



CONNECTION

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EPSILON SIGMA PHI

The Cooperative Extension Professionals' Organization

President's Perspective

Excellence: A Pathway to Success

by Laurel L. Kubin, National President

As we launch into 2000, it truly seems we're moving Epsilon Sigma Phi, the *Cooperative Extension Professionals' Organization*, into a higher orbit as well. Just seven years ago, then-National President Pat Buchanan stated that we had challenges, choices, and changes to face to keep Epsilon Sigma Phi alive and healthy. During the ensuing six short years, ESP made quantum leaps by providing additional services for members, creating a solid financial foundation, and following a strategic plan to foster excellence in the Extension system and developing the Extension profession and professionals.

In Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman's *IN SEARCH OF EXCELLENCE* the authors identify several attributes that characterize excellence. *A bias for action* is a characteristic of ESP as has been shown by our willingness to develop, follow, and now update a set of strategic directions that have strengthened the fraternity and its programs.

Staying close to the customer, ESP actively seeks input from its membership, constantly learning from the people for whom the organization exists. *Autonomy and entrepreneurship* are fostered by encouraging national committees and state chapters to be creative and by sponsoring mini-grants to support great ideas.

Productivity through people is how the work and benefits of the organization are

accomplished. Members are the source of quality and productivity. Professional courtesy is extended to colleagues as we learn from each other.

Epsilon Sigma Phi is *hands-on, value driven*. Recognizing excellence in our colleagues, valuing the diversity each person brings, and supporting Cooperative Extension as a valuable structure in society keep ESP focused on what is important. Even as we "stick to our knitting", e.g. doing what is best for its members and the Extension system, ESP seeks to deliver the goods through a variety of methods such as the satellite uplinks from the National Conference, informing members through the National web page, committee work via conference calls, etc.

ESP keeps a *simple form, lean staff*. We have streamlined the national board structure with vice presidents having responsibilities for both regional leadership and a national committee chairmanship to enhance communications and accountability. We are also blessed with an exemplary National Executive Director and staff. Please help recruit a new National Executive Director so that we can keep this level of quality.

And finally, ESP exhibits *simultaneous loose-tight properties*. ESP is clearly focused on excellence in

(See *Excellence* on page 8)



ESP National President for 2000, Laurel Kubin (Left), of Colorado, shares with her Western Region's Vice President, Richard Garrard (Center), of Idaho, one of many generous hospitality gestures from Alpha Lambda Chapter at the recent Professional Development Conference in Indianapolis. Also pictured is Evva Wilson (Right), who is also a member of the National Board.

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Cooperative Extension in Wisconsin The First Hundred Years

by: Rosemary Stare (WI)

The Alpha Sigma Chapter of Epsilon Phi is taking on the responsibility of getting the History of Cooperative Extension in Wisconsin, 1900-2000, written and published.

Jerry Apps, noted Midwestern author and chapter member, is authoring the book. Wisconsin ESP members are serving a volunteer "story gatherers" to interview current and retired professionals, support staff, past and current Extension Education Committee members, clientele and others affected by or involved in Cooperative Extension Programs in Wisconsin. Author Apps is putting together the overall history framework.

Volunteers are gathering and writing vignettes and human interest stories that will be used by the author to bring Wisconsin's history alive. Support and encouragement of faculty involvement by Carl O'Connor, Dean of Cooperative Extension, and Ellen Fitzsimmons, Associate Dean, is helping the Wisconsin Chapter move rapidly on this exciting project. Current staff, retirees, and chapter life members have many memorable moments and events to share. We expect to accomplish the task and have our story in print before the end of 2002.



(Standing Left to Right), Carl O'Connor, Dean of Cooperative Extension Service and Ellen Fitzsimmons, Associate Dean (Seated Left to Right) Mary Brintnall-Peterson, president of the Wisconsin Chapter of ESP, Rosemary T. Stare, co-chair of History Project Advisory Committee, Jerry Apps, author, and Laverne Forest, co-chair of History Project Advisory Committee.



