



In this issue ...

- From the President & Editor
- Chapter News
- SPO Officers & Staff
- Career Reflections
- SPO, the Organization
- Recent Contributors
- Advertising Opportunities!
- New Resources, FYI
- Coming Attractions

Submissions due November 15, 2005
for January 2006 publication.

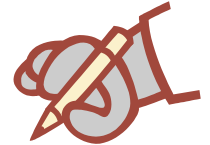
From the President

May this issue of the SPO newsletter find you well! For those affected by Katrina and Rita, our thoughts are with you. I mentioned in the last newsletter that the SPO board wants to determine how SPO can be more responsive to members' needs. In upcoming months we will be asking SPO members to share how the board and national office can help chapters to accomplish SPO's goals of recognizing the academic achievements of students, promoting scholarship and research, maintaining and fostering professionalism in the field, and creating opportunities for social and practical interaction with elders. Begin this discussion within your chapters and share ideas with the SPO board. We need your input! Our plan is to gather information this fall and share preliminary findings at the SPO Presidential Symposium at AGHE in February and in subsequent SPO newsletters. Finally, a bittersweet announcement: Beth Ciha, who has taken care of SPO for three years, is leaving her position as Deputy Director of AGHE in November. Beth is returning to Ohio to spend more time with her family, most especially her niece Lauren, who was born earlier this year. SPO's loss is young Lauren's gain! All the best, "Aunt Beth"! ~ Dr. Jennifer Kinney, kinneyjm@muohio.edu

From the editor

In a recent Letter to the Editor of Greensboro, NC's **News and Record**, a 48-year-old citizen expressed concern when a news reporter referenced a 64-year-old murder victim as "elderly" and "senior". "Come on. Sixty-four?" she asked. I agree and ask how we professionals, educators, students, and advocates of older adults can and should effect change in the everyday vocabulary that perpetuates a negative and culturally-based age bias.

Ageism was first introduced by Robert Butler, MD in 1968 to identify stereotyping and discrimination against people because of age. Yet after twenty-five years, even in this era of political correctness, ageism does not garner the intensity that does racism or sexism. Google the terms 'greedy geezers' and you'll get over 17,000 hits about this selfish, self-interested, undeserving ever-growing segment of society. Googling 'ageism' results in over a half million hits referencing issues of intergenerational warfare, employment, and health care. Ageism is even found in the legal profession. In reviews of statutes and judicial opinions, old age is often used to explain or predict the behavior or demeanor of individuals rather than merely describing their chronological age.



Regardless of the boomers' and older adults' purchasing power or wealth, education, and productivity, ageist practices continue discrimination of this economically rich segment of society, from radio stations screening out 'old sounding callers' to ads targeting youthful middle-aged adults for sexual enhancement pharmaceuticals or suggesting incontinence is typical for middle-aged and older women.

Why be concerned about the everyday use of 'elderly' or 'seniors' in a local news 'Letter to the Editor'? Language that continues to belittle older adults is hardly inconsequential if it demeans or degrades or uses chronological age as a predictor. I suggest that, as professionals, educators, students and advocates, we evaluate our language when speaking about, to, and for the older adult. For example, the term 'elderly' brings thoughts of frailty, declining, senescence, forgetfulness, and vulnerability; and 'senior' evokes thoughts of golden-ager, old geezer, old-timer, oldster, a relic or retiree. Replacing value-laden ageist words with 'older adult' or simply using a person's age, such as 'Paul, aged 64', removes value laden language. The 64-year-old victim mentioned in the letter above was not only robbed of the 15 or more years of his life, but of his dignity by an uneducated reporter suggesting he was feeble or frail.

While we can continue professional discussions on the correctness of ageless terminology, until we speak, write, and advocate with those outside our profession and educate the world in which we are aging of ageist language, ageist language will continue and the older adult will continue to be perceived as frail, helpless, and useless. Yes, there are larger battles to fight regarding ageism; yet all expressions of ageism should be addressed, especially at the grassroots level where each of us easily may have an impact. Excuse me, I need to write a letter! . ~ Dr. Janice I. Wassel.
jiwassel@uncg.edu

SPO Chapter News from ...



