

Peaks & Plains



Colorado Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

Volume 81

Winter 2026

Number 1



The Peaks and Plains of Eastern Colorado. This is the view from 70 miles east of the Front Range. Pikes Peak is ever changing as are the skies above. In the foreground you can see a wheat field. The field was harvested in July using a method by which only the heads of the wheat are plucked from the stems. The stalks are then left to prevent soil erosion until the next cycle of crop rotation. In this area, the usual crop rotations include wheat, dryland corn, and sunflowers.

Recently, some farmers have begun planting canola. In the fall it is not unusual to see long flexible plastic tubing that is full of wheat. In February we are all waiting to see green and

hoping for moisture! ~Photo Credit; Juana Hajek, Editor

Table of Contents

Omega State Officers _____	1
White Roses of Remembrance _____	1
President's Corner _____	2
Team Updates _____	2
Chapter Happenings _____	6
Items of Interest _____	8
Webmaster/Editor Update _____	13
Mark Your Calendars _____	14
MY Librarian _____	14
Mission Statement, Vision, Society Purposes_	15
Colorado Peaks & Plains _____	15
Extras _____	14



Omega State Officers

2023-2025

President - Dr. Laura Kuniansky

1st Vice President - Dr. Heathre Palige

2nd Vice President - Donna Jenkins

Recording Secretary - Sarah Jack

**Corresponding Secretary - Beth
Barzdukas**

Executive Secretary - Beth Barzdukas

Treasurer - Lilly Vigil

Parliamentarian - Memory Wollenweber

Editor - Juana Hajek

Webmaster - Heidi Ragsdale

Archivist - Suzanne Foster

**Immediate Past President - Dr. Maxine
Fawcett-Yeske**



White Roses of Remembrance



REMINDER FOR CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

It is very important that each death of a member be reported as soon as possible on **Form 6 for Death of a Member**. Please work with your membership team leaders to promptly report to all three of the following:

1. **International Membership Services:**
mem@dkg.org
2. **Omega State Membership Team Leaders:**

Kelly McGuire:
mcguire_maureen@yahoo.com

Maggi Johnson: maggipj47@aol.com

3. Omega State Treasurer: Lilly Vigil:
cmcer1@msn.com

The form is interactive online and is available on both the state and international websites. Names will not be listed in the White Roses unless the form 6 is submitted.

President's Corner

This Year's Theme: *ONE WITH ALL* allows us to have the higher level calling of "One With All Things." I see this as staying within a practice I have of seeing others on equal ground. I am no higher nor lower than another human alleviating judgements that I am above or below another person. With this in mind, this theme or thrust is to carry us from individual to group, chapter, committee, friends, other states, Int'l DKG, and the Global Mission of our 45,000+ members. This spiritual practice may guide us into DKG's first purpose "to unite women educators of the world in a genuine spiritual fellowship."

I ask that in all communications we participate in genuine care with understanding, hope, purpose and passion to help each other listen to and meet the needs of all DKG members. We must also keep in mind our important task of attracting new members so we may move into 21st century communication without throwing away the past. We build upon the past experiences and knowledge of our members and help each other understand today's additional modes of communication. We are here because we want to socialize, enjoy and learn from each-others' knowledge, advance professionally, support educators and the education we know has proven itself viable through research and/or practice. In order to participate in our world and DKG's at least 45,000+ members internationally, finding

common ground past, present and future helps us learn in every realm.

Who is "THE Most Important in DKG? My first reaction might have been "no one," but that certainly wouldn't sit well because I know we all are all important. Answering everyone doesn't answer the question of "THE most important Person." I believe it is each individual member. Delta Kappa Gamma is here to help you fulfill your needs and dreams through its 45,000+ members who each have expertise in a field they may or may not claim expertise. Every one of us, by receiving the invitation to be a member in Delta Kappa Gamma has demonstrated leadership, or a potential for distinctive service in education, whether it be divinity/spiritual fellowship, leadership, collaboration, compassion, excellence, helping others find information about any area of interest etc. etc.

Now, what am I doing to make use of the many offerings DKG has for me? In my 44 years as a DKG member I can tell you that I did very little for many years, with the exception of socializing in Oregon where I was asked to join in my 5th year of teaching. DKG meant very much as I was able to transfer my membership after moving back to Colorado. I was quite capable but didn't feel I met up to the standards of my DKG sisters in Epsilon Chapter. I took jobs at the chapter level, had meetings at my home, baked and served food at meetings, etc. The "less than" feeling stayed with me because my husband and I opened Durango's first bottled water and cooler rental business so I didn't feel I was a "real teacher" in Colorado. I stayed active and did my part without anyone pushing me to do so. I went to 3 International Conventions, always still feeling lost and like I didn't belong, but continued to stick with DKG. No, I never felt like the most important person anywhere, especially not in DKG! Today, as Colorado State President, I recognize that every one of you is the most important person in DKG. How could that be? Because whoever I am working with or speaking to in DKG is the most important person at that time. Please see yourself that way and give that respect to whichever member may be in your presence. As

I have watched myself grow from the 20-year-old 2nd grade teacher doing my very best and having my mentor, a seasoned 2nd grade teacher and a local Reverend's wife, tell me, "Stick with it, Laura, it's never been one teacher who makes or breaks a child!" I thank my parents, my God, my education and every one of you for helping me have the stick-to-it with DKG. This year and I hope for the rest of my biennium as State President, I will continue to grow spiritually, mentally, and most of all in the attributes I try to live by. Humility used to be an elusive attribute to me, but not since I've taken this job! I have been blessed with humility about twice a week! I've learned to admit my faults, correct them and move on...what a concept!

May we all grow and grow in DKG and allow DKG into our lives to the extent it may fit with each season of our lives!

