

# Sigma Phi Omega

National Academic Honor and  
Professional Society in Gerontology

December 2009  
Volume XXVI Number 3



## From the President Janice I. Wassel, Ph.D., R.F.G.



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Whoa! This year has zipped past at race car speed. As the year draws to close, I would like to thank the SPO National Board for the support each member has provided to the organization and to me personally! SPO continues to grow in membership, services and in commitment to the membership because of our strong board and the past leadership that continue to support SPO. To recap the year are some of the Board's actions that might be of interest to you and your chapter:

SPO is financially in a good place with restoration of our 501(c)3 classification. Currently, the board is reviewing PayPal as an option for payment of dues, renewals, cords and medallions. Watch the SPO website and newsletters for details.

SPO is staying updated with contact information. Although SPO lost three chapters in 2009; partly due to gerontology programs being dropped at those universities, we have 94 active chapters! So, remember to send us your address or email changes as we want to be able to send you your newsletter. SPO also has several inactive chapters whose membership has indicated that they would like once again to become active. The Board has determined that for a one year period, 2010, inactive chapters may simply notify the board of the chapter's intent to become active. No new members are required at that time. The chapters' reactivation fee will also be forgiven; however, the chapter must induct at least two qualified members and hold an induction ceremony within twelve months of its notification to SPO Board. We so please contact me or any of the board members.

Our Board membership has changed with the addition Candace Brown's impressive newsletters. We are looking forward to interested members serving as Student Representatives and Member-at-Large in the upcoming year. The nomination form is on the SPO website. Notice nominations close January 30, 2010. Voting information will be emailed Feb. 4, 2010 with voting closing Feb. 28, 2010. SPO is an excellent

organization to develop leadership skills, so don't be hesitant to nominate yourself!

The SPO National Board presented **four** new awards: the Service Project Awards recognize faculty and students engaged in service learning undergraduate and graduate education; the Project Award in Student Education, open to both undergraduates and graduate students, which recognizes the unique projects that enhance the lives and /or environments of older adults and/or an aging society; and the Professional Award is a way to pay tribute to a member in the professional community who has contributed to Sigma phi Omega and the well-being of older adults. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 2 (Groundhog Day)! More details of each award and the application forms may be found on the Sigma Phi Omega website at <http://sigmaphiomega.org/awards.html>. The board looks forward to reviewing the submissions!

One of the SPO National Board's goals is to encourage and enhance Service Learning and Civic Engagement opportunities for our students. Most faculty and students appreciate the value of these learning experiences; however, faculty can be overwhelmed with developing and creating these experiences. To help SPO faculty, the SPO webpage will soon offer information on Service Learning and Civic Engagement. Please email Service Learning and Civic Engagement success stories and ideas that you are willing to share and have posted on the web to [SPOPresident@sigmaphiomega.org](mailto:SPOPresident@sigmaphiomega.org)

Sigma Phi Omega will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year in 2010 at the AGHE March meeting in Reno! In honor of SPO's 30<sup>th</sup> year, the SPO Board invites SPO members to an ice cream social after the SPO business meeting. SPO is putting a BIRTHDAY card ad in the AGHE program. If you'd like to support this event and have **your name or your chapter's name** on the birthday card, please let us know by January 4, 2010. The SPO Board hopes that SPO members will donate to help support this effort with minimum donation suggestion of \$15.00. Please send the donation indicating that the donation is for the 30<sup>th</sup> party directly to me:

Janice I. Wassel  
SPO President  
219 McIver Building  
UNCG  
Greensboro, NC 27402  
I look forward to seeing you in Reno!

Warmly,

Dr. Janice Wassel  
SPO National President

Hope is the thing with feathers  
that perches in the soul  
and sings the tune without the words  
and never stops at all. ~Emily Dickenson

## ΣΦΩ Chapter News

### Alpha Lambda Chapter, Nazareth College of Rochester

The Alpha of Sigma Phi Omega has had a very successful and rewarding year thus far by providing services to our Rochester community. One of the most rewarding experiences has been our newly formed relationship with The Friendly Home, in the town of Pittsford. SPO members have adopted the game Bingo, once a month, where the seniors certainly look forward to the decorated room and the fun Nazareth logo prizes that we provide. With our connection with The Friendly Home, we have created long lasting bonds with the elders. The honor society also participated in the 2009 Alzheimer's Memory Walk. At this event we had club bonding over our inventive breakfast tailgating and then walked together for a great cause. A Halloween movie and pizza night took place at the end of October to serve as another enjoyable club bonding activity. Next year, on January 27th, our honor society will be privileged to welcome two speakers to give a lecture on Alzheimer's. Mr. Todd Goddard from the Alzheimer's Association and Mr. Bob Betterton, author of *The Familiar Stranger Who Lives in Our Home*, will provide knowledge on this key issue to our Rochester and Nazareth Community. We look forward to continuing on our service adventures and only hope to create more volunteer events. We congratulate and welcome our seven new interests **Jennifer R. Lounsbury, Alysha K. Mahunik, Joshua L. Mendez, Jessica Montalbano, Victoria S. Russell, Sarah L. Segal and Emily A. Shatas**. The new members will be formally inducted on April 9<sup>th</sup> in front of family and friends. ~ Submitted by Sarah L. Segal, [ssegal2@naz.edu](mailto:ssegal2@naz.edu)



