiree Directory and regular e-mail Extension updates.
- Continue to strengthen partnership with MAEE** – We implemented last year's by-law addition, with an ESP liaison (*President Elect*) to participate in MAEE board meetings. MAEE also designated a liaison (*Holli Arp*) to participate in ESP meetings. This has provided both groups with current information on activities, and collaboration on planning for annual meetings in conjunction with Fall Conference.
- Complete updating ESP Policies and Procedures** – The document has been greatly expanded to include detailed responsibilities of all officers and committee chairs, providing a comprehensive "handbook" for current and new ESP leadership.
- Continue to review and update archives** – This is an on-going process, under David Pace's leadership. The board is exploring movement of some materials to the University Archives, and existing files located in the Coffey Hall attic are labeled with ESP contact information to ensure they are not discarded
- Increase nominations and applications for state and national ESP awards.** At the summer board meeting, the board developed a list of potential candidates for each of the award categories and volunteered to personally work with nominees on award application materials. We hope to see an increase in those awards today!
- Support and work with MAEE on a pre-retiree workshop.** Both ESP and MAEE worked with administration on a very successful pre-retirement workshop held on campus. Response was so great that an additional workshop day was added to accommodate all interested staff.
- Increase members' participation in professional development opportunities.** Roselyn Biermaier continued to promote use of the MEWS scholarship fund. Although not an increase, \$3,296 was used by members to attend a variety of professional development conferences this year.

The executive board has been very productive this past year, and their hard work has resulted in many accomplishments – new directory, policies & procedures finished, and a national membership award. The officers, committee chairs, and directors have provided outstanding leadership and cooperation in these and many other efforts. All organizations rely on this type of teamwork, so please volunteer to serve on a committee, invite a colleague to join ESP, or serve in a leadership role. It truly is a great way to learn more about ESP and all that the organization has to offer.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve as your president this past year. All of you - committee chairs, officers, directors, and members – have made my term much easier. Thank you all for your support and enthusiasm, and I look forward to the year ahead!

Epsilon Sigma Phi — Pi Chapter 2007 President Elect Report—Glenice Johnson

This has been a year of observation, orientation, and participation in preparation for next year's responsibilities as president. It was an opportunity to become better acquainted with current and retired Extension colleagues across the spectrum of capacity areas and administrative positions, as we met for board meetings in person or via conference call.

Attending the JCEP (Joint Council of Extension Professionals) North Central Regional Leadership Workshop, held in St. Louis, MO this spring was an excellent way to "learn the ropes". The conference theme of "Extension's Changing Climate" was very timely and applicable for Minnesota, given the extensive changes in recent years. The ESP session was a full day of in-depth training, including national updates, plans of work, professional and leadership development opportunities, helpful resources (website, handbook, newsletter), membership recruitment and retention, and member services. A general ECOP presentation gave a concise picture of national Extension history, current status, and potential new partnerships and "location" of Extension within USDA.

The challenge of maintaining membership continues to be a concern, both in Minnesota and nationally, as Extension services reorganize, down-size, and streamline their operations. The possibility of an associate membership for newer employees will hopefully attract more members, earlier in their career. Continued collaboration with MAEE will strengthen both entities, as we work cooperatively to enhance professionalism.

I look forward to the coming year and working with my fellow officers and committee chairs—a special "thank you" to so many of you who "re-enlisted" for another year of chairmanship!

Committee Chairs for 2006-2007:

Auction	Colleen Gengler
Awards & Recognition	Cindy Bigger
Global Relations	<i>(past chair, Chuck Schwartau, ?? need for this committee)</i>
History & Archives	David Pace
Legislative/Public Issues	Jeanne Markell
Membership	Diane Damerow & Kia Harries
Newsletter (co-editors)	Sara Croymans & Kathy Olson
Nominating	Janet Beyer
Professional Improvement	Neil Broadwater
Retiree/Life Members	Beth Russell
Scholarship	Roselyn Biermaier
National Website	http://espnational.org

2007 ESP Committee Reports

Audit Committee — Phyllis Onstad & Janet Beyer

The Audit Committee met treasurer, Sheila Craig, on September 14, 2007, to review the accounts of the association throughout the past year,. The fund balances shown in the treasurer's documentation of checkbook register and approval forms/receipts have been found to be in good order and the reports reflect the activity of the chapter.