Here's to a beautiful year! With love from
 Laura Kuniansky, PhD & Colorado State
 President
 (970) 799-8056 cell; (970) 385-6903 home



Team Updates

Nominations Team

The Nominations Team Needs:

Who?

The Nominations Team is composed of one member from each area of the state. The Team shall be elected at the State Convention in odd numbered years by ballot to serve for four (4) years on a rotation basis. The primary consideration of the Nominations Team should be to seek the best leadership available. Each member of the Team shall review all endorsements submitted for each position.

What?

To provide Colorado State with a slate of the best qualified candidates to fill elected positions for each Biennium.

When?

TIMELINE: March (year prior to election) - Submit article to Colorado Peaks and Plains regarding the election
 March (year prior to election) - Distribute information/nomination forms to chapter presidents at the Spring Executive Board Meeting (dkgcolorado.com)
 October (year prior to election) - Give update at Colorado State Fall Executive Board Meeting
 November 17 (year prior to election) - Nominees submit nomination forms and photos to Team Chairman
 February 15 (year of the election) - Nominations Team Chairman sends photos and biographies of nominees to Colorado Peaks and Plains editor for March publication

March (year of the election) - Present Slate of Officers at Spring Executive Board Meeting
 June (year of the election) - Presentation of Slate, Voting and Installation at Colorado State Convention.

Why?

Because Colorado State needs strong, dedicated women in leadership positions to represent our members throughout the state. Your organization needs you!

How?

The Nominations Team shall submit, in election years, the name of one (1) nominee for each

elective office and nominees for the Nominations Team. The Nominations Team shall request the membership to recommend members capable and willing to serve as state officers and Nominations Team members. The slate of officers, with candidate qualifications, shall be published in the Colorado Peaks and Plains sixty (60) days prior to the State Convention. After the report of the Team has been made to the convention, additional nominations may be made from the floor, with the consent of the nominee. Elections shall be by ballot and a majority vote of the members present and voting at the business session of the State Convention elects. If there is but one nominee for an office, the election may be by voice vote. The Nominations Team shall prepare the ballot and conduct the election.

How?

Committee Responsibilities:

Follows the Colorado State Colorado Bylaws/Standing Rules in the officer selection process; corresponds with Chapter Presidents about nominations for Nominations Team members from their respective areas; submits articles/slate of officers and Nominations Team nominees for Colorado Peaks and Plains publications in a timely manner; presents the slate of officers at the Spring Colorado State Executive Board Meeting; prepares the ballot and conducts the elections at the State Convention; meets at Colorado State Executive Board Meetings to develop and review goals, process, guidelines and timelines; revises nominations form is needed; communicates with Team members throughout the biennium. Your organization needs you!

Submitted by

Mary Jo Pollman (Chair of Nominations Team) with guidance from Laurie Salazar (Former Chair of the Nominations Team)

Membership

Members of the Membership Team serve for a two year term. Members for this biennium are Maggi Johnson, Kelly McGuire, Dr. Maxine Fawcett-Yeske, Heidi Ragsdale, Christina Collazo, Kathy Jeppson, and Ronda Collette. Ex-Officio member is Dr. Laura Kuniansky, Colorado state president. Duties of the team include:

- Studying membership concerns and making recommendations to the Colorado State Organization Executive Board pertaining to those concerns.
- Providing ideas for increasing and maintaining membership.
- Continuing the expansion of state chapters.
- Training for the strengthening of chapters.
- Conducting the Ceremony of Remembrance to memorialize deceased members at the Colorado State Organization Convention.
- Evaluating recommendations for Colorado Honorary Membership and submitting names to the Colorado State Organization Executive Board for a vote.

Submitted by Dr. Laura Kuniansky

Chapter Happenings

Rho

Rho Chapter members have been looking forward to hosting our Colorado State Leadership Conference in June. Our president, Donna Jenkins has been doing a lot of leg work getting ready!

Our October meeting was held at Big Sandy High School in Simla. It is always a fun time with our Big Sandy Crew hosting. The meeting is a fun kick-off to the year.

In November, we met at the Pioneer's Museum in Colorado Springs and toured the exhibits, including the Women's History Exhibit. After the meeting members met for lunch at a local restaurant.

The December meeting included our Box Social, the reading of the Rho Chapter history, and a special Christmas story read by Juana Hajek. This is usually a long meeting with lots of laughter and love shared with our sisters.

Prior to our January meeting we met at Pueblo Viejo restaurant for lunch, after which we traveled to Library 21C for a special presentation from Dr. Sue Lynn Pettit and our state recording secretary, Sarah Jack. They shared helpful tips for using social media to advance DKG and inform members of activities. We also discussed several matters pertaining to our upcoming state convention.

Our February meeting consisted of planning the quilt squares that we are collaboratively making to be sold for fundraising at our upcoming state convention. We also welcomed a new member! Her name is Cassandra Merryfield and we are so excited that she decided to join us as a Rho chapter member!

Submitted by Juana Hajek

Alpha Beta

Alpha Beta Notes



It's a good day when we get together.

Sometimes small (5 or 6); sometimes all (10+)

September was in Karin's lovely home.

Stories of family, work, retirement, and DKG to hone.

Jordano's restaurant was our October meet.

Picked up where we left off, not missing a beat.

In November, Jessie (our acupuncturist guest) helped us feel the best.

December: adventure at Denver Country Club with Alpha Gamma Chapter.

Connecting over brunch had us cherishing the memory long after.

Looking forward to 2026, there's not anything we want to miss!

February, something with the arts;

And a bi-chapter scholarship luncheon in March.

In April, something nice will come to the fore;

In May, Charlotte, in Genessee opens her door.