### Beta Zeta Chapter, St. Cloud State University

This last fall, Beta Zeta Chapter of St. Cloud has been very busy. On Saturday, October 3, Beta Zeta Chapter, The Gerontology Club, and The Gerontology Program teamed up for the 2009 Memory Walk held at Whitney Senior Center in St. Cloud. The group consisted of nine members and raised \$840.00! We had so much fun that we decided to make it an annual event. On October 14, Beta Zeta Chapter and the Gerontology Club held a Coffee Sale to fundraise for conference dues and club expenses. The group sold coffee, hot cocoa, biscotti, and donated baked goods from Panera. The fundraiser was a huge success. We also have an on-going fundraiser selling our student-designed "Aging: Every Body's Doing It!" t-shirts. You can order one at <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/gerontology/sigmaphiomega.asp>. October 28, we helped sponsor the annual SCSU Gerontology Program Pot Luck. It was a great time for graduate students, faculty, and community members to meet and share food and laughs. We are looking forward to a busy and successful Spring! ~Submitted by Rona Karasik, [karasik@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:karasik@stcloudstate.edu)



### Delta Gamma Chapter, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

On Monday, November 9, 2009 the UNCG Delta Gamma chapter of Sigma Phi Omega hosted a business card social at Friends Home, Inc. A group of professionals and students from Greensboro and the surrounding area attended this event, networked and exchanged business cards. Refreshments were provided, along with information about the UNCG Gerontology Program, the next UNCG Gerontology Summit, and the Mentoring Programs between Professionals and Graduate Students. The event was a success! ~ Submitted by Brittany Singhas, [bsingha@uncg.edu](mailto:bsingha@uncg.edu)

### Delta Eta Chapter, California State University- Long Beach



In October 2009, the Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) Gerontology Honor Society at Cal State Long Beach took to the streets around CSU Fullerton to participate in the Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk. Our team of fifteen SPO members and friends (including two dachshunds!) completed the two-mile walk, "moving" towards a cure for Alzheimer's. Many of our team members walked in support of family members suffering from dementia. Our team raised a total of \$1,250 in donations. ~ Submitted by Maria Claver, [mclaver@csulb.edu](mailto:mclaver@csulb.edu)

### Gamma Kappa Chapter, California State University- Fullerton

The Gamma Kappa chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at Cal State Fullerton had its FIRST annual semester kick-off meeting in August 2009. It was an informal meeting with 4 faculty members, 14 gerontology graduate students and 7 new comers interested in the study of aging. While informal, this was an informative meeting where gerontology students were able to discuss classes, teachers and course loads. Advice was given to first year graduate students about what courses to take and when, and how many classes should be taken each semester. Budget cuts were also a topic of conversation, much like at other university campuses.

Other topics of conversation were the upcoming events planned by our chapter. The first event was a Grandparent Conference scheduled in mid September. Students were encouraged to attend this free conference to learn more about intergenerational relationships. The Alzheimer's Memory Walk, on October 17, was a success on the Cal State Fullerton campus. We raised over \$1500.00! All the officers hope that the new comers who are interested in gerontology are motivated by our community service and join Sigma Phi Omega. We also hope to encourage interested in aging studies come to any of our upcoming meetings. ~ Submitted by Candi Trefero and Dr. Joe Weber, [jweber@fullerton.edu](mailto:jweber@fullerton.edu)



### Delta Epsilon Chapter, California State University-Northridge

The first in a series *Careers in Aging Boot Camp* was held at CSU Northridge on Saturday, May 2, 2009. The all-day workshop presented students with a broad overview of careers in the field and introduced them to a career management model and toolkit for assessment, market research and successful job search. Presenters offered first person insight into a variety of unique employment options and discussed ways to translate education and an interest in older adults into a successful career. They also shared practical tips and examples about how to match them to the products and services defined by current and emerging workforce trends and opportunities. Faculty included **Dr. Neal Cutler, Jolene Fassbinder, Dr. Debra Sheets,** and aging and workforce consultant, **Linda Wiener.** Guest professionals from the field of aging included **Josh Johnson, Kali Peterson, and Trina M. Saucedo.** Attendees represented eight area campuses: UCLA; USC; Cal State Bakersfield, Cal State Fullerton, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Northridge, Chaffey College and Coastline Community College. The *Careers in Aging Boot Camp* exemplified the theme for Older Americans' month, May 2009, "Reinvent Yourself, Reinvent Aging." Plans are developing to carry the workshop to additional campuses across the state in the 2009-2010 school year. *In photo (left to right) Roxaynn Robinson, Linda Wiener, Debra Sheets, Jill Burlingame, and Judith Schamadan.* ~Submitted by Elmer Solis, [Solis.elmer@gmail.com](mailto:Solis.elmer@gmail.com)



