



CONNECTION

MAY/JUNE 98 • NUMBER 72

EPSILON SIGMA PHI

National Honorary Extension Fraternity

1998 Satellite Conference Featured Presenter Confirmed
December 10, 1998 at 1:00 p.m. EST

BUILDING A LEARNING ORGANIZATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

by: Bernadette Watts, National President-Elect

Mark your calendar and reserve downlink viewing sites to gear-up for the 1998 National Professional Development Satellite Downlink Conference on Thursday, December 10, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time. Persons attending the ESP National Conference will be on-site at the Continuing Education Center of the University of Georgia in Athens for this conference opener. This is the third nationally televised satellite conference sponsored by Epsilon Sigma Phi.

Featured presenter

The 1998 featured satellite distinguished presenter, executive consultant and author is Charlotte Roberts, a co-author with Peter Senge for THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE FIELDBOOK. Ms. Roberts focuses on organizations' sustainability and competitiveness. Practical strategies, techniques and frameworks for building and sustaining a learning organization in Cooperative Extension for the 21st century and much more will be featured during this downlinked conference. She has hosted nationwide satellite broadcasts on leadership, managing people and building learning capacity of organizations. She uses hands-on experiences and lessons from numerous clients in health care, education, government, Fortune 500 corporations, technology and non-profit groups in her presentations. Senge says, "Charlotte brings a unique blend of Southern charm and style to the challenging work of organization change - and she possess an engaging story-teller's wit." She has been an organizational development consultant for over 15 years.

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Renown presenter: Charlotte Roberts, a co-author with Peter Senge of THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE FIELDBOOK, will be the 1998 professional development downlink presenter.

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What is the basic meaning of a "learning organization"? In **THE FIFTH DISCIPLINE**, the author Peter Senge, writes that a learning organization is an organization that is continually expanding its capacity to create its future. For such an organization, it is not enough merely to survive. It is about learning that enhances our capacity to create.

Benefits

Cooperative Extension employees, volunteers, advisory members, community agencies and the broader university faculty and staff will benefit from this satellite broadcast by a distinguished keynote presenter and facilitator. The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization.

More information will be forthcoming on the registration fees, deadlines and other national conference details. The National ESP Conference is December 10-12, 1998, in Atlanta, Georgia at the Terrace Garden Hotel.

The mission of Epsilon Sigma Phi is to foster the standards of excellence in the Extension System and to develop the Extension Profession and Professional.

JOE.....JOE Who?

by: Laurel Kubin, Chair, National Professional Development Committee

JOE isn't your coworker. JOE isn't even a person. But, JOE is important to your Extension work.

JOE stands for JOURNAL OF EXTENSION. The Journal offers tips on methods that work, research and evaluation results and commentaries on the direction in which Cooperative Extension is headed.

Check out the the February 1998 issue. Learn about how affluent parents of young children are a neglected parent education audience. Or how volunteer recognition is a relationship, not an event. The use of Internet and DTN in Extension education are discussed. Learn about research on Ohio farmers' use of pesticide labels after receiving training.

Where will you find JOE? Not in your snail mail. It arrives on-line. Get your free subscription on the Worldwide Web at <http://www.joe.org/joe/>. Or send an e-mail to almanac@joe.org and in your message write "send joe (month) (year)".

GALAXY SUMMIT evaluation results

Nearly 2,400 Cooperative Extension Systems professionals attended the national joint summit conference sponsored by the Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP). Preliminary evaluation results from 840 (35%) conference attendees were highlighted at the regional workshops. Briefly, the results indicate:

- ⇒ 89% gave the overall event a very good to excellent rating
- ⇒ 97% reported that their individual objectives were met or exceeded
- ⇒ 90% of those attending work with an office staff of four or less
- ⇒ 75% shared the general sessions as very good to excellent
- ⇒ 81% indicate the seminars & super seminars were very good to excellent
- ⇒ 79% were able to identify new working relationships as a result of attending GALAXY
- ⇒ 70% requested that there be another Galaxy Summit within 5 years.



Circuit riders to 1998 JCEP Regional Leadership Workshops

by: Bernadette G. Watts, National President-Elect

National President-Elect Bernadette Watts traveled with Donna MacNeir, national president-elect of NAE4-HA; Emily Remster, national president of NEAFCS and Don Drost, national president of NACAA as the official JCEP circuit rider team at the regional leadership workshops. The Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP) sponsored these regional workshops in Las Vegas, NV, St. Louis, MO, Mobile, AL and Philadelphia, PA.