Alpha Epsilon Chapter, The University of North Texas, Denton, TX

The Alpha Epsilon chapter is proud to announce the addition of a new Ph.D. program in Applied Gerontology at the University of North Texas. We welcomed 10 doctoral students to the first cohort in fall 2004. The second cohort consisted of 8 students who began doctoral studies in fall 2005. Interested individuals who do not hold a college degree may apply to the bachelor's degree program in gerontology. Students with bachelor's degrees may apply to the master's degree program and, upon completion, continue their graduate studies in the doctoral program. Criteria for evaluating admission to the Ph.D. program include grade point average for the master's degree, writing samples, GRE scores, professional experience, and letters of recommendation. For direct inquiries, please contact Dr. Stanley Ingman: ingman@pacs.unt.edu, (940) 206-7473. Visit www.unt.edu/aging for more details about our Applied Gerontology Programs. ~ Submitted by Dr. K. Whisnant Turner, turner@pacs.unt.edu

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



The Beta Zeta Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega is selling t-shirts to raise money for activities and to send student members to conferences. 100% cotton t-shirts are navy blue with white lettering and say: **AGING - Journey of a Lifetime**. Sizes small through XXXL are \$16 each (plus \$1 shipping and handling for mailed orders). To order, e-mail Rona Karasik or visit our website www.stcloudstate.edu/gerontology and click on the Sigma Phi Omega section. ~ Submitted by Rona Karasik, karasik@stcloudstate.edu

Delta Gamma Chapter, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Greensboro, NC

Delta Gamma Chapter began the fall semester with members Dr. Janice I. Wassel and Ms. Patricia Young raising \$1,350 in the annual Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk! Invigorated by the success of the walk, our chapter initiated a mentorship program with undergraduate Gerontology programs at local universities and began a Journal Club for our monthly chapter meetings to study and discuss subjects on a variety of topics including advanced directives, sexuality, global aging, and changes in the physical senses observed as one ages.

The UNCG Gerontology Program recently announced a unique, new dual degree MS in Gerontology-MBA through which future Gerontologists will be educated in business and gerontology! Visit www.uncg.edu/gro for details of this new 57-credit hour degree. ~ Submitted by D'Ann Hershel, Dpresidio@aol.com

Gamma Mu Chapter, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY

Most Gamma Mu members are graduate students in the Univ. of KY Graduate Center for Gerontology. In addition to our Careers in Aging luncheon and participation in the annual Alzheimer's Association Memory Walk, Gamma Mu sponsored a White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) 2005 event during the Summer Series on Aging conference. Professionals in aging services and policy makers from 15 states attend this conference and engage in sessions about Livable Communities, Health, and Long-Term Living; Health Promotion and Disease Prevention; and Chronic Disease Management.



Gamma Mu members conducted sessions and compiled a final report of recommendations to Congress on aging issues. The WHCoA generates recommendations to guide national aging policy over the next decade, focuses on opportunities and challenges presented by the "new" 60+ populations of 78 million, and considers issues that impact the mature older population. WHCoA 2005, "The Booming Dynamics of Aging: From Awareness to Action", seeks input from a wide array of stakeholders as they develop an agenda and resolutions for delegate voting this year. The report is available at www.whcoa.gov/about/des_events_reports/PER_KY_07_27_05.pdf. ~Submitted by Heidi H. Ewen. heidi.ewen@uky.edu

Gamma Omicron Chapter, University of Hawaii, Honolulu, HI

On October 29, our Chapter will hold a "paper goods drive" at a Safeway in Honolulu, to provide paper products for Voyager Charter School. Voyager is a public Charter School, with a strong educational philosophy but a very limited budget. In Hawaii, Charter Schools must pay rent, hire their own janitors, and, yes, buy their own paper goods! In return for our help, Voyager students will join SPO members in singing Christmas carols to residents of a long-term care facility and will make Christmas cards for the residents.