There's more at Colorado State Organization and International (revised governing documents and new membership goal).

Our plate is full; we are very blessed and thankful.

Submitted by Susan Denny

Alpha Rho

The November meeting proved to be insightful and educational. It was centered around books. Kathy O'Neil monitored a book talk and exchange. We each brought a book that we read and were willing to exchange. It gave a glimpse

about each of our members that maybe we did not know about. There were delightful impressions that each member had about their book. It was so much fun to hear about each book and learn more about each other as an educator. Afterwards, we had a chance to exchange a book with our sisters and hoped that we would share and exchange again.

He was very grateful and hoped to have his students and him come to a future meeting to let us know more about Avid and the impact it has had on his students.

We always look forward to December's meeting. It is with our sister chapter Delta. They present us with a yummy cuisine of breakfast items, a delightful program, music, and fun games. This year it was centered around the theme of Santa. We had a great time conversing, and especially laughing with our Delta sisters.



During January, we had an executive meeting in which we planned our future meetings, our

opportunities for upcoming conferences and State Board meetings. Our goals are always set to encourage new members and our continued outreach to our community. Our meeting was very productive and we are excited for the next few months.



Submitted by Beth Barzdukas

Delta Chapter

Greeley's Delta Chapter had a busy autumn with a September field trip to Riverdale Ridge High School hosted by Riverdale Ridge teacher and Delta member JoLynn Baral and the DECA officers. Members visited the technical education area, engaged in discussions with DECA officers and Baral, and enjoyed refreshments provided by the hosts. In November an exceptional program, "Girls in Science," was presented by Dr. Lizette Navarrete. In addition to providing valuable information, she engaged members in science curiosity, emphasizing the importance of continuing to engage girls of all backgrounds in science education to open more career fields for them.



University of Northern Colorado Educational Leadership professor, Dr. Lizette Navarrete, presents facts about girls and science.

Delta hosted fellow Greeley Chapter Alpha Rho at a holiday brunch with games, a photo booth, and holiday singing. The organizing team of Dr. Kris Melloy, Wendi Oster, Renee Mayer, D'Lane Joens, and JoLynn Baral excelled at planning and including all members. At the event, the Chapter also presented the Cumbres/Delta scholarship to a University of Northern Colorado Cumbres student to be used during her student teaching semester.



Presenting the Cumbres/Delta scholarship are Aldo Romero, UNC Cumbres; Scholarship recipient Angel; and Delta Scholarship Team members Dr. Barbara Whinery and Dr. Kris Melloy.

In addition to events, the Delta's Early Educators Team continues to support new staff at Greeley's James Madison STEAM Academy.

Submitted by Mary Lauck, Delta Communications Team

Pi Chapter

Spotlight on a special DKG birthday

Happy 85th Birthday, Pi Chapter!

On behalf of Colorado DKG, First Vice President, Heathre Palige and Carol Tebo from Zeta chapter were asked to attend and surprise the Pi chapter on their chapter's 85th birthday. Have you considered teaming up with another chapter for a meeting, event or project? Maybe 2025-2026 is the year to try it! This welcoming group of women enthusiastically accepted us. A gorgeous gluten-free cake from Cakes by Karen was provided so that everyone could enjoy it. Special Thanks to Dr. Laura Kuniandy, CO State President for the fun idea!



This special chapter has been through heavy losses over the past few months. Having the talented and beloved Memory helping lead the chapter and the state organization was quite a gift. In all her official roles for her chapter and the state for many years, Memory was a strong and compassionate leader. Imagine, her sudden passing away along with another valuable team member, Sharon, two months earlier. The Pi chapter lost these two dear friends in a short time. Knowing they had the 85th birthday of the chapter coming... who would take over the responsibilities for the loss of their members? Anyone might wonder how they could plan and celebrate their big upcoming birthday. This courageous chapter came through. The meeting on October 25th fulfilled everything a chapter meeting includes with team reports, reading correspondence, new and old business, approval of minutes, time to enjoy each other's company, a gorgeous, comfortable location, and delicious refreshments. They even made time to pass out the new annual yearbook. Has your chapter completed your yearbook and turned it in?

Time was dedicated to Memory's honor during the chapter meeting. Her former student teacher, Maria Cunningham, a Pi chapter member, was in attendance. Linda Omdahl, Pi President, shared the program from Memory's celebration of life (including over 400 friends and family and bagpipes!) and every member participated in the lively conversations.



Linda also shared with members a bookmark honoring Naomi Kullerstrand Olson, former Pi member, who was Memory's third grade teacher! Other valuable members attending this important chapter milestone were: Ginny Champlin, Roxanne Foster, Becky Dague, Barbara Howe, Tricia McCulley, and Uhla Davidson.



And we must give this chapter a few more shout-outs! This Arvada area chapter has had 5, yes 5 local schools named after Pi members! Kudos for the incredible work they are doing every year with Adopt a Classroom (<https://www.adoptaclassroom.org/>). The Pi Chapter is the first Colorado chapter to put a project on International's Impact Spotlight list for chapter projects to share with other organizations throughout DKG Society. At the fall executive board meeting, the website location to find how to submit a project was

shared. To submit your chapter's amazing projects that support educators, simply log into DKG -->MyDKG -->Apply/Submit -->Impact Spotlight.

Please note, you can email our Educational Excellence Chair, Dr. Heathre Palige at dkgcoloradozeta@gmail.com and she will email the document/form to you, and then digitally submit it for your chapter on behalf of Colorado!

Chapter members and leaders, we appreciate you.

With DKG love and bubbling over with pride,

Heathre Palige

1st Vice President, DKG CO state organization

Items of Interest!