Teamwork Learning: With the Teamwork Jazz, Inc. group leadership, Western Region participants did a simulation game "In Search of the Lost Dutchman". (photo by Watts)

NEAFCS made arrangements

These annual workshops provide leadership building experiences and updates for state officers of the four national professional associations of Extension educators, scientists and administrators. Local arrangements and program co-ordination was the responsibility of the National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences. Chairs for her respective regions were Sharon Hoelscher Day, Jennifer Klee, Susan Neher and Jeanne H. Winters.

Teamwork training

Each region focused one of the evening sessions on elements of teamwork or leadership dynamics that impact the workplace and leadership roles. In Las

Vegas, Teamwork Jazz, Inc., guided participants through the maze of "In Search of the Lost Dutchman" to discover the importance of teamwork, following directions, communications, follow-through and competition. Speakers in the other regions challenged us on either "Leadership Dynamics", "Staying Sane in an Ever-Changing World" or "We're All Trapped in A Dilbert Cartoon".

Building political support

The enlightening and resounding keynoter at each closing session was Dr. Mike Tate, Assistant Director of Extension at Michigan State University. His topic, "Building Political Support for Extension - Challenge for Today", shaped the action agenda for the Cooperative Extension System members within the political and educational context of program delivery impacts and accountability.

Report from CSREES staff

Participants gleaned updates on CSREES via videos, telephone conference calls and/or on-site

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EPSILON SIGMA PHI

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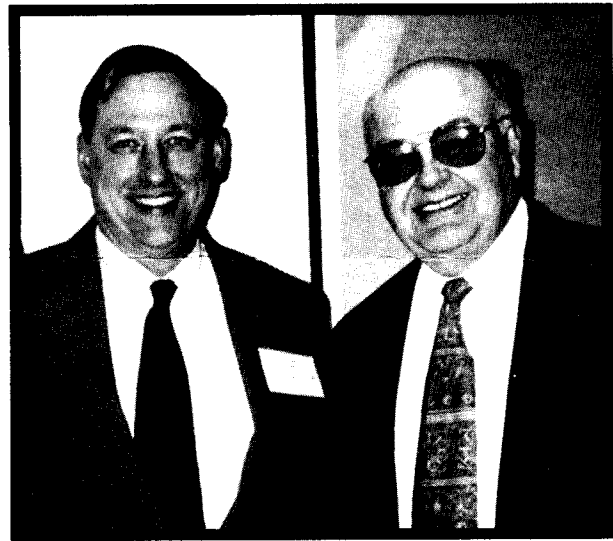


New regional vice-presidents

To guide regions into new millennium

1999 - 2000

The four newly-elected regional vice presidents will hold office through the transition into the new millennium. In addition to serving as a regional leader, each regional VP has major national leadership responsibility as a member of the fraternity's national board of directors and as the chair of a major national committee. They will take office at the close of the 1998 National Council Meeting in Atlanta in December.



Western Region Elects: Robert M. Ohlensehlen (left) will be followed as regional vice president for the Western Region by Richard Garrard (right). Both gentlemen represent the Theta Chapter in Idaho.

Western Region VP and Chair of the National Resource Development and Management Committee

Richard Garrard, ID

Richard Garrard is an Extension Educator in Cassia County, Idaho. His work speciality is animal science and related agricultural areas. Garrard has been a delegate to ESP

national conferences, is a member of a national committee and served as a state chapter officer. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Agricultural Education from Utah State and a Masters Degree from University of Idaho.

North Central Region VP and Chair of the National Public Issues Committee

Marilyn Schnittjer, IA

Marilyn Schnittjer, CFLE, retired as a family life field specialist this year from Iowa State University Extension. She worked in a cluster of counties in northeast Iowa near their home at Delhi. In recent years, the focus of her work was on support for families in transition, violence prevention for youth and families and



Elected by NC Region: Marilyn Schnittjer, IA, was elected to follow Patrick Borich as the NC Region's Vice-President.

Current VP:
Patrick Borich,
MN, retired
Minnesota
Extension
Service Director,
is the current
North Central
Region's VP.



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New Regional VP from page 4

development of part of the Strategic Advantage Program for Iowa farm families. Many Extension professional organizations, including Epsilon Sigma Phi, expanded effectiveness during Schnittjer's terms of leadership. Her academic degrees were earned at the University of Iowa.



Southern Region VP's: After the 1998 National Conference, Evva L. Z. Wilson, LA, (left) will move into the position now held by Michele Abington-Cooper (right).

**Southern Region VP and Chair of the National Global Relations Committee
Evva L. Z. Wilson, LA**

Evva L. Z. Wilson, PhD, is Apparel & Textiles Management Specialist at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA. She has been a state chapter elected leader and a voting delegate to national council annual meetings. The Global Relations Committee chair is a natural fit for Dr. Wilson. She has served on a committee relating to textile rules and law and manufacturing for NAFTA and Third World Countries, plus she has other international interests and holds a degree in Vocational and International Education.