In the spring of 2006, the Chapter will conduct a similar drive for a program serving low-income elders. In November, our Chapter will sponsor an informational meeting on jobs in fields related to aging for students from Honolulu's public and private colleges and universities. We plan to invite employers to speak about job openings for students with some background in aging studies. It will be a first opportunity for students to meet colleagues with similar interests from other institutions. Hopefully, the meeting will lead to future internships, job placements, and interest in opportunities for additional gerontological education.

~ Submitted by Tony Lenzer, Ph.D., tlenzer@hawaii.rr.com

Gamma Psi Chapter, University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Charlotte, NC

The Gamma Psi chapter held its first meeting with the newly elected officers to plan the 2005-2006 academic year. A chapter representative attended the annual gerontology new student orientation held on campus August 23rd. We presented an overview of the organization to potential inductees and requirements for joining. Our first event of the year will be a meet and greet on November 8th to encourage both new and old members to network among one another as well as to help plan the remaining events of the year. We look forward to an exciting and productive year. ~ Submitted by Lara Backus. lara.backus@cms.k12.nc.us

Gamma Sigma Chapter, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI

We are currently in a recruitment drive for new members by providing a luncheon for new Gerontology Fellows in the School of Social Work. At our latest planning meeting we decided the Gamma Sigma Chapter will provide SPO tassels and possibly medallions for the members who are graduating in December. It is hoped this program will continue for future Gamma Sigma members. A presentation by State Representative Aldo Vagnozzi on the current budget constraints and its effect on seniors and the social work profession will take place on October 24th in the School of Social Work Commons. A Social Work Career Panel is scheduled for early November with up to five presenters providing information on opportunities in the social work field. Members of the Gamma Sigma Chapter will participate in a Fall Chore Day helping needy elderly in the Ann Arbor area prepare their yards and gardens for the winter season. ~Submitted by David Majors. davidm055@yahoo.com

Meet SPO Officers & Staff for 2005-2006 ...

President

Dr. Jennifer Kinney
Miami University
(513) 529-2915
kinneyjm@muohio.edu

Past President

Dr. James Peacock
Appalachian State University
(828) 262-2070
peacockjr@appstate.edu

President-Elect

Dr. Debra Sheets
California State University, Northridge
(818) 677-2344
Email: debra.sheets@csun.edu

Treasurer

Dr. Rona Karasik
St. Cloud State University
(320) 308-5224
karasik@stcloudstate.edu

Secretary

Ms. Gail McMillon
Southeastern Louisiana University
(985) 549-3758
gail.mcmillon@selu.edu

Members-at-Large

Dr. Elizabeth Markson
Boston University
(617) 353-5045
hezikih@bu.edu

Dr. Patricia Kricos
University of Florida
(352) 392-2116
pkricos@geron.ufl.edu

Student Representative

Ms. Echo Chang
University of Southern California
echochan@usc.edu

SPO Administrative Director

Ms. Beth Ciha
202-289-9818 Ext. 123
bciha@aghe.org

Newsletter Editor

Dr. Janice I. Wassel
UNCG
336-256-1020
jiwassel@uncg.edu

Newsletter Managing Editor

Ann C. Stringfield
UNCG
336-370-0457
acstring@uncg.edu

Career Reflections

We encourage SPO members to reflect on their careers and introduce students to a myriad of opportunities! In the following article, we share the third of three presentations from the AGHE 2005 closing plenary session.

Career Reflections: Wandering the Gerontological Career Path ... with Cynthia Stuen

I grew up in the company of many older people who lived with us, from an itinerant grandmother to three bachelor great uncles. Shopping for and visiting some older person in and around the rural farm communities where I grew up in South Dakota was a way of life among struggling farm families. Majoring in Social Work seemed the logical thing to do when applying to Valparaiso University in Indiana.

