Dear Life Members,

Abraham Lincoln said, “In the end it’s not the years in your life that count. It’s the life in your years.”

I hope that despite the many changes we are adapting and continuing to adjust to, you are still living with purpose, meaning and joy. I know that one of my greatest joys the past nine months has been spending time with my first grandchild. Before he arrived, I thought I’m not ready to be a grandpa. But that all changed when Roran came into the world. I have enjoyed taking him out for a stroll while the weather has been pleasant. I have referred to him as my therapist during these trying times. I expect that you have found activities and people who contribute a sense of peace and solace during these times of uncertainty.

As Life Members you represent nearly half of the Epsilon Sigma Phi. With your years of experience I know you have sage advice that is valuable to share. I encourage you to consider sharing some of the important lessons you have learned with members in your chapter through a newsletter or when you have opportunities to present. Life experience changes our perspective and allows you to see things that were always there but we missed seeing it in our early years. Your insight can help make a difference in Extension Professionals career. I want to thank you for your commitment to Epsilon Sigma Phi and leave you with another quote.

“We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give.” – Winston Churchill

Mike Knutz, National ESP President
2020 National ESP Conference has changed to a virtual format for this year

On June 23, 2020 the National Board made the decision to cancel the in-person conference due to Covid-19 travel restrictions. Please continue to hold October 6-8 for a virtual conference. Planning for a virtual conference has already begun. A schedule will be released soon. We hope that the virtual formal will allow for even more members to participate this year.

Below is a letter from our ESP National President, Mike Knutz:

Dear ESP Members,

The National ESP (In-Person) Conference scheduled in Rochester, NY for October 5-8th has been cancelled. The National Board is planning for a virtual conference over those same days. We have been monitoring the travel restrictions across the LGU system. Twenty-three chapters reported state or university travel bans while only 3 chapters reported clearance for out-of-state travel. As of last week, we received one conference registration while in previous years we typically have 60+ registrants at this time.

On behalf of the National Board, I want to thank the New York Conference Planning Committee and the Chairs; Arlene Wilson and Beth Claypoole, for their tireless work over the past three years. I also want to express my gratitude for our Conference Planner, Jennifer Bates with HelmsBriscoe for her negotiation skills that released ESP from the Hyatt Regency Hotel contract without penalty.

We hope you consider joining us virtually for the 2020 National ESP Conference.

Mike Knutz
ESP National President

Past Presidents, Many as Life Members, Support the ESP Development Fund

By David S. Ross, Member, National Resource, Development and Management Committee

Twenty-six ESP Past Presidents came forward last November 2019 to create the Past Presidents Matching Challenge to encourage member giving to reach the ESP Development Fund Goal of $500,000. These strong supporters of ESP gave $7,225.00 to match member and chapter donations. Fifty-eight members, six chapters (ID, IL, IN, OH, OR, TN) and one family foundation responded with $13,259 in donations. From November 14, 2019 until April 30, 2020 a total of $20,484 was given to the ESP Development Fund. This brought the Development Fund to $515,913.70. For 2020 the Development Fund provided $36,000 in program support.

The twenty-six past presidents who participated and who are thanked are: Della Baker, Ann Berry, Mark Blevins, Pat Buchanan, Ellen Burton, William Braden, Elizabeth Claypoole, Cassandra Coridon, Nancy Crago, Clarence Cunningham, Patricia Dawson, Madeleine Greene, Duane Johnson, Laurel Kubin, James Lindquist, Bonnie McGee, Jeffrey Myers, Robert Ohlensehlen, Patricia Powley, Mark Stillwell, Faye Strickler, Deborah Thomason, Kathleen Tweeten, Gale VandeBerg, Margaret Viebrock, and Bernadette Watts.

Life members continue to play an important role in our profession and in our professional society by supporting Extension professionals. I call on you to remember ESP in your giving. To give, send a check payable to ESP Development Fund to: ESP National Office, 55 Walton Place Dr., Newnan, GA 30263, or go online to: https://espnational.org/Donate.
Iowa State University President Wendy Wintersteen has been selected to receive the 2020 National Ruby Award from Epsilon Sigma Phi, the national honor society for extension professionals.

The National Ruby Award is the most prestigious recognition presented by ESP and recognizes truly outstanding thinking, performance and leadership in extension. Wintersteen was nominated by Iowa State’s ESP Alpha Mu Chapter. She will receive the award in October at the 2020 National ESP (Virtual) Conference, where she also will deliver the Ruby Lecture.

“I am truly honored to have been nominated by my friends and colleagues in ISU Extension and Outreach and to be recognized at the national level by my extension peers,” Wintersteen said.