Northeast Region VP and Chair of the National Membership Services Committee

Eleanor L. Wilson, DC

Eleanor Wilson is a life member of Epsilon Sigma Phi who retired from the USDA Extension Service as an assistant deputy administrator. She has extensive involvement in international 4-H programs. Her work with grantsmanship and staff development leadership uniquely prepare her to serve as chair of the Membership Services Committee. She has been chapter president and is now a voting delegate and national committee member. She holds a graduate degree from the University of Wisconsin.



Northeast Region will pass leadership to Wilson: Eleanor L. Wilson, DC, will accept the regional vice-president role at the national conference in Atlanta from Rita T. Wood, NJ.

National Board on e-mail: natlboard-mg@ces.ncsu.edu
ESP National Home Page: [www-http://esp-nat.tamu.edu](http://esp-nat.tamu.edu)



Niche marketing

by Madeleine Greene, ESP National President

Cooperative Extension is a unique and incredibly special commodity. Are you marketing it that way? Have you narrowed your emphasis, interests and activities? Have you truly tried to find out what citizens in your community are looking for, asking for, and what information they are willing to buy? If you do this well you will be able to “sell” whatever you offer.

Cooperative Extension has been so good for so long that in some areas they have new competition. Others want some of the action. Community colleges, adult education programs of school districts and hospitals and entrepreneurs see a demand for information and aim to fill that niche. Are you willing to let them take over your niche? Perhaps you have decided to move on to other areas. In these times of information overload it is more important than ever to carefully craft a niche for your offering.

Who do you see as potential clients? Get the names of key individuals, businesses and agencies interested in that topic. If you are unaware of who these key players are, then ask. Ask all the individuals and agencies, you currently have a working relationship with, for help. It is critical to do a good job of defining this and future contact groups. A key to our success today and in the future is doing business with the right people. These people will serve as a marketing link for us.

Your specialness will be defined by what you learn about your potential client/customer and the information they seek. Take the time and commit resources to this step and it will return value to your effort. This is very much like the effort one puts into “Building Bridges for Political Support” as defined by Dr. Pat Boyle. Along the way we need to ask is this special enough and sufficiently desirable to be selected above other options available in the community. This is truly a 21 Century challenge as more and more people have access to global resources through the WWW, specialty newsletters, and ever expanding cable T.V. offerings.

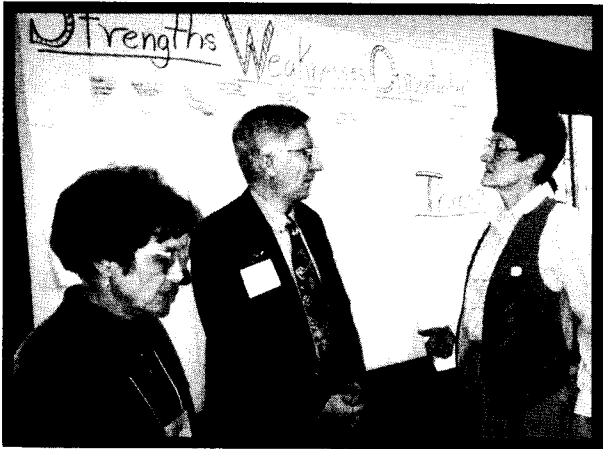
In the supermarket we often encounter individuals offering a tasty morsel, and they inquire “Are you likely to buy this product?”. Take your product to the public. Test market it. You will quickly discover if you have crafted a product that has a niche. You will also find out what changes need to be made. Have the courage to make the changes. Once that is done you no longer want to keep your program/product a secret. That is the time to market and market. It is the time to make things happen. If you have done your homework the ball is in your court.

Just because we know our research based product “is the best thing since sliced bread”, we are not guaranteed success, only a place in history. We need to continually rework our niche, keep it current and build in change.

Epsilon Sigma Phi is faced with the same niche crafting challenges we face in our daily work. The challenges are here, they are real and they will not go away. Think long and hard about the niche your unit is crafting. When we commit resources to niche crafting we position ourselves to own the market place.

Regional Workshops *from page 3*
representation from Joan Gill and Dr. Barbara White. Dialogue on GPRA, status of the Reauthorization of the Farm Bill, the President's proposed budget and CSREES organizational structure were among the priority topics in all regions.