Graduating from college, I knew only that I wanted to work with older persons, and I didn't want to go back to SD! So I packed up my gently used VW Bug and landed in Ithaca, NY, where a new nursing home's Administrator, Mrs. Baker, was under pressure to hire a social worker to comply with recent NY State regulations created to insure that the psychosocial needs of residents in the nursing home setting were being met. Mrs. Baker hired me on the spot to do "whatever it is that you social workers do." She often called me into her office to say, "Now Ms. Stuen, what exactly is it that you do?" A year of that sent me scurrying back to graduate school to be able to address better the needs of older persons living in institutions. Residents in such environments needed strong advocates and individual attention.

At my request, the fieldwork placement during my first year at the University of Chicago School of Social Service Administration was at the Drexel Home for the Aged. This premier, innovative nursing home on the south side of Chicago taught me the value of working in a multi-disciplinary team environment. A summer internship at St. Elizabeth's Psychiatric Hospital in Washington, DC brought responsibilities helping long-term institutionalized older patients discharged to less restrictive community environments. The Chicago Mayor's Office for Senior Citizens was my second year fieldwork placement. There I saw the policies of the Older Americans Act implemented at the regional and local level, and I performed a national survey of AAA to determine how mental health needs of older persons were being addressed.



The University of Chicago provided access to cross-disciplinary faculty, real pioneers in the gerontological arena. There was an excellent relationship between The School of Social Service and the Committee on Adult Human Development and Aging chaired by the brilliant Bernice Neugarten, whose work and encouragement made a significant impact on my life and career. The late Robert Havinghurst, by then a professor emeritus, joined faculty and students every Monday evening for presentations about the leading research in aging. I was fortunate to be selected to attend the Gerontological Society of America (GSA) conference in 1971. There, with the encouragement of Neugarten, Morton Lieberman and Sheldon Tobin, that then GSA President, Carl Eisdorfer, accepted our creating a student organization within GSA.

By 1973, all I had to my name was a Master's degree, a Lutheran pedigree and a Scandinavian lineage. Yet when I interviewed with the administrator of a new 400-bed Eger Lutheran Health Care Center of Staten Island whose name was Sverre Ulvestad, ya, you betcha, this Norwegian farm girl got the job. I became Eger's first professional Director of Social Work and my interdisciplinary skills were put to the test as we created a rehabilitation focused nursing home especially for those admissions that have a good prognosis for return to home after intensive rehabilitation. After 4 years in that role and the creation of Eger's first Resident's Council to more actively participate in the life of the institution, I moved on to become the Director of the Community Agency for Senior Citizens for the Boro of Staten Island (CASC).

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

Now I wanted to work keeping people out of institutions. CASC, established with Older American Act funds, concentrated on providing supports to older persons in their communities. We created programs to assist with shopping, erranding, transportation and advocacy. We were also part of a major Medicare-waiver demonstration to infuse home care services. Concerned for certain high crime areas and older adult victimization, we also began an anti-crime program. Grant writing became second nature by this time.

With a growing interest in research and writing, and a baby on the way, I resigned from CASC in 1981 and entered the doctoral program at Columbia University's School of Social Work where I specialized in program planning, policy and administration in field of aging. While a student, I worked at Columbia's Brookdale Institute on Aging. I developed Columbia's Retired Faculty Project and the Seniors Teaching Seniors program. Recognizing those retired faculties were eager to remain active and involved, we placed esteemed faculty in a high school in the south Bronx helping to prevent drop out and had mentors for high school students in specialized areas. And through the Seniors Teaching Seniors program, we recruited Columbia's retired faculty to provide retired accountants, businesspersons and numerous other professionals with the skills necessary to teach and market their vocational or avocational interests in their own communities.

Seventeen years ago, as I was completing my doctoral work at Columbia, Barbara Silverstone, President and CEO of Lighthouse International and a well-known gerontological social worker, invited me to lunch. Lighthouse International's mission is overcoming vision impairment through vision rehabilitation services, education, research and advocacy. Over dessert and coffee, Dr. Silverstone invited me to head up the recently established National Center for Vision Aging. Vision loss is major aging issue. We engaged Louis Harris and Associates to conduct a nationwide population-based telephone survey, which ascertained that among the population age 65 and over, 20% reported a problem with their vision. Among the population over the age of 75, over 26% reported a problem with their vision and less than 2% were aware of vision rehabilitation resources.