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Bio

Laurel L. Kubin National President

Laurel L. Kubin brings enthusiasm and a wealth of wisdom and vision to the Epsilon Sigma Phi presidency. She served on the 1994 ESP Strategic Planning Committee and co-authored the Chapter Handbook. She is committed to providing quality member services and served as the National Membership Services Committee Chairman for three years, also representing the Western Region on the National Board at the same time. As Professional Development Committee Chair, she and the committee organized the program for the 1998 National Conference held in Atlanta, GA. While National President Elect, Kubin appointed members to the 2000 National Committees, led the process to update the Strategic Plan, and served on the Joint Council of Extension Professionals.

For Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, she serves as Director of the Larimer County Office, located in Fort Collins, CO. Previously, she also served as Acting Assistant Director for Family and Consumer Sciences. During employment with the University of California Cooperative Extension, she was a County Director and Regional Program Leader. In Colorado, Kubin was the first female County Director in a multiple agent county.

Kubin earned a B.S. Degree in Consumer Sciences from Colorado State University and a M.S. Degree in Family Economics from Oregon State University.

Active in her community as a facilitator for several organizations, Kubin also serves on the Administrative Council of Christ United Methodist Church. She is married and enjoys scuba diving, gardening, music, traveling, reading and is a Colorado native.



Request for Proposals - Concurrent Sessions

Please share with chapter members, state administrators, and faculty/staff

2000 National Epsilon Sigma Phi
Professional Development Conference
November 30 - December 2, 2000
Salt Lake City, UT

Theme: Anticipate Excellence — Pathways To Success

Epsilon Sigma Phi invites you to submit a proposal for a concurrent session presentation at the 2000 National Professional Development Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Sessions will last 45 minutes (including discussion). Presenters may be invited to repeat their session. Both members and non-members are urged to submit proposals.

Submission Procedures

Proposals must be sent by **April 14, 2000** to: Fay Strickler, e-mail at: fbs1@psu.edu or fax: (610) 378-7961. *Whenever possible, submit proposals via e-mail attached as MS Word file or Word Perfect. Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. This request for proposals and more information about the 2000 Epsilon Sigma Phi Professional Development Conference can be found on the Epsilon Sigma Phi Web Site <http://esp-nat.tamu.edu>*

To be considered, proposals must contain:

- Name, title, address, daytime phone number, FAX number, and e-mail address of contact person
- Name, title, and address of each presenter
- Presentation title
- Brief description (25 words) which will be published in the conference program booklet
- Identify the conference objective(s) that the workshop compliments
- Include an abstract, not to exceed 400 words
- Specify equipment and room set-up needed



Concurrent Session Objectives

- Explore alternative delivery systems.
- Learn about state of the art technology.
- Develop excellence through successful partnerships.
- Provide professional development opportunities to meet the diverse needs of all ESP members.

Potential Workshop Topics

- Marketing programs for clients and decision makers
- Retirees as successful lobbyists
- Using technology to reach more people
- Develop personal and professional excellence
- Financial planning for retirement
- Unique partnerships

Presenters will be notified by **June 30, 2000**. Selected presenters will provide biographical information for introductions. Abstracts of selected presentations will be on the ESP Web Site for use by members of state units not attending the annual session. Note: Epsilon Sigma Phi does not provide financial assistance to presenters. All presenters must pay registration costs to attend the national conference. Members selected to make presentations may want to work with chapter presidents to utilize funding for transportation provided for voting delegates to the national conference. Registration materials will be in the ESP CONNECTION, the Epsilon Sigma Phi national newsletter. All presenters must register for the national conference by the dates set forth in the registration materials.

Send proposals to: Fay Strickler
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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.



Annual Professional Development Conference Recap

by: Robert Halman (MD) & Judy Carlson (IA)

Epsilon Sigma Phi's sixth annual conference was held in Indianapolis, IN, December 2-4, 1999. Over 325 people participated, a ten-fold increase over the first conference held in 1994. Dr. Walt Walla was honored as the Ruby Distinguished Service Award recipient. National Friends of Extension honors were presented to Alvin Fjeldheim (SD), Billy Ray Smith (KY), and Nancy Patterson (OH).