We recommend that the ESP Board and membership accept the end of year treasurer's report and audit.

Fundraising Committee — Colleen Gengler

The Committee worked on a recommendation to the Board and membership for this committee to be a standing committee. Through conference calls and e-mail we put together the recommendation and also language for Policies and Procedures. The committee will take direction from the Board yearly as to the greatest need for fundraising; continuing to grow the Minnesota Extension Workers Scholarship (MEWS) Fund or supporting operational expenses supplementing the annual and life memberships of Epsilon Sigma Phi, Pi Chapter. Recommended changes to the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws will be voted on at the 2007 annual meeting.

In 2006, the committee held a Dollar Auction. Proceeds went toward supporting operational expenses supplementing the budget with income coming almost exclusively from memberships. A total of \$467.00 was raised. At the Fall Program Conference, a Silent Auction will be held with all proceeds going to the MEWS Fund.

2006-2007 committee members included; Shirley Anderson-Porisch, Kathy Brandt, Janet Beyer, Bob Mugaas and Colleen Gengler.

Epsilon Sigma Phi – Pi Chapter, Awards Committee Report, 2007

Submitted by Cindy M. Bigger, ESP Awards Committee Chair

In March, nominations were sent to the national level. They included Kathy Olson as the Pi Chapter Distinguished Service Award nominee, Jeanne Markell for the Visionary Leadership category and Kay Stanek for Administrative Leadership. Congratulations to each of you! We are very proud to have you representing Minnesota!!

It is with great awe that we recognize many deserving individuals this year! ESP is very grateful to all of those who took the time to put together nominations and submit the materials needed to support those nominations. We had submissions for numerous categories this year.

We are very happy to recognize the following individuals in 2007:

Distinguished Service Award: _____

Meritorious Service Award: _____

Early Career Award: _____

Mid Career Award: _____

Retiree Service Award: _____

International Award Recipient: _____

Administrative Leadership Award: _____

Visionary Leadership: _____

Multi-cultural Programming – Team Award: _____

25 year Tenure Recipients: _____

New Members: _____

Retirees: _____

You didn't think I would tell you ahead of time did you?! Congratulations to all the Award Winners in 2007... you are most deserving and ESP is *ESPecially* proud of you!

Note: This is my last year as your Awards Chair. It has been an honor to shepard the process and celebrate the achievements of many over the past three chairs. I look forward to handing over the reins to the new chair.

Global Relations (International) Report —Larry Zilliox

As we go about our daily lives we find that we are linked more and more into the international community. It all starts with the first cup of coffee or tea in the morning. Neither of those products are grown in the United States, so we rely upon some other country to meet our needs. Some farm hand starts the process by planting the trees or bushes that will grow to produce the beans and tea leaves. How many hands and nationalities are involved to bring it to our table or favorite coffee stop in the morning, would boggle your mind. So to say you are not interested in international events or affairs means that you haven't looked around you to see how inter-dependant we really are for our food, clothing and other goods and services.

That reminds me of event on a trip to Costa Rica. We passed a coffee farm and I was asking the guide about coffee farming, so he pulled over to a roadside coffee cooperative. I met the manager and asked about the process of roasting coffee. He took my family into another room and poured some beans into a hot air corn popper. After a few minutes the beans were roasted and ready to be ground into coffee. He said if you wanted a stronger brew to run them throught the hot air popper again. Basic education at its best. The best part of the stop was the converstion afterwards when he asked where we were from. After several questions we got to from Alexandria, Minnesota. Oh he said I have been in the Fleet Farm there many times. As it turned out he was on a Land O' Lakes Exchange and lived on a dairy farm near my parents and came to Alexandria for parts.

Get involved with international activities and a new wonderful world will open up for you. Who knows who you will run into and the connections they may have. Share some of your travel stories with me and I will put them into the newsletter.

History and Archives Committee — David E. Pace

I encourage all members, ESP Officers and Committee Chairs to provide materials and information which they feel might be worthy of being included in the ESP Annual Record for the History and Archives files, to the committee. This might include, but not limited to: Announcements, news articles or information regarding special achievements, of members including retires, obituaries of deceased members, etc., as well as officers and committee reports.