As Senior Vice President for Education at Lighthouse, I have been involved in the development of educational materials for professionals, the public, consumers and those at risk of vision impairment and their families. They range from pamphlets, booklets, books and videos to professional curricula and vision simulators and most recently online education. I have been both a principal investigator and contributor on numerous research demonstration projects in the community and in the long term care setting. We have studied family involvement in the rehabilitation process, and my colleagues and I advocate for changes in Medicare to cover vision rehabilitation services.

My gerontological career path has been an exciting ride, enriched by the opportunity to work in so many diverse areas of practice, planning, administration, and advocacy. As a gerontologist, I have never been bored, the opportunities for employment are so wonderfully diverse and range from the micro to the macro level, as I hope my own career path illustrates. And while I have no data other than anecdotal and personal experiences, I believe gerontological practice nurtures the most committed, creative professionals. It has been my privilege and honor to be one of you!

~Submitted by Cynthia Stuen, DSW/Ph.D. Senior VP for Education and Services, Director of The Lighthouse Center for Education of Lighthouse International. CSTUEN@lighthouse.org Visit www.lighthouse.org



Dr. Stuen's article is the third **Career Reflection** that focused on paths to gerontological careers. We thank **Dr. Stuen** and the other two contributors: **Kathy Sykes**, Senior Advisor, Aging Initiative, Office of Children's Health Protection of the EPA, and **Jodi Olshevski**, Corporate Gerontologist, The Hartford, for their previous contributions highlighting their unique career paths in gerontology. For the January 2006 newsletter, the SPO editorship seeks additional career stories in gerontological fields.

Please email your contribution, name, title, affiliation, phone and e-mail to jiwassel@uncg.edu by November 15, 2005.

Our Thanks to Recent SPO Contributors

William T. Bailey Susan J. Buehler Susan E. Garrow
Margaret Glasgow Deirdre Haywood-Rouse
Carol A. Keyes Peggy McCall Glory Okezie

SPO, the Organization

When seeking information about Sigma *Phi Omega*, the organization, remember to visit www.aghe.org and click on *Sigma Phi Omega*. There you'll find information about how to initiate a new chapter or become a member, contacts for the current Board of Directors, a list of Past Presidents, a directory of Active Chapters, information about the new President's Award which recognizes outstanding SPO student presentation submissions at the annual AGHE meeting, and you can read recent SPO newsletters.

Beginning in 1992, SPO contracted with the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE) to provide administrative support. The AGHE/SPO national office maintains membership and administrative records, produces and distributes membership certificates, cords, and medallions, assists with production and distribution of this quarterly SPO newsletter, and distributes information about SPO. *SPO's national meetings are held during the AGHE annual meeting.*



Join SPO members **February 9-12, 2006** in Indianapolis, Indiana for
"Outcomes of Gerontological and Geriatric Education"
the 32nd Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference of the
Association for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE).
Details available from AGHE at 202-289-9806 or www.aghe.org

How About You?

Have you moved recently? Has your e-mail address changed? Please keep the SPO National Office informed to insure you receive membership information and the newsletter in a timely fashion. Send mailing addresses and e-mail updates to **Berkin Aslan** at baslan@aghe.org or call the SPO office at 202-289-9806.

Sigma Phi Omega Marketing and Advertising Opportunities!

Interested in advertising/marketing to SPO members?
Visit <http://www.aghe.org> > SPO > Marketing & Advertising
or email jjwassel@uncg.edu for an order form
to purchase the SPO mailing list or to submit ads for upcoming SPO newsletters.

New Resources FYI

Springer will publish **Enduring Questions in Gerontology** in the fall of 2005. Chapter authors include George Maddox, James Birren, Steve Austad, Phoebe Liebig, Chris Fry, Manfred Diehl, and Chris Philipson. Co-editors include Jon Hendricks, Dana Bradley and Debra Sheets.