The first keynote speaker, Denis Waitley, presented "The Future Proof Leader: Effectively Managing Change and Balancing Professional and Personal Priorities in the Knowledge Century" which was telecast and downlinked by sites in 21 states by Purdue University. Chuck Bell (OH) was the chairperson of the downlink arrangements in cooperation with Randy Spear of Purdue Extension.

The outstanding event was hosted by Purdue University and Alpha Lambda Chapter of Epsilon Sigma Phi. The huge master-minding job of local arrangements was done by Linda Garringer, Grant County, IN and Mary Ann Dickason, Marion County, IN. One hundred fifty-two Purdue University Extension staff members participated in the conference.

Three years ago when Purdue's State Director of Extension Hank Wadsworth was the Ruby Lecturer, he pledged his support to Alpha Lambda Chapter to bring the conference to Indianapolis.

When Past President Dick Angus returned from the conference he wrote to friends, "It was great seeing old friends and the Indiana Chapter of ESP outdid themselves in hospitality and ambiance. The final banquet was climaxed with the Purdue Bell Choir performing at the Indiana



(Left to Right) Commissioner of Agriculture Billy Ray Smith (KY), Alvin Fjeldheim (SD), and Nancy Patterson (OH) were presented their recognition as National Friends of Extension by President-Elect Laural Kubin.

Museum, a brand new building, which was a delightful close to an outstanding conference."

Some members and guests came to Indianapolis a day early to take advantage of a wonderful "see Indiana" tour conducted by local Extension personnel and retirees. At the final stop they joined the National Board for a wonderful evening of laughter and great "down-home cooking" at the restaurant, Heritage Acres, operated by the humorous retiree Jean Reed and her family near Greensburg, Indiana.



Chuck Bell, Ohio, was chairperson of the arrangements for the conference presentation and downlink by Dr. Denis Waitley. Bell (Left) and Carl Carlson (Center), of the National Office, had a jovial "warm-up" lunch with Waitley just before his presentation the "Future Proof Leader".

Maryann Dickason and Linda Garringer (Right) were Alpha Lambda's Chapter local arrangements co-chairs for the 1999 National Conference. Both members are past chapter presidents.



Jean Reed (Center), Purdue Extension retiree, operates Heritage Acres Restaurant in her grandmother's farm house near Greensburg, IN. The pre-conference tour group and the National Board enjoyed a jovial and taste pleasing home cooked dinner with Jean and her family.

(Conference from page 4)

Scholarships

ESP awards several scholarships to members attending the conference. Here's some feedback on the conference from two of those scholarship recipients. Sue Buck, Central District Director in Stevens Point, WI, wrote, "It was a great professional development opportunity and it also provided me with a new insight into the organization. I am looking forward to sharing the information I learned with my colleagues in Wisconsin. It was a valuable three days for me. I look forward to participating in future ESP events and activities."



ESP National Conference Scholarships were awarded to three retirees, an Extension administrator and an early career first-timer. Pictured with President Watts (Left to Right) are Ronnie Mitchell (AR/IN), Mary Schuman (IN), Sue Buck, (WI), Evelyn Adams (IN) and Clarence Cunningham (OH).



2000 National Board members are: (Left to Right) Richard Garrard, Evva L. Z. Wilson, Marilyn Schnittjer, Laurel Kubin, Bernadette Watts, Jim Lindquist, Fay Strickler and Eleanor Wilson.

Ronnie Mitchell, Extension Educator at Rising Sun, IN, was the recipient of an Early Career Scholarship. He wrote, "I would like to commend you for the organization and planning of the 1999 National Conference. The speakers were very motivating and I enjoyed meeting the national officers. The information I gained at the conference will be a great benefit to me in my career as an Extension Educator."

Dues Increase

The National Council voted to increase national dues by \$10, effective FY 2001. National dues will then be \$30 per member. This automatically increases the Life Member dues to \$150.

Strategic Plan Update

Chapter leaders provided input for the update of Epsilon Sigma Phi's strategic plan at last year's national conference and the 1999 Regional Leadership Development Workshops. The update focuses on increasing diversity and membership involvement, and strengthening. The plan is on the national ESP web site.