### Gamma Upsilon Chapter, University of Massachusetts- Boston

Eleven of our chapter's members, including the three student officers, recently attended GSA's 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting and Conference in Atlanta, GA. The diversity of topics showcased our students' areas of expertise including elder driving, demographics of assistive technology use, the relationship between helping behaviors and hypertension, and an analysis of the efficacy of target date funds as the default investment option for 401(k) plans. Prior to the annual meeting, Gamma Upsilon hosted a Student Practice Session. The event was widely attended by UMass Faculty and staff and was well received. Students appreciated the opportunity to refine their presentations and clarify their message while those who were unable to attend GSA benefited from the onsite learning opportunity.

**Kelli Barton** received a \$2,000 grant from the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) through the University Student Scholar Program. Ms. Barton was one of seven studies funded this year. Barton's study is titled, "Assessing Stakeholder Opinions of Medical Review of Impaired Drivers and Fitness to Drive: Recommendations for Massachusetts." **Deborah Gray** was awarded the 2009 GSA Social Gerontology Theory Award. She presented her paper, "Determinants of Wealth Decumulation in Later Life – A Multidisciplinary Perspective" at the GSA Social Gerontology Theory Award Symposium. Her work examines divestiture of assets by elders and incorporates economic, psychological and sociological factors. This year's award was sponsored by American University and GSA. Criteria for the award included providing an interdisciplinary perspective on social gerontology theory by examining the aging individual in a larger societal, economic, temporal, cultural, physical and environmental context.

~Submitted by Deborah Gray, [deborahagray@comcast.net](mailto:deborahagray@comcast.net)

### Upsilon Nu Chapter, University of Nebraska-Omaha

The UNO athletics teams have launched their second semester of the UNO Athletes and Elders program. *UNO Athletes and Elders: A Community of Interest* is the first program of its kind in the US. It is supported by a College Initiative Grant for Intergenerational Programs, a DOROT Volunteer Project, funded in part by the Dorot Foundation headquartered in New York City. The grant was awarded to the UNO chapter of the national gerontology honor society (Sigma Phi Omega, Upsilon Nu Chapter) and is administered by students in the chapter (**President, Amy Panning**) and its faculty advisor (**Lyn Holley**). Teams are "matched" with the facilities to adopt by Desert Ministries, an Omaha nonprofit organization which, since 1992, has been recruiting, training and matching volunteer visitors with institutionalized elders in Omaha. During the Spring 2009 pilot, three UNO teams "adopted" a nursing home or assisted living facility: Coach Michael Denney's NCAA Championship Wrestling Team, Coach Rose Shire's Volleyball Team, and Coach Todd Samland's Woman's Swim Team. Dr. Julie Masters, Chair of the UNO Department of Gerontology observes that "This multifaceted partnership with UNO's Team at its heart adds elders to the UNO circle of life experience and education, and is rewarding to all involved."

~Submitted by Lyn Holley, [lmholley@mail.unomaha.edu](mailto:lmholley@mail.unomaha.edu)



### Beta Upsilon Chapter, St. Joseph College

On October 15, 2009, the installations of new officers, to the Beta Upsilon Chapter of SPO, were inducted. These were: President and Treasurer, **Lieba Bernstein**; Past President, **Audrey Harrell**; Recording Secretary, **Bev Hughes**; Corresponding Secretary, **Phyllis Bansavach**; and Membership Chair, **Barbara Keating**. This meeting was made exceptional due to the special presentation by Marla Ludwig. Marla is affectionately known as "The Backpackin' Granny". She spoke of her action to sponsor a village in need, in the Volta Region of Ghana. Her "Bright Star Vision" organization focuses on helping the Village of Dalive and is currently working on several projects related to education, health and water. Her call to action is a reminder to us all that, "Nobody makes a bigger mistake than (s)he who did nothing because (s)he could only do a little."