The book's preface, "The March of Progress", sets the tone. "To illuminate the shadows and to cast attention toward what is coming from just over the horizon we invited some of the most creative thinkers currently contributing to the gerontological literature to reflect on their disciplines, to consider how key questions emerged, how they have changed in the decades since gerontology entered the fray, and what may lie ahead. The resulting collection of essays provides a comprehensive perspective on the enduring questions in gerontology and how they have shaped our understanding of differences in the experience of old age."

By suggesting ways in which a discipline has influenced other disciplines, or benefited from the influence of other foci, the authors show how, in tandem, progress emerges when boundaries are pushed between what we know and what remains elusive."

Maggie Grows!, a 56-minute film produced in 2002 profiles the life of Maggie Kuhn, feisty organizer of the Gray Panthers. This captivating film integrates interviews with Maggie Kuhn and those who knew her, clips of her public appearances on Johnny Carson's Tonight Show, and comical animation in addressing Kuhn's passion about age discrimination, pension rights, and nursing home reform. This film will capture the interest of gerontology students and many interested individuals. To learn more about this film, read **Dana Burr Bradley and Cliff Todd's recent August review in *The Gerontologist* 2005 45:465-466.** "Maggie Grows!" is distributed by Women Make Movies, 462 Broadway, #500, New York, NY 10013. 212-925-0606



MERLOT is more than a fine red wine. MERLOT is an acronym for the Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching. Visit the 'Tasting Room' or tour the peer reviewed online teaching and learning materials.



And MERLOT is more than a repository of well-constructed lectures. It provides high quality simulations, animations, tutorials, exercises, and other organized learning materials that may be used or adapted for courses you are developing. Although the current resources on aging and gerontology are limited, other resources may be adapted to your educational needs. And you're invited to contribute to MERLOT as well! Visit www.merlot.org and Browse Materials for subjects of interest.

UNCG Gerontology Program
P.O. Box 26170 • Greensboro, NC 27402-6170
Phone: (336) 256-1020 • Fax: (336) 256-0174
Dr. Janice I. Wassel, Director • jwassel@uncg.edu

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Hagerstown, MD
Permit No. 93

This newsletter is published as a membership benefit of Sigma Phi Omega (SPO) with a circulation of 1,350. SPO offices are located at 1030 15th Street NW, Suite 240, Washington, DC, 20005. Faculty, faculty advisors and students are encouraged to submit news, meeting reports, club activities or studies underway to the **SPO Newsletter Editor Dr. Janice I. Wassel** (above) **preferably via email** by **September 15, November 15, February 15, and July 15**. **Please include your name, chapter affiliation, phone, and e-mail.**



Coming Attractions

November 9-12, 2005

Boston, MA. Revolution Leads to: Innovation. 36th Annual Meeting and Exhibition of the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists. (888) 887-8133 or www.ascp.com

November 14-15, 2005

San Diego, CA. Mastering the 50+ Marketplace Seminar. Direct Marketing Association. (212) 790-1500 or www.dmamature.org

November 18-22, 2005

Orlando, FL. The Interdisciplinary Mandate. 58th Annual Scientific Meeting of The Gerontological Society of America. (202) 842-1275 or www.agingconference.com

November 30, 2005

Washington, DC. Practical Solutions to the Problems of Low Health Literacy. Fourth Annual National Health Communication Conference of The American College of Physicians (ACP) Foundation. http://foundation.acponline.org/healthcom/hcc_reg.htm

December 8-11, 2005

Boston, MA. 10th World Congress on Osteoarthritis. Osteoarthritis Research Society International. www.oarsi.org

January 25-28, 2006

Greensboro, NC. AIFG Winter 2006 Educational Session for the Registered Financial Gerontologist™ professional designation. Hosted by the UNCG Gerontology Program with the American Institute of Financial Gerontology. www.aifg.org

February 1-5, 2006

St. Petersburg, FL. 2006 International Conference on Aging, Disability, and Independence. <https://secure.php.ufl.edu/icadi/index.php>

February 9-12, 2006

Indianapolis, IN. Outcomes of Gerontological and Geriatric Education. 32nd Annual Meeting and Educational Leadership Conference of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. (202) 289-9806 or www.aghe.org