Strickler New National 2nd VP

Fay B. Strickler (PA) was elected to the Second Vice President position and will chair the Professional Development Committee and the 2000 National Conference in Salt Lake City, UT.



National Second Vice President Jim Lindquist of Kansas (Right) was the conference chair for the National Professional Development Conference. He is sharing an overview of the program with 1999 National President Bernadette Watts of North Carolina.

Presentations on Web Site

Concurrent session abstracts and the full text of the Ruby Lecture are on the national ESP web site at <http://esp-nat.tamu.edu>.

At the Ruby Luncheon, honored guests were Past "Rubies" and Past National Presidents. Pictured here are (Left to Right) Hank Wadsworth, Director Emeritus of Purdue Extension, Richard Angus (MD), Patricia Buchanan (IL), Raygene Paige (MS) and Clarence Cunningham (OH).



The Art and Science of Building Bridges

1999 Distinguished Ruby Lecture – An Abstract

by: Walter J. Walla, Kentucky

The expectation to build bridges goes back many years. As a young, inexperienced agent in Texas, I remember my first supervisor told me to recruit volunteers for advisory committees, work with 4-H and youth programs, assist with both method and result demonstrations and help secure program resources. As the years went by, we began organizing interdisciplinary teams to help solve complex problems. Today the buzz words include collaboration, coalition building, and partnerships. We've learned these skills by trial and error. We made mistakes and improved as we went along.

How much easier it would have been, if as a young agent, I had been given training on how to recruit, manage and retain volunteers leaders. It would have been easier to chair a committee or task force if I had been trained on the various stages a committee goes through and how to manage a diverse group of people and to bring them to a consensus. And today, we encourage coalitions, collaboration and bridge building without the slightest thought that we are asking our employees to engage in a complicated process without possessing the basic skills required to succeed.

I will use my engineering background and my understanding of structural design as an analogy to building bridges, i.e., partnerships, coalitions, collaboration, etc.

Building these bridges or relationships, even in the simplest form, is a complicated task that requires knowledge of the fundamentals.

The most basic bridge is a plank across a stream or gully. It sounds simple and easy to build doesn't it? But maybe not, if you consider the basic principles involved. The bridge requires a solid foundation or footing on both sides. It requires a board or plank that is capable of sustaining the load that it will be exposed to. The plank will be subjected to stresses, both internal and external, as well as compression and tension. If a miscalculation is made in computing these stresses, the result could be catastrophic failure of the structure or over building the structure based on its function can result in excess use of resources. Not so simple anymore, is it?

Let's focus on the components and start with the foundation. The principles are the same whether you're considering a physical structure or a personal relationship. In order for the foundation to support the structure, it must be solid and have a sound footing. The

foundation for personal relationships must also have solid components. These include trust, integrity, respect, credibility, reliability, loyalty, attitude and honest communication.

To ensure success, we need the very best people we can find, those that are solid in their discipline and respect those of other disciplines, aren't intimidated by other team members, and are able to communicate honestly and openly. The first time one of the team members is intimidated or overwhelmed by another team member they are unable to pull their weight or hold up the load and (what do you know) we have another failure.



Dr. Walter Walla, Director of Extension in Kentucky, receives the distinguished Ruby jewel from National President Bernadette Watts (Right).

Now let's talk about the plank. The first question is: what will be the load to which the span will be subjected, or what is the task or goal we hope to achieve? In all relationships, the simplest is "one on one," where two people enter into an agreement to work together to accomplish a mutually agreeable goal, i.e., get from one side to the other. I would require a totally different plank than someone half my size to accomplish the goal to reach the other side. The bridge is still subjected to the same stresses, compression on the top of the plank and tension on the bottom. There are also internal and external forces at work; any of which, if an overload occurs because of design weakness, will result in failure of the bridge or relationship. As the number of variables or participants increase, the greater the chance for failure. It is important to recognize that even in the simple



relationships, continuous forces are at work which, if not recognized and taken into consideration, could cause problems.