The officers, committee members as well as ESP members need to be familiar with the Guidelines and Format established a few years ago when providing information to the History & Archives Committee. ESP members are welcome to send this information via an attachment to my via e-mail: [davidepace,@ comcast.net](mailto:davidepace@comcast.net) or by mail to: David E. Pace, 2188 Ferris Lane, Roseville, MN 55113.

I encourage others to volunteer to serve on the History and Archives Committee. A committee of two or three would accomplish much more to determine items to be placed in the files and ensure continuous filing of items in the future.

Membership Committee — Diane Damerow and Kia Harries, Co-Chair

Pi chapter has 36 active members and 154 life members for a combined chapter membership of 190. The Membership Committee asks that members encourage their co-workers to join and to support ESP. Membership recruitment went out to all Extension Staff in September 2006 to encourage membership. Retirees also received membership information during the fall membership drive.

As another membership option, Pi Chapter has opened the door to another membership category, Associate members. To be an Associate member, a staff member will have been employed by Extension for less than 3 years. This membership will be for Pi Chapter only, not a national member. (Currently National membership requires a member to have been employed by Extension for a minimum of three years.)

Since our last Annual meeting the following have joined ESP as Life members:

Jean Pitt

Membership forms for 2007 were included in the September ESP newsletter.

New members in October 2006 were:

Bev Durgan
Gwen Gmeinder
Sara Heineke
David Nelson
Dick Senese

Deaths Since October 2006 Meeting:

Donald Petman – 4/29/06
Lewis T. Hendricks - 9/24/07
Gerald McKay - 8/20/07
Earl Fuller - 8/14/07
Wayne Hansen - 8/3/07
Wilma Gary - 6/28/07
Myrna Shearer - 7/15/07
Rachell Barrett - 2/19/07
George Roadfeldt - 2/11/07
Rosella Qualley - 2/18/07

*Note: all of these people are in the ESP booklet

Newsletter Report — Kathleen Olson and Sara Croymans

Kathleen Olson and Sara Croymans have shared the duties of Epsilon Sigma Phi 'A Slice of Pi' newsletter as co-editors for the third year. Two issues of the newsletter were developed this year – spring 2007 and fall 2007. Sara took most of the leadership of newsletters this year due to Kathy's work as co-liaison of the NEAFCS Annual Session. Co-editors took leadership for organizing the newsletter and used email and conference call methods to consult on layout, content, process, and proofreading.

Morris Regional Center support staff Beth Hilbrand has provided expertise in the layout and design of the newsletter. Technology has also been maximized to save dollars by promoting sending the newsletter via email to members (and to encourage members to receive an email copy only) if they have email access. This is anticipated to expand in future years as more life members have access to email. Melissa Instenes, support staff in the Rochester Regional Center, has served as the mailing list manager/administrator for mailings and email distribution lists. We continue to make an effort to secure correct mailing addresses and email addresses for members to make sure that members who have access to email are using that option to save mailing costs. A notice is placed in the newsletter to alert members to this.

Current numbers for mailing lists are:

Current members:

55 of 75 receive newsletter via email only
18 of 75 receive newsletter via email and mail (down 3 from last year)
2 of 75 receive newsletter via mail only (up one from last year)

Life members:

45 of 149 receive newsletter via email only (down 2 from last year)
39 of 149 receive newsletter via email and mail (up 28 from last year)
65 of 149 receive newsletter via mail only (down 26 from last year)

The good news is we have maintained membership. The number of those receiving their newsletter by both email and postal mail, and those that receive email only is down has actually increased, so we need to keep reminding people that it will save the organization money if they receive their newsletter by email only.

Nominating Committee — Janet Beyer

Officer candidates for Pi Chapter for 2007-08 are:

President-elect: Neil Broadwater
Secretary: Chuck Schwartau
Director: Toni Smith
Treasurer: Sheila Craig/Jerry Tesmer

Remaining Officers for 2005-06 are:

President: Kay Stanek
Past President: Glenice Johnson
Director: Sue Fischer

Professional Improvement Committee — Neil Broadwater

Based on the fact so few Extension retirees attended the Annual ESP/MAEE conference last year, I sent out a survey last fall to those retirees for which we had e-mail addresses. Over 30 responses were received. Based on this unscientific survey, I summarized the results as follows:

- Some retirees are meeting in groups, some have presentations and for other it's just a social thing.
- Most retirees feel a real disconnect with present day Extension Service
- Most respondents would like to get up to date information on what's happening in Extension and how it's going
- Most want as much up to date information on benefits as possible.
- Most want social time to reconnect with former friends, colleagues and present staff they know.
- If they are to be invited to Annual Conference, they want to feel welcomed, to be given more time for socializing with others, and to be given updates on what is going on. They want to know their friends are coming so they will then want to come.