Teaching in Action Across 7 Time Zones!

The morning of December 8th at 5 AM, Sarah Jack of Alpha Iota chapter in Aurora, spoke with graduating high school students in Finland as part of an English language engagement experience. She lectured on colonial American witch trials from her family heritage perspective and on the alarming extent of modern witch hunts happening globally today.

This international opportunity developed through the DKG NEXT program where Sarah connected with an international DKG sister who created this opportunity for her students.

Cross-cultural interactions like this are invaluable. They give us the chance to see our own work and perspective through fresh eyes, enriching both the teaching and the learning.

The technology we have today means we're not limited by language, geography or time zones. We can reach students anywhere in the world when we're willing to wake up early and say yes.

Sarah is grateful for the DKG international network, educators who bring the world  into their classrooms, and for engaged students asking thoughtful questions about history and human rights.

#####

Dr. Teresa Cowan



Dr. Teresa Cowan

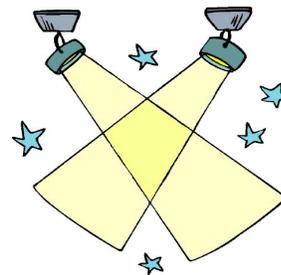
Dr. Teresa Cowan will be the featured International Speaker for the Colorado State Leadership Conference in June. Dr Cowan is one of the nominees for International 2nd Vice-President. She has also served as DKG Visionary Network Chair, Southeast Regional Director, Bursting the Bubble Task Force Chair, and Communications & Marketing Committee Chair.

Dr. Cowan is a past North Carolina past state president and has served her state as First Vice President, State Parliamentarian, and as the chair of several state committees. She is part of the International Speakers Fund, and has brought her message of leadership, inspiration, and service to members of DKG around the world.

We look forward to Dr. Cowan's visit and we hope that sisters from across the state can join us at our 2026 Colorado State Leadership Conference June 9-11 at the Hyatt Place on Garden of the Gods Road in Colorado Springs, CO.

#####

Member Spotlight



This issue's inaugural Member Spotlight shines a light on TWO members from very different backgrounds. First, Debbie Thieman is a member of Rho Chapter. The sisters of Rho visited Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch outside of Limon, Colorado last spring when the new calves were being born. It was such an interesting meeting that I couldn't resist sharing the Thieman family's story with you all.

Our second member to be recognized in this first Member Spotlight is Beverly Ausfahl from the Alpha Gamma Chapter. Alpha Gamma Chapter vice-president Barbara Fettner submitted her

story as an inspiration for all of our Colorado sisters.

Debbie Thieman



Ray and Debbie Thieman along with their partners in the bison ranch, their grandson and his family and their daughter and son-in-law.

#1 Please tell us about your family and about your early education.

I have four grown children and their spouses that all live in Colorado. We are a family of teachers. Three of my children and one daughter-in-law are teachers here on the eastern plains. I was born and raised part of my life in Colorado Springs, Colorado. I attended Ivywild Elementary School from Kindergarten through 6th grade. Then kids from my school district were bused to South Junior High where I completed 7th and 8th grade. My family moved to Rush, Colorado during my High School years.

#2 What or who was your inspiration for becoming a teacher?

My younger cousin, Kathy, and I played school whenever we were together. I was always the teacher because I was the oldest and she was my student. We spent many play dates at my grandparents house enjoying our school sessions.

#3 At which schools have you taught?

I have taught at Genoa-Hugo School, Big Sandy School, and Limon RE 4J School. These schools are all on the eastern plains of Colorado.

#4 What classes or subjects did you teach?

My first teaching position was at the Genoa-Hugo School and I taught fourth grade and third, fourth, and fifth grade Science for two years. Then I transferred to Big Sandy School and taught Kindergarten. Next I transferred to the Limon School district and taught third grade, Kindergarten, and first grade. I retired from the Limon School after 23 years teaching.

#5 How did you and Mr. Thieman become interested in raising bison?

My husband, Ray, was an Ag lender with the Farm and Home Administration in Hugo, Colorado. He made loans to ranchers that were raising livestock and pursuing the ranching lifestyle. A young man that was working on the old Denver Buffalo Company Ranch visited with Ray about buying a small herd of buffalo and returning to his grandfather's ranch in South Dakota. His grandfather was getting older and hoping to turn the ranch over to his grandson. Ray began researching the possibilities of becoming a profitable bison owner. Ray set up tours and visits to ranches in Nebraska and Colorado with owners of bison herds. He

invited me to go along and we visited these ranches on the weekends. Ray and I soon became enthralled with each bison herd we visited and we purchased 29 head from a man near Limon. Oh yes, Ray made the loan for the young man to purchase ten buffalo and he moved to South Dakota where he became a successful bison rancher.



The Entrance to the ranch

#6 Where did you get the idea of having tours at your ranch?

Local people began to find out that we had purchased bison and were raising them on our ranch and they were interested in seeing them. We began advertising in local newspapers that we were selling bison meat. I cooked buffalo meat in our local grocery store to help introduce the meat to people that have never tasted it. We also set up a booth at a local farmer's market near Colorado Springs. Ray and I became members of the National Bison Association and the Rocky Mountain Bison Association and talked to members that were doing Ag tourism on their ranches. Cooking bison burgers at the

Lincoln County Fair sparked interest in people visiting our buffalo. The buffalo were creating so much interest and we were taking people out to see the herd often that we realized we needed to do something that would be profitable for us. That is when we decided to try and have our buffalo dinners and tours.

#7 How many school tours do you conduct per year?

We do around 5-10 school tours a year, but have also hosted back to school activities for teachers. I have also gone into schools and taught about the bison. I love to make sure the kids know that the bison are our National Mammal.