Over the years I have been involved in many partnerships. We were successful in achieving our goals a high percentage of the time. That success can be attributed to each of the partners understanding the goals of the partnership and having solid commitment to achieving them. If there is one thing that I have learned in my 38 years in Extension, it is there is no such thing as giving too much credit or praise. Generally if you give more credit than is deserved, people will overcompensate the next time and give more than their fair share. The key to success in relationships is always allow the other person to be the star.

To this point our discussion has been a simple structure, i.e., plank. But what about coalitions? If a simple partnership is complicated, what do you think about coalitions? Same principle, but instead of one beam (plank) we have to deal with many, each one necessary to support the load the structure is designed to carry. Some beams or girders are compression members; others are under tension. All are subject to internal and external pressures. All are designed and located to support the structure each dependent on one another. If one fails, the structure fails. One thing to keep in mind, you

don't choose someone with little or no experience or training and ask them to design a complicated structure.

Once we have the bridge built remember the first thing you did - took that first step. Even assuming that you used the appropriate formula, were accurate in your calculations, read your slide rule correctly and had confidence in yourself, you didn't go barreling across the bridge! Your first step was tentative. You knew that even under the best of conditions, you had to be cautious and feel your way across. If you're part of the design and construction team, you have greater confidence in the structure. The same can be said for programs we deliver to our clientele. If they [clientele] are part of the process, they will have commitment, support and ownership at all levels.

Have you ever been driving down the road and noticed how many bridges are undergoing maintenance of some type? To think that you could build a bridge or form a partnership without thought of

(See *The Art* page 7)

2000 National Board

2000 National Committees

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(The Art from page 6)

maintenance is a path to disaster. All relationships need constant nurturing (maintenance). Keep in mind, maintenance is cheaper and more efficient than new construction. Maintaining an ongoing partnership is easier than establishing a new relationship.

We, as an organization, need to invest more resources in helping our employees understand group dynamics and the various stages that committees, teams and partnerships go through in their evolutionary stages. Just as we use mathematical formulas to design and build bridges, research has shown that personal relationships and group behavior is predictable. We can apply science to help us become more effective as we deal with new relationships, but keep in mind that there is also the "art." No matter how good a job we

do in training our employees, if they do not possess the artist skills in applying the science, they will not be successful. These skills include communication skills, interpersonal skills, integrity, attitude, loyalty and honesty. Each is required to achieve a successful, fulfilling partnership. As we move into the next millennium, we need to recognize that the issues we deal with will become more complicated. The "Lone Ranger" approach will no longer work. We will work in teams, coalitions and partnerships, and our employees will require the necessary skills to allow us to function effectively in this new era.

The entire text of the lecture is available on the ESP National Web Pages – <http://esp-nat.tamu.edu>

Joint Council of Extension Professionals (JCEP)
Public Issues Leadership Development
Conference (PILD)

POLITICS & EXTENSION PARTNERSHIPS: SHOWCASING THE PREMIER EDUCATIONAL NETWORK

April 2-5, 2000

Hilton Crystal City at National Airport
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Early Bird Registration March 1, 2000
Cstamper@ca.uky.edu for information





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ESP National Executive Director

Epsilon Sigma Phi, *the Cooperative Extension Professionals' Organization*, seeks to establish a long-term relationship with an individual for the purposes of performing certain executive and administrative responsibilities of the organization. The individual hired shall serve as the organization's Executive Director. Position Announcement can be found on Epsilon Sigma Phi's Web Site (<http://esp-nat.tamu.edu>). The initial appointment is for one year and may be renewed annually. Applications received until March 13, 2000. Position available December 2000.

To obtain more information and ask questions contact:

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(Excellence from page 1)

its members, yet is decentralized in effect, as chapters provide the primary point of contact for members. Chapters are encouraged to take a close look at the Annual Plan of Work and the Strategic Plan Update to determine for themselves how they can make membership in ESP a valuable experience.

Check out the National ESP web page for opportunities. Apply to serve on chapter and national committees, attend the Public Issues Leadership Development seminar, apply for scholarships, nominate your colleagues for ESP awards, plan to attend the 2000 National Conference in Salt Lake City, make excellence happen for you and your chapter. It's up to you to continue the success of Epsilon Sigma Phi.