## Eta Chapter, University of Illinois-Springfield

The Eta Chapter of SPO, at the University of Illinois, Springfield inducted four new members students at a ceremony held on October 23, 2009. Faculty advisor, **Dr. Carolyn Peck** and SPO Alumni Convener, **Jill Centko Hambrick** honorably inducted **Ellen Christner, Sherrika Green, Marita Karrick and Julie Walton**. Dr. Judy Everson spoke about "Dylan Thomas on Death: Literary Lessons on Life's Last Chapter." ~Submitted by Dr. Carolyn Peck, [cpeck2@uis.edu](mailto:cpeck2@uis.edu)

## Board of Directors 2009-2010



### **President**

Janice Wassel, Ph.D.



### **President- Elect**

Rona Karasik, Ph.D.



### **Secretary**

Dawn Carr, MSG



### **Treasurer**

Brenda Burgin Ross, MSG, RD



### **Student Representative**

Pamela Pitman Brown, MSG



### **Newsletter Editor**

Candace Brown, M.Ed.

### **Members At Large**



Scott D. Wright, Ph.D.



Kelly Fitzgerald, Ph.D.



Mary Ligon, Ph.D.

[Director bios are available at www.sigmaphiomega.org/leadership.html](http://www.sigmaphiomega.org/leadership.html)

The SPO Board is seeking nominations for Member-at-Large and Student Representatives. The nomination form is on the SPO website. Nominations close January 30, 2010. SPO is an excellent organization to develop leadership skills. Don't be hesitant to nominate someone or yourself!

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

As our organization strengthens in numbers, the results of our benefits are being recognized in the gerontological community. Current membership in this organization identifies and associates a person with excellence in the field of aging. Leadership opportunities, on the local and national level, additional recognition through awards of academic excellence, civic engagement and professional works are also annually recognized. The newsletter helps individuals and chapters stay connected. Take the time to tell others about the benefits of Sigma Phi Omega and encourage active participation and membership in your community!

As stated in our President's letter, we currently have 94 active chapters! SPO also has several inactive chapters whose membership has indicated that they would like once again to become active. In 2010, inactive chapters may simply notify the board of the chapter's intent to become active. No new members are required at that time. The chapters' reactivation fee will also be forgiven; however, the chapter must induct at least two qualified members and hold an induction ceremony within twelve months of its notification to SPO Board.

## CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORTS

All active chapters are requested to submit an annual report of their activities for the past year. The reports provide important information to the Board of Directors and National Office regarding chapter activities, and assist with efforts to improve the organization as a whole. A rebate of \$5.00 per dues-paying member (paid by December 31) is given to each chapter that submits an annual report.

If you completed the annual report form, located on the SPO webpage, and emailed Jan Wassel by April 30, 2009, your chapter is eligible for the rebate. Rebates will be sent to active chapters in January 2010.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Sigma Phi Omega turns 30!

Sigma Phi Omega will celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> year in 2010 at the AGHE March meeting in Reno! In honor of SPO's 30<sup>th</sup> year SPO is putting a birthday card advertisement in the AGHE program. If you'd like to support this event and have **your name or your chapter's name** on the birthday card, please let us know by January 4, 2010. The SPO Board hopes that SPO members will donate to help support this effort with minimum donation suggestion of \$15.00.

### Join the SPO Gerontology Honor Society on Facebook!

Join us on Facebook and receive updates from SPO creators, administrators and members. Be sure to change your personal settings so you may receive these updates! Facebook is a great way to meet others with interests in gerontology!



### Society Medals & Honor Cords!



Cords and medals are now available for purchase. You'll want to wear them with your cap and gown! Medals are embossed in blue and gold with the SPO emblem. Honor cords are two-cord sets in the Society's colors of blue and gold. Buy yours now for only \$15.00 each plus shipping. If you or your chapter purchase 10 or more, you'll get a 10% discount. You can mix your order to include both medals and cords. Shipping is \$3.00 for the first item with additional shipping \$1.00 per item. No credit cards accepted.

## **Send Us Your News!**

We love to share your chapter news, pictures, ideas, and events. Please send your submissions for the Winter newsletter, to the newsletter editor, Candace Brown, at [SPONewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org](mailto:SPONewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org) by December 1, 2009. Please include your chapter name, college or university, submitter's name, email, and phone. Looking forward to hearing your chapter news!

## **Advertise With Us!**

SPO welcomes paid advertisements. Contact our SPO President to submit ads for an upcoming newsletter.

University of Southern California  
Davis School of Gerontology  
Ethel Percy Andrus Gerontology Center  
3715 McClintock Avenue  
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0191

This newsletter is published as a membership benefit of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) with a circulation of 1,600. SPO offices are located at 1220 L Street NW, Suite 901, Washington, DC 20005-4018. Faculty, faculty advisors, and students are encouraged to submit news, meeting reports, club activities or studies underway to the SPO Newsletter Editor, Candace Brown at [SPONewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org](mailto:SPONewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org) by April 1, September 1 and December 1.