#8 Is there any one question that most elementary students ask about the bison?

The kids ask, "What is the difference between a buffalo and bison?"

#9 I know that you have hosted all Miami Elementary classes, and all Big Sandy Elementary classes. How many elementary schools tour Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch?

Other Eastern Plains and Denver Schools have visited our ranch through the years.

#10 Do you teach about bison to all the groups you host?

Yes, we like to share the history and bison facts to all our visitors. I have a permanent display set up in our Prairie Ridge Event Center that visitors can view and learn about the bison. We have a store where people can buy meat and other related bison items. We also have flyers set out at several tourist visitor centers along I-70 where people can find out about our ranch and the location.

#11 What is your favorite part of

a. Owning Prairie Ridge Buffalo Ranch?

b. The tours that you and your family give of the ranch?

I love the animals and am proud that we are keeping their legacy alive. They are a majestic, smart, and fascinating animal. We never get tired of watching them or viewing their actions. They are part of our nation's history that we hope to promote.

The people are my favorite part of our tours and their fascination with the buffalo. It is also fun to meet people from all over our country and world. They also have much to share about their experiences with the buffalo.

#12 What else would you like Colorado State DKG sisters to know about your ranch?

It has been a wonderful experience in our lives to own and operate a buffalo ranch. We continue to learn about the bison and love getting together with other bison producers throughout the United States and world. When we go on vacations we always take time to locate and visit ranches in the area. All of our family are involved in our ranch and most of our grandkids own bison. I would have never dreamed we would have a bison ranch and it has truly been a blessing to us!

Submitted by Juana Hajek

Beverly Ausfahl



Beverly Ausfahl is first and foremost a family-oriented person. She loves and supports them all. From taking care of her older sister, to helping her 2 daughters through sickness, careers, and building a new home, to also having her grandson live with her while he gets back on his feet. Family is extremely important to her.

Beverly grew up in Pueblo with her mom, dad and siblings. Her dad believed all his children should be able to take care of themselves, and he taught them well. Even down to changing a flat tire! She married Rodney and they had a wonderful life of adventure, including their time in Turkey as members of The Peace Corps. Beverly's first daughter was born in Turkey while they were in the Peace Corps. (Should you meet her, ask her about Turkish cigarettes).

When they returned to the US, they moved to California, it was a different world both politically and culturally than when they had left. After returning home they had their second daughter while her husband finished his degree.

They used his father's camper to take their two daughters camping. Rodney was the chef of the family, cooking Turkish food to serve to their

parents. That helped bring both families together. Because their fathers were tinkers, it gave them even more common ground over which to bond.

When her husband was transferred back to Colorado as a LEAA (law enforcement assistance administration), Beverly began her teaching career here. As a middle school teacher, she made great connections with her students. She ran for office in the teacher's union and became the state president which had her traveling all around the state. Because her daughters were often with her, they learned the ins and outs of leadership.

Beverly eventually set down roots in Denver. She moved into her Denver apartment and easily made some great new friends, where she also served two terms on the HOA board and still continues on the building's finance committee.

In her "spare time" her hobbies include: putting jigsaw puzzles together, knitting, exercising on a regular basis, belonging to a book club, traveling with her friends, and making a mean drink of hard apple cider and fireball. Her last trip to New Zealand and Australia really renewed her travel bug and she now hopes to visit Japan.

Currently, Beverly regularly attends Alpha Gamma DKG meetings, is the treasurer of our chapter, and will have a table at the annual CEA Leadership Conference in Denver. Beverly hopes that with information about what we do, former scholarship winners will see their connection to education and they will want to become new members. We want to meet the national goal of increasing the membership for each state, but more importantly, we want others to experience the benefits available to them through DKG. I hope this gives you some insight into Beverly. She is a fantastic person and deserves to have a spotlight shine on her.

Submitted by Barbara Fettner

Do you know a member who has a unique talent? Do you know of a sister who is doing something phenomenal? Please send your information to the Peaks and Plains at coloradodkgpeaksandplains@gmail.com ! We'd love to hear all about them and share their unique stories with our readers in our Member Spotlight!

Webmaster/Editor Updates

Heidi Ragsdale, Webmaster

There are several new items on the DKGCOLORADO.com website. New additions include:

- Communications and Marketing Page with many ideas for chapters.
- Pictures from the summer Colorado Convention
- Many items were added to the International sites.
- International Arts Gallery closes 9.15.25, Spring gallery opens 2.15.26
- Conventions Slide show 1 [Website Deep dive](https://tinyurl.com/2uynx9bv)
<https://tinyurl.com/2uynx9bv>
- Convention Slideshow 2: [AI and Space for Members](https://tinyurl.com/4n9m2525)
<https://tinyurl.com/4n9m2525>
- The Weebly former site is no longer available. Please go to DKGColorado.com

DKGColorado.com (state)



DKG.org (International)



Juana Hajek, Editor

Thank you to all who sent items for this issue. It's very exciting to see what's happening across our state!

Mark Your Calendars!

An editable version of the registration is available at dkgcolorado.com under the "Events" tab

Spring Board Meeting

March 21, 2025

Colorado DKG State Leadership Conference

June 9-11, 2026

Hyatt Place, 503 Garden of the Gods Road

Colorado Springs, CO 80907

International Events International Convention, Aurora 2026

Aurora Gaylord

Aurora, Colorado

MY Librarian

The Cowboy and the Cossack by Claire Huffaker is one of those books that you never really forget. I read it for the first time when I was either in the eighth or ninth grade. I was enthralled, to say the least. I recently asked for book recommendations from our staff and our basketball coach mentioned this one as one of his favorites. I simply had to read it again!