This information was sent to your ESP President who shared it with the Board. The information was also shared with Jeannie Markell, Associate Dean. The survey results were used to help plan the 2006 ESP Annual meeting including the ESP luncheon activity, professional improvement breakout sessions and break time to allow socializing with other retirees and present employees of the Extension Service. The professional improvement concurrent sessions were planned in cooperation with MAEE.

ESP Scholarship Committee—Roselyn Biermaier

Since our last annual meeting \$3296.66 has been awarded for ESP Scholarships. This is a slight decrease over last year. Less of the funds did go for ESP conferences.

With the new promotion and documentation policy the committee is hoping to have more applicants in the coming years. This may also increase our membership since the scholarships are awarded to Pi chapter members of ESP.

Committee members are Pat Borich, Naomi Fruechete, Phyllis Onstad and Roselyn Biermaier

Retiree Report – Gwen Gmeinder, Chair

The major initiative for 2007 was the creation of the first ever newsletter specifically designed and written for Extension retirees. This publication, *Extension Update*, is an electronic newsletter that will be sent out three times a year. The April premier issue included a message from the Dean, updates on retiree activities, and highlights from recent media stories on Extension. The overall goal of the communication is to continue to connect retirees with Extension, share information on Extension's programs, people and impacts across Minnesota. *Extension Update* is sponsored by the Office of the Extension Dean. The project is co-managed by Government and Constituent Relations team and the Public Relations and Communications unit.

Additional accomplishments for the year include: 1) an updated Extension retiree directory was mailed to all retirees in March; a copy is also posted on the Extension employee website. 2) Reaching retirees by e-mail is progressing: in September 2006 there were 138 e-mail addresses and now there are 166 in the database. 3) The annual retiree spring reception was held on June 12 with 45 retirees and staff who enjoyed an afternoon reception with Dean Bev Durgan.

Federal Retirement Issues Congressional Action

Legislative Committee Report -Liz Templin & Jeanne Markell

Premium Conversion

Description of the bill:

Introduced on 3/6/2007 Amends the Internal Revenue Code to permit: (1) federal civilian and military retirees to pay Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP) and TRICARE supplemental premiums on a pre-tax basis (i.e., exclude premiums from gross income); and (2) a tax deduction (available to itemizers and non-itemizers) for TRICARE supplemental premiums or enrollment fees. Directs the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the option of paying FEHBP and TRICARE supplemental premiums on a pretax basis is available to federal civilian and military retirees for the first open enrollment period beginning not less than 90 days after the enactment of this Act.

What this means to retired Extension Employees:

This bill would provide average saving of \$820 a year for federal retirees, according to a government estimate.

Current status:

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform reported favorably on this legislation. The [House Ways and Means Committee](#) has not taken up this bill. Note: The 2006 Pension Protection Act allows retired "public safety officers" to request up to \$3,000 from their annual pensions be deducted to pay for medical insurance and long-term-care insurance, allowing that income to be pre-tax. This bill would allow all federal retirees to have this pre-tax benefit.

Minnesota elected officials position on this bill:

Senate bill #773:

Minnesota Co-sponsor: Coleman

Not a co-sponsor: Klobuchar

House bill # H.R. 1110

Minnesota co-sponsors: Walz, Ramstad, McCollum, Peterson, Oberstar

Not a co-sponsor: Bachmann, Kline, Ellison

Repeal the Government Pension Offset & Windfall Elimination Provision

Description of the bill:

Amends title II (Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance) (OASDI) of the Social Security Act to repeal: (1) Government Pension Offset; and (2) Windfall Elimination Provision with respect to computation of an individual's primary insurance amount.

What it means to retired Extension employees:

Windfall Elimination Provision:

This bill reduces the combined Social Security and CSRS annuity for federal retirees based on their own earnings. This began with the Social Security Amendments of 1983.

