



# GAMMA ZETA CHAT



Volume 13, Issue 1

January/February 2013

*Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide*

## *President's Message*

Dear Members,

I enjoyed our time together at our last meeting and look forward to our next. We will be initiating new members next time. Leslie Hammontree and Darlene Looper are looking forward to joining our organization

Many beautiful dresses have been sewn for our dresses for Africa project. Our goal is to have one dress per member. Some of you have chosen to sew multiple dresses. I am sure we will reach our goal . But if you have not found someone to sew a dress for you, students at the high school are willing to sew for you. Please email me if you would like for me to coordinate with the high school so your dress is sewn.

I would like to thank you for all you do for our organization.

Amanda

## **New Chapter Officers for 2012-2014**

**President** - Amanda Pritchett

**1st Vice-President** - Cyndi O'Daniel

**2nd Vice-President** - Laura Jennings

**Treasurer** - Janice Jolley

**Recording Secretary** - Mary Evelyn Perkinson

**Corresponding Secretary** - Lee Ann Cross

**Webmaster/Editor** - Joan Glasser

**Parliamentarian** - Rebecca Burnette



## *Birthdays*

### **January**

3 Betty Mason  
3 Cyndi O'Daniel  
7 Barbara Millaway  
10 Patty Harris  
26 Shelia Yarborough  
6 Billie Sue McKenzie

### **February**

3 Betty Lynn Thompson  
15 Judy Leamon  
23 Jane Lillard Bowers  
25 Trudy Templeton

## **Preview of Meetings**

**February 7**      Meigs High School - Vote for new members  
**March 27**      Middle School - Initiation  
**May 7**            Retired Teachers - Founders Day

**Xi State Legislative Symposium**  
**February 19 & 20, 2013**

Joan Glasser and Mary Evelyn Perkinson attended the Xi State Legislative Symposium held at the Millennium Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, TN on February 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. On Tuesday evening Dr. Marge Lofstrom introduced the roundtable guests Mr. Ron Pendergrass, TN Retired Teachers Association Executive Director; Mr. Stephen M. Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Policy & Legislation, TN Department of Education; State Representative Charles M. Sargent, Chairman Finance, Ways & Means Committee; Ms. Gera Summerford, TEA president. Dr. Kay Awalt Musgrove, Rho Chapter, led the Dialogue/Discussion. Topics discussed were teacher evaluations, performance tied to test scores, state salary schedule, school safety, vouchers and charter schools. The Xi State members had many excellent questions for the members of the roundtable and for the most part they were adequately answered.

On Wednesday morning a Music City Breakfast Buffet was held in the Crown Ballroom at 6:30 a.m. Dr. Marge Lofstrom introduced Dr. Kathleen Airhart, Deputy Commissioner for the TN Department of Education. Dr. Airhart reflected on her journey from elementary school to her present position. She emphasized her belief that all students can be successful when given the right opportunities. She also stated the department core values of Excellence, Optimism, Judgment, Courage, and Teamwork. She believes that reform that needs to happen can take place through collaboration.

After the breakfast, members traveled to the TN Legislative Plaza where they met with their respective legislators. Joan and Mary Evelyn met with Representative Eric Watson and Representative John Forgerty. During their meeting with each of the representatives they discussed teacher evaluations, charter schools, vouchers, and school safety. This was a very informative symposium and a very enjoyable experience.

## Chapter Activities



Thanks to all who have worked so hard to help us reach our **Dresses for Africa** goal. A special thank you to those that have contributed extra time.

Promoting



Programs

“Leading women educators impacting education worldwide” is our Delta Kappa Gamma vision statement. Xi State chapters have enthusiastically embraced Schools for Africa, our international project. Each Chapter has been ask to make a contribution to help reach a goal of \$5,000 for this biennium. Over \$4,000 has already been raised. If you would like to donate loose change, please bring it to the March meeting. Several members will be attending Xi State in June and will deliver our donation at that time.



Members Celebrate “Fat Tuesday” during February meeting. Chapter members from Meigs County High School and Meigs County Central Office hosted the meeting complete with King Cake, masks, and beads. The meeting was very enjoyable and the program was centered on the reason for Mardi Gras, the purpose of the King Cake, and the Season of Lent. Great meeting and lots of fun!

## What Members Are Doing



Meigs North teachers enjoyed dressing up as storybook characters for Read Across America.



Joan Glasser and Mary Evelyn Perkinson visited with Representative John Forgerty and Representative Eric Watson during Xi State Legislative Symposium on March 20<sup>th</sup> in Nashville. Some of the issues discussed were school vouchers, teacher evaluations, and school safety.

LeeAnn Cross - Our history club is wrapping up its competition for the Tennessee History Day competition, which is Saturday, March 2. We are looking forward to Spring Break!

Missy Posey - We are still awaiting the birth of baby Posey. I'm enjoying my time off work before she comes. We've put together several baby furniture items and contraptions. Let the fun and sleepless nights begin.

## *Educational Concerns*

Significant changes to retirement for new teachers have been proposed by State Treasurer David Lillard. The changes represent a significant reduction of the guaranteed retirement benefit crucial to teachers.

The plan as outlined is a bad deal for new teachers, and what's worse is that it is unnecessary. TCRS is one of the strongest retirement plans in the country. There is ample evidence that Tennessee's conservative and thoughtful approach to teachers' retirement in TCRS is sustainable and affordable. With TCRS the old adage applies: if in ain't broke, don't fix it.

The treasurer wants new teachers to pay into a hybrid plan, a portion of it in a defined benefit (as it is currently but with a much smaller percentage) and a portion in a defined contribution (like a 401k). However, after reading the plan TEA has questions whether there is any defined benefit at all. The state seems to hold the power of changing it in future years even after new teachers have vested.

What the proposed change comes down to is that new teachers will get far less for retirement. This is bad for the profession, bad for schools working to retain good teachers, and bad for students that need highly qualified and experienced teachers.

Teachers take a risk in making less for their level of education. In exchange, risk of a teachers' retirement is eliminated with the defined benefit of TCRS. The Lillard plan breaks this covenant, transferring risk to every young teacher looking for a career in education.

As the debate moves forward on the Lillard plan, it is important for current and future teachers to weigh in. TEA knows TCRS is not only sustainable, but it is in the best interest of teachers, students, and the economic future of the state. Please visit the [Legislative Action Center](#) today to email your legislators.

<http://teateachers.org/news/help-tea-fight-changes-teacher-retirement>

## *Dates to Remember*

**June 6-8, 2013: Xi State Convention at Sewanee.**

**July 10-13, 2013: Southeast Regional Conference** Gaylord Palms Orlando, Florida

**July 28-August 1, 2014: Delta Kappa Gamma International Convention:** J. W. Marriott, Indianapolis, IN

**July, 2015: Southeast Regional Conference:** Georgia

**July, 2016: Delta Kappa Gamma International Convention:** Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center, NASHVILLE, TN