The book is a true epic of the West, but the entirety of the book takes place in Russia! Thus the title. The story, which takes place in 1880, begins with a group of cowboys and a herd of 500 head of longhorn cattle in the hold of a ship off the coast of Vladivostok, Russia. The cowboys and the captain of the ship discover that they are not to be allowed to dock at the port to unload the cattle so they are trying to determine how they will get the cattle off the ship. Once they figure out how to do it and get them off (I'm not going to spill those beans!), they meet the cossacks of the story.

The narrator of the book is Levi, the youngest of the cowboys. His hero is Shad the ramrod, or foreman of the outfit. The cowboys have traveled from Montana to deliver their herd to a village in Siberia. The cossacks have come to meet them and escort them across Russia to Siberia. The trouble between the two groups

begins almost immediately when Shad meets Rostov, the leader of the cossacks.

Slowly but surely the men find common ground as they travel. Both Shad and Rostov find a growing but grudging respect for one another. Both are tough men who must maintain that toughness to maintain order among the men they lead. Levi wonders at one point if the two men will end up killing each other!

In some ways the wilds of Russia are much like the American West in that there is dangerous wildlife (wolves) and there are dangerous people (the Tartars), and there is a vast expanse of land for them to cross before they get to where they are going.

Fair WARNING! There is a great deal of what my Grandma Claussen used to call “Pasture Language”, so if that bothers you, this probably isn’t the book for you. However, as I said, I read it in eighth or ninth grade and the storytelling wiped the bad language from my memory. I’m rereading it now and I had truly forgotten those parts of the book. If you love a good cowboy story, this is one of the best!

Submitted by Juana Hajek

Mission Statement

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

Vision

Leading Women Educators Impacting Education Worldwide

Society Purposes

- To unite women educators of the world in a genuine spiritual fellowship
- To honor women who have given or who evidence a potential for distinctive service in any field of education
- To advance the professional interest and position of women in education
- To initiate, endorse, and support desirable legislation or other suitable endeavors in the interests of education and of women educators
- To endow scholarships to aid outstanding women educators in pursuing graduate study and to grant fellowships to women educators from other countries
- To stimulate the personal and professional growth of members and to encourage their participation in appropriate programs of action
- To inform the members of current economic, social, political, and educational issues so that they may participate effectively in a world society.

Colorado Peaks & Plains

Published three times a year in February, April, and September, by the Omega State Organization of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International.

Deadlines for inclusion of articles in the Peaks & Plains are as follows:

- **FEBRUARY 1**
- **APRIL 1**
- **SEPTEMBER 1**
- **Contributors to the newsletter are asked to send news as soon as it is available to ensure inclusion in the next issue to:**

Juana Hajek, 24886 County Road 2L Hugo,
Colorado 80821 or
coloradodkgpeaksandplains@gmail.com

Send address and email changes to:

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International
12710 Research Blvd Ste 230
Austin, TX 78759-4395 or mem@dkg.org

[Colorado Peaks & Plains Submission Guidelines](#)

1. Each individual article should be a **maximum** of 300 words. The purpose is to have room to make the newsletter a statewide representation of as many chapters as possible.
2. Two photos **maximum**, per article. Photos must include a clear description and name identification of each person in said photos.
3. Additional photos/videos should be submitted to our webmaster Heidi Ragsdale at STEMisMyFuture@gmail.com to be used in a slideshow on the website.
4. Members are encouraged to send photos for this slideshow.

5. Submit basic word processed documents - do not heavily format your submission as it will not translate to the column style of the newsletter. **Please do NOT send submissions in PDF. PDF submissions cannot be formatted correctly for inclusion.**
6. Communicate clearly with the newsletter editor if you want your submission formatted in a specific way.
7. Some suggestions for submissions to *Colorado Peaks & Plains*:
 - New chapter member bios/photos
 - Chapter awards given to members
 - Special chapter projects and/or presentations
 - Programs given at the chapter level
 - Scholarships or other awards given to student teachers, first-year teachers, or community members.

An editable version of the spring board meeting registration and the state convention registration is available at dkgcolorado.com under the “Events” tab.

If you prefer, download and print the copy below.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International

COLORADO STATE ORGANIZATION

**Spring Executive Board Meeting Official Call: Saturday, March 21,
2026**

Courtyard by Marriott Denver, Golden/Red Rocks

**14700 W. 6th Ave. Frontage Road, Golden CO 80401; Phone
303-271-0776**

To: Voting Members: The Colorado State Executive Team (includes Elected State Officers, Appointed Personnel, and Immediate Past State President), additional members of the Executive Board including Past State President, all current Chapter Presidents, and State Team Leaders.

Also invited are the following non-voting members: State Team Members, all DKG members statewide, and guests.

Please share the Call, Registration Form and Hotel Information with your state Team Members and chapter members. Only the voting members will receive the CALL from the executive secretary, so please forward this document to all.

From: CO State President: Dr. Laura Kuniansky laurafromdurango@gmail.com; CO State Treasurer: Lilly Vigil cmcer1@msn.com; CO State Executive Secretary: Beth Barzdukas barzdukas@live.com.

- **The Spring Executive Board Meeting will be held Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the Courtyard Denver Golden Red Rocks, 14700 W. 6th Ave. Frontage Road, Golden CO 80401. Phone: 303-271-0776. All guests booked directly through the group code will receive overnight comped parking. Group code is [Book your group rate for Delta Kappa Gamma meeting.](#)**
- CEU credit will be available: check the line on the registration form.
- The meeting will run from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Check-in will be from 8:30-9:00 am.

Welcome/call to order at 9 am.
The board meeting registration is enclosed.

This meeting will be a hybrid meeting.