Government Pension Offset (GPO)

Starting in 1977, GPO prevents government retirees from collecting both a government annuity based on their own work in non-social security covered employment and social security benefits based on their spouse's work record. The law provides that two-thirds of the government annuity offsets whatever social security benefits would be payable to the retired government worker as a spouse (wife, husband, widow, widower).

What this means for retired Extension employees:

- GPO example: a spouse who receives a civil service benefit of \$900 a month based on his/her own earnings applies for a social security widow(er)'s benefit. The widow(er)'s benefit is \$500. Two-thirds of his/her annuity, or \$600, totally offsets the social security widow(er)'s benefit. He/She, therefore, receives no widow(er)'s benefit from social security.

Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employees and annuitants, and former Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) annuitants who transferred to FERS are NOT affected by GPO.

Current Status:

Bills have been introduced (see below). Rep. Barney Frank's (D-MA) bill (H.R 726) would exempt retirees whose combined Social Security earned benefits and public pension are less than \$2,500 a month. The WEP would gradually phase in for those receiving combined benefits above \$2,500 per month.

Minnesota Elected Officials Position on the bill:

Senate bill # S.206

Minnesota co-sponsor: Coleman

Not a co-sponsor: Klobuchar

House bill #H.R. 82

Minnesota co-sponsors: Walz, Ellison, McCollum, Peterson, Oberstar

Not a co-sponsor: Bachmann, Ramstad, Kline

Federal Health Benefit Premiums

Description of the concern:

- NARFE is “troubled by the continued disparity between the government / employer and enrollee share of premiums. For example, in the BC/BS standard option family plan, the government share increased by 2.3 percent while enrollees will see their out-of-pocket premiums rise by 8 percent. The increasing popularity of lower cost FEHBP health plans has contributed to the difference.
- Since the government contribution formula is weighted to the number of enrollees in each plan, lower cost options that attract a large share of enrollees would reduce the overall dollar amount of the maximum government contribution. NARFE favors a premium formula that would ensure that the government and enrollees shoulder an equal share of any rate hike.
- NARFE points out that out-of-pocket costs for all enrollees could have been better contained had the OPM applied for a subsidy available to all employers, including the federal government, under the law that created the Medicare prescription drug program. A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that premium growth in one of the largest FEHBP plans with many older enrollees could have been 3.5 to 4 percent lower in 2006 had the payment been accessed. And, it could have reduced overall FEHBP premiums for the year by more than 2 percent.

The nonpartisan GAO issued a report in January 2006 which found that HSAs in FEHBP tend to attract younger and wealthier enrollees, disaggregating the risk pool. As a result, premiums rise for the non HSA / non high deductible plans.

What it means to active and retired Extension employees:

Higher premiums for all employees and retirees

Minnesota State Legislature

Exempting Part of CSRS Federal Annuity from State Income Taxes

Description of the concern:

Several states, including neighboring Wisconsin, exempt part or all of CSRS federal annuity income from state income taxes. There is a local group from NARFE, headed by Edward Keyser from St. Cloud, working on obtaining similar legislation passed in Minnesota

What it means for retired Extension employees:

Lower state income tax

What you can do:

Join NARFE today! Membership for Active Employees increases from \$25 / year to \$33 / year on Jan 1, 2008

Let Legislative Committee member Liz Templin know about your willingness to contact elected officials about these issues. She will put you in touch with the appropriate person from NARFE.

Report on ESP Legislative Committee: Government Relations - Jeanne Markell

Thanks to ESP members and retirees for a ramped up effort this past year in government relations advocacy work. The ESP legislative committee collaborated with MAEE, Extension regional directors, and the Extension Government Relations unit to reach the goal of contacting each of the all 201 state legislators prior to the start of the 2007 legislative session. Extension benefitted in the successful funding for the University of Minnesota's biennial request this year through new salary funding and program investment via the compact process. Additionally, we have made great strides in relationship building at the local and state levels of government, following some quite stressful years for those relationships during recent reorganization activities.

At the federal level, Extension continues to avoid the slippage of formula funding into competitive funding. Although the FY08 budget has not been finalized and we are under a continuing resolution at this time, there is optimism that Senate action will match the House recommendation to increase Extension funding for next year.