ESP business
Individual associations devoted a full day to updates, reports and regional organizational business. Epsilon Sigma Phi regional vice presidents, Bob Ohlensehlen, Patrick Borich, Michele Abington-Cooper and Rita Wood, led the way in championing the outstanding efforts of chapters and committee members in fulfilling the many goals of ESP chapters. Numerous suggestions and ideas for marketing, membership retention, dues and professional development opportunities such as GALAXY were highlighted. Members in all regions shared Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of ESP in a SWOT analysis conducted by National President-Elect Watts. The findings will be reported to the National Board at its mid-year meeting. ESP members purchased over \$300 worth of Fraternity jewelry. Over 90 ESP leaders representing 40 chapters participated. Semi annual regional vice-presidential elections were held. (See Page 4-5)



SWOT for ESP: These North Central Region workshop participants are doing a group exercise in identifying Stengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat (SWOT analysis) under the guidance of President-Elect Watts. (photo by Watts)

Riverdance, leprechauns and community development: An Irish experience for agents and community leaders

by: Mary P. Andrews, Michigan State University

Michigan State University Extension has a long and rich history of supporting the international education of its staff, clientele, youth and local leaders. In the 1970's the Kellogg Young Farmer's program pioneered international participation of local leaders. In October 1997, MSUE updated that chapter of extension history by inviting local community leaders to visit Irish communities struggling with concerns similar to those faced in Michigan—economic development, managing fragile natural resources, encouraging tourism without sacrificing resident services, and developing the human capacities in local communities for sustainable development.

A 10-day visitation program was planned with local interests in mind. A Michigan regional community development agent worked with an Irish counterpart to establish the basic agenda. It included a number of individualized options—chances for Michigan agents and community leaders to intimately learn about local action groups and their struggles.

The program started in Northern Ireland with presentations from our Irish government host agency and specialists at Queens University. These colleagues had visited Michigan in an earlier exchange.

We spilt into small traveling groups to observe local development efforts.

Violence between Catholic and Protestant factions was very evident as one group visited a border region



Michigan delegates listening to Irish legends from a young Irish storyteller.

observing vivid reminders of terrorism. A strange counterpoint to the lush green meadows and picturesque stone fences of idyllic rural Ireland! We were impressed with the efforts of local leaders to bridge the differences of religious and historic mistrust.

The Republic of Ireland is an entirely different story. Reconciliation is not a daily subject of discussion in the South. There, political disagreements are overshadowed by economic concerns. Although historically the Republic (who won their independence from British rule in the 1920's) has been more economically depressed than Northern Ireland, recent global changes have created a boom economy. One of

the factors influencing this boom is the emergence of Ireland as a communications and computing center. One example is the answering-service industry. Long distance calls can be answered

comfortably in Ireland while the U.S. sleeps. Likewise in data processing. Medical services in the U.S. electronically send billing data for processing in Ireland for overnight service to local practices! Even local leaders have been caught by surprise at the rise of the Celtic Tiger! In concrete terms it means that urban sprawl is out-of-control, enveloping small rural villages adjacent to Dublin. An inter-city highway system that has relied on mass transit for heavy commerce is

becoming inundated with commuters. Young people with any computer competence are getting jobs with salaries unheard of by their parents with accompanying YUPPIE aspirations and characteristics. The challenges for local leaders in anticipating future needs are difficult, as the multinationals involved are not very revealing of their plans!

In contrast to these mega-developments in and around Dublin, rural Ireland is trying to preserve its agricultural and historic traditions. The maintenance of cultural heritage sites, preservation of stone fences and historic buildings, designation of environmentally sensitive areas with accompanying incentives to protect wetlands and waterways, all are of



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critical interest to land owners. Some of the Michigan delegation, those from the "Wild Michigan" contingent, were impressed with the development of coastal tourism, angling and aquaculture, and regional integration of waterways for holiday boating opportunities. One observation of the Michiganians was an envied appraisal of the monies available for community development. The European Union and U.S.-Irish interests are actively investing in community development and training in Ireland. An excellent array of training activities and materials have been developed to support these efforts. The Michiganians were interested in both the empowerment approach and the emphasis on documentation and evaluation.

After spending a few days on-assignment with local agencies, the entire Michigan delegation and their host agency representatives joined for a debriefing seminar. The venue was the University of Ireland, Maynooth campus. This modern institution of higher education is steeped in a rich history.

The 22 participants in this community development exchange represented varied roles in communities in Michigan, yet a common sense of purpose created close ties of friendship and support. Since returning, the group has met to exchange pictures and ideas and have invited and hosted Irish guests. They are actively pursuing business and community partnerships and have shared their perspectives on

Ireland with many local groups. The value of person-to-person and community-to-community international experience is important and useful to this group. Already other community groups have approached MSUE to plan future study tours.

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