Since attendance at some of our executive board meetings has, at times, been difficult due to the weather, we are offering two choices for this meeting, (1) regular face to face meeting at the hotel as we have always done or (2) Zoom meeting online for which a Zoom link will be sent to your email address. **Zoom link will be sent to you by Heidi Ragsdale, webmaster, after your registration is received.**

Lodging: A block of rooms has been reserved for our use on Friday, March 20, 2026. The rate per room is \$129 plus tax of 13.5% totaling \$146.41 for either a king or double queen room. Breakfast is included in the room rate. When you register at the hotel, you will have a breakfast coupon applied to your guest room reservation and the reservation team will have a list of names of those who are eligible for the free breakfast. Please phone the Courtyard if you desire a pet friendly room. Pet-friendly rooms are available at the Residence Inn next door to the Courtyard, 14600 W. 6th Ave. Frontage Road, Golden CO 80401, a sister hotel to the Courtyard.

Please make your own reservation either by calling the hotel at 303-271-0776 or online at **Book your group rate for Delta Kappa Gamma meeting.** Deadline for room registration is February 14, 2026.

As per the contract with the Courtyard, the following statement must be included in this communication: *Incidental charges (e.g. room service, gift shop charges and in-room entertainment fees) will be the responsibility of each individual guest. At the time of check-in, each guest will be required to present a major credit card, on which Hotel may place a hold or process a prepayment in the amount of the guest's estimated charges. Group shall notify its guests of this policy.*

Breakfast buffet is included in the room rate.

The lunch will be an Italian buffet. Registrants will go through the buffet line and choose from these offerings: Cost includes lunch, beverage, service charge and tax. (Contract with the Courtyard states that no food be brought into the meeting room unless it is from a licensed caterer who has paid the Courtyard use fees in advance.)

Spaghetti & Penne Noodles

Marinara with all Beef Meatballs

Alfredo with Grilled Chicken
(Vegetarian options available)
Green Salad and Dressing
Garlic Bread
Fresh Baked Chocolate Chip Cookies

Lunch cost includes all the above plus Bottled Water, Assorted Canned Soft Drinks, Assorted Hot Tea /Hot Water, Starbucks Coffee which will be replenished throughout the day.

In deciding on whether or not to attend in person, please consider the following:

1. Purpose #1: to unite women educators... in a genuine spiritual fellowship;
2. Current weather conditions.
3. Business to discuss including hosting the 2026 International convention at the Gaylord in Aurora.
4. Your Zoom access and whether this type of meeting fits your needs or lifestyle.
5. Team (committee) work you may need/want to do.
6. The state organization will owe \$500 plus AV charges by contract if the Food and Beverage minimum of \$1200 is not met.

FRIENDLY REMINDER: Please send Webmaster, Heidi Ragsdale, any PowerPoints and any projected presentation materials members want to project on screen for reports electronically to Heidi at stemismyfuture@gmail.com no later than **March 5, 2026**.

If you or your team plan to submit a motion or a proposal for a motion, please contact Beth or Laura by February 15, 2026. Any proposal will be attached to a second email with further details of CALL information along with the minutes of the last meeting and upcoming meeting agenda. Minutes are also attached to this email as well.

Continue...

COLORADO STATE ORGANIZATION

2026 Spring Executive Board Meeting Registration

(Please print and complete all the information)

Name: _____

Title

First

Last

Address: _____

Street or PO Box

City

State

Phone: _____ Chapter _____

Email: _____ Chapter Office or

Team _____ State Office or Team _____

CEU Credit _____ Yes or No

To receive CEU credit, one must be present at all sessions and lunch. Networking throughout lunch is necessary to receive CEU credit.

PHOTO RELEASE: By your attendance at this event, you are granting permission to be filmed, videotaped, or photographed by any means, and you are granting full use of your likeness, voice, and words without compensation.

Registration:

YES or NO: (Circle one.) I will attend by **Zoom** and will need the Zoom link sent to the following email address: _____ **Cost\$15.00**

(required of all participants for AV and room usage. Heidi Ragsdale will send the link to you via email.)

YES or NO (Circle one) I will attend and plan to meet **in person** at the Courtyard hotel. (required of all participants for AV and room usage)

Cost \$15.00

Lunch

Cost \$40.00

Total \$55.00

Food Allergy? Please list

Prefer vegetarian entrée? **YES OR NO (circle one)** **Continued ...**

If you choose to Zoom, please mail your check for \$15 and registration form by March 1, 2026 to Lilly. See address below. If you choose the face-to-face meeting, please mail your check for \$55 (registration and lunch), and registration form no later than March 1, 2026, to Lilly. See address below.

Make check payable to: *Colorado Delta Kappa Gamma Society*

Mail this completed form and the check

to: Lilly R Vigil

217 W. 2nd St.

Leadville, CO

80461

All information is available on the state website.

Questions? Call Laura Kuniandy at (970) 799-8056, Lilly Vigil at (970) 409-9312, or Beth Barzdukas at (970) 518-1066. We hope to see you there!

Cancellations: Registration fees for in-house face-to-face meeting may be refunded if an attendee becomes ill or is otherwise unable to attend. After March 1, food/lunch costs cannot be refunded. Please contact Lilly Vigil for cancellations. *Zoom attendees' registration fees cannot be refunded.*****

Theme: Learning from the Past, Living in the Present, Looking to the Future
Delta Kappa Gamma Colorado State Conference
June 9-11, 2026
503 Hyatt Place Garden of the Gods Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80907
719-265-9385

Please use a separate form for each person

PHOTO RELEASE: By your attendance at this event, you are granting permission to be filmed, videotaped, audio taped, or photographed by any means and are granting full use of your likeness without compensation.

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address, City, ST ZIP+4 _____

Email _____ Chapter _____

Chapter Office/Committee _____ State _____

Office/Team _____

First Time Attending? Yes No Free CEU Credit? Yes No

Registration Deadline: Hotel registrations must be made by May 18, 2026, to receive the group rate. Registration and meals for the conference must be paid for by May 21, 2026. Meal fees cannot be refunded after May 22. Registration Fee: Member - \$75.00 Non-Member - \$ 100.00 Hostess Chapter Member - \$ 50.00 *All attendees (including presenters, volunteers, and hostess chapter workers) must register.*

Meals: Please list any dietary restrictions: _____

Number of meals

_____ x \$ 40.00 \$ _____ Tuesday evening

_____ x \$ 40.00 \$ _____ Wednesday Lunch

_____ x \$ 60.00 \$ _____ Wednesday Dinner (hotel does NOT need you to make a choice of protein; they will be sure to have what everyone wants)

_____ x \$ 0.00 Thursday coffee break/snack (*included in registration fee*).

\$ _____ **Registration Total from above**

\$ _____ **Total Due (Registration and Meals)** Make check payable to: The Delta Kappa Gamma Society

Send registration and check to: Lilly Vigil 217 W. 2nd St. Leadville, CO 80461-3619

For Questions Contact: Beth Barzdukas, (970) 518-1066 barzdukas@live.com

Lilly Vigil, (719) 486-0093 cmcer1@msn.com

Updated registration information will be available at DKG COLORADO:
www.dkgcolorado.com

Meal Information

Tuesday Night Dinner

Fresh Popcorn with Butter

Cowboy Pasta Salad

BBQ Baked Beans

Potato Wedges

Grilled Chicken Breast

BBQ Pulled Pork

Rolls and Butter

Beverage

Wednesday Lunch

The Deli Lunch

Choice of Tomato Basil Bisque or Southwest Chicken Tortilla Soup

Salad Station with a variety of salad greens
and garnishes

Choice of chicken breast, salami, prosciutto, and various cheeses

Variety of breads and rolls

Fruit

Kettle chips

Dessert Tray

Beverages

Wednesday Dinner

Soup and Salad with Dressing

Garlic Green Beans

Baby Potatoes with Lemon Butter Sauce

Grilled Chicken Breast served with Bacon and Honey Dijon Sauce

Beef Roast, tender, shredded beef with gravy

Vegetarian: Roast Cauliflower

Rolls and Butter

Cheesecake Bites

Beverages

Thursday

Coffee Shop Break

Coffee station with freshly brewed regular and decaf coffee

Assorted tea selection with hot water, honey, syrups and lemon

Biscotti, Scones, petite macarons

As per contract: A surcharge of up to five percent (5%) will be assessed for menu selections or changes that are received less than twenty-one (21) days prior to the first day of the Event. In other words, if you call in after the deadline, you will be charged 5% surcharge.

Lodging Information (continued on next page)

Lodging will be at the Hyatt Place, 503 Garden of the Gods Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80907.

Driving directions from the south: Take I-25 North. Exit at Exit 146 toward Garden of the Gods Road onto W. Garden of the Gods Rd.; Go for 0.6 mi.: Make a U-Turn onto W. Garden of the Gods Rd. Go for 0.2 mi. Turn right. Go for 479 ft. Turn left. Go for 233 ft.

Driving Directions from the north: Take I-25 South. Exit at Exit 146 toward Garden of the Gods Road onto W. Garden of the Gods Rd.; Go for 0.6 mi: Make a U-turn onto W. Garden of the Gods Rd. Go for 0.2 mi. Turn right. Go for 479 ft. Turn left. Go for 233 ft. Arrive at 503 W. Garden of the Gods Rd., Colorado Springs, Colorado 80907. (Copied from Mapquest)

Guest Room Group Rates

Standard Guest Room, king or double - \$155 plus tax State 2.9%=\$4.49 City
3.10%=\$4.80 LART 2% = \$3.10 County 2.23% = \$3.52 **Total including Taxes**
\$170.91

Room fee includes wi-fi, breakfast, and free parking.

Method of Hotel Reservations:

Group rate of \$155 for king or double is guaranteed until the block is full. Add \$10 per night for triple occupancy; Add \$20 for quadruple occupancy per night. Any reservations made after the Cutoff Date shall be at the Hotel's then current available rate.

Cutoff Date is May 18, 2026.

Use the link below to make your reservation:

Link:

<https://www.hyatt.com/events/en-US/group-booking/COSZC/G-D>
KGC

Call for Proposals for Breakout Sessions, DKG State Conference

The DKG State Conference to be held June 9-11, 2026, in Colorado Springs is just around the corner. It is time to think about sharing your exciting and creative ideas in a break-out session at the conference. The small group (breakout) sessions may be presented by individuals, two or more members or by teams (Example: Professional Pride team.) All breakout sessions are scheduled for one (1) hour in length.

The theme for the conference is “Learning from the Past, Living in the Present, and Looking to the Future.” The state president’s theme is “One with All.”

Please complete the form below and submit it to Donna Jenkins no later than **March 31, 2026**. Donna’s email is dmsj2021@gmail.com. You may also send a screenshot to her phone at 719-313-3509. Her USPS mailing address is 15587 County Road J, Ordway, CO 81063. After March 31, decisions will be made on the presentations, and you will be notified with details about your presentation.

Name _____

Chapter _____

Other participants:

Presentation Title:

In 50-100 words, describe your presentation:

What type of AV equipment will you need? Which items will you furnish? Which items will you need for the conference/hotel to furnish?

Please send this completed for to Donna Jenkins at the email address above. All requests for AV equipment need to be sent to Beth Barzdukas, barzdukas@live.com.