“We are pleased that President Wintersteen will be recognized with this national award. As an extension professional she has made highly significant contributions at the state, regional, national and international level over her entire career,” said Barbara Dunn Swanson, chair of the ESP Alpha Mu Chapter.

Wintersteen has served Iowa State for more than 40 years in several capacities. She began her extension career as an integrated pest management specialist in eastern Iowa. She earned her PhD while working as an extension associate, and as a faculty member led the Pesticide Safety Education Program. She served as director for Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension and associate dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. In addition, she served as endowed dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and director of the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station for 11 years before being chosen as Iowa State University president in 2017.

“Through ever-increasing accomplishments and responsibilities, President Wintersteen has maintained her extension soul. She understands extension’s vital role in the land-grant mission and cares deeply for the people delivering on that promise,” Dunn Swanson said.

Ron Justice, Vice President of Public Policy with the Oklahoma Farm Bureau was selected in the category of Elected Official. For fifty years Ron Justice has served his community as an educator, leader, legislator, and role model. He has been an advocate for Extension and a model of the best that Extension has to offer either as an educator or as a leader in his community. We can measure the tangible things he did as a legislator, but of even greater value is the positive impact that his entire life has had on the public image of Extension.

Bill Lee, Governor of Tennessee was also selected in the category of Elected Official. Governor Lee has taken the state under his wing. Generations upon generations in Tennessee will have a greater appreciation and understanding of Extension through Governor Lee’s dedication, generosity, and efforts. Whether he is mentoring young engineers, speaking to generational beef producers, or highlighting the impacts of Extension, Governor Lee is Extension’s greatest friend.

Stripling Family Foundation was selected in the category of Business/Organization. The Stripling Family and their foundation have devoted time, knowledge, and financial contributions to the youth and citizens of the state of Georgia in the area of water economy. Through the generous donations of the CM Stripling Family and Foundation, youth and adults are benefiting by increased knowledge and access to resources. The programs and research conducted make it possible for UGA Extension to continue to extend lifelong learning to Georgia citizens through unbiased research-based education in agriculture, the environment, communities, youth, and families.
Welcome to our new National Board Members

Daphne Richards, Texas Alpha Zeta Chapter, has been elected as the next 2nd Vice President of the National Epsilon Sigma Phi Board of Directors. A member of ESP since 2000, Daphne currently serves as the Southern Region Vice President and as the Chair for the National Marketing Committee. She served as the President of the Alpha Zeta Chapter as well as Chair of the Alpha Zeta Chapter Global Relations Committee. The 2nd Vice President begins a four-year appointment serving as President during their third year. Congratulations Daphne!!

The National ESP Board also welcomes two new regional vice-presidents. Both positions will serve a two-year term.

Chad Proudfoot joins the national board as the Southern Region Vice President. Chad was inducted into ESP in 2016 while working in West Virginia. During his time as a member of the Phi Chapter, Chad served as Membership Chair, Treasurer and chaired rewriting of the chapter bylaws. In 2018, Chad took a position with Virginia Cooperative Extension and transferred his membership to the Alpha Gamma Chapter where he currently serves as the Extension Specialist representative to the Executive Board.

The North Central Vice President position will be filled by Jennifer Wilson. Jennifer has been a member of the Alpha Rho Chapter since 2000 and currently serves as the Chapter President. She has served in multiple roles on the Chapter level including; President-elect, Treasurer, Annalist/Historian, Annual Recognition Banquet Committee Chair, ESP 80th Anniversary Committee Chair and ESP Endowment Board Member. On the National level, Jennifer was co-chair for the 2018 ESP National Conference.

Congratulations Jennifer and Chad!
What’s Happening with ESP Life Members

Deborah Thomason, Alpha Phi Chapter / South Carolina
dthmsn@clemson.edu

Life AFTER Extension has been everything and MORE than I expected! Hard to believe I have been retired for 8 years. We are finally finding time to enjoy living on the lake and having more time for friends and family to visit! The pandemic and all the wonderful travel to national professional meetings (Especially ESP!) has reduced our travel “bucket list”, therefore, staying home has become a pleasure. Keeping in touch with ESP via our national newsletter, attending National Conference and email/Zoom with ESP colleagues has been an effective and fun way to stay involved and connected.

Hope everyone stays healthy and safe during these unpredictable times!

Barbara O'Neill, Alpha Xi Chapter / New Jersey

I am a new life member in 2020 after a 41-year career with Rutgers Cooperative Extension in NJ.

My news is that my new book, Flipping a Switch, is coming out this summer.
See https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1620236869 for details and ordering information.

I also have a webinar and podcast that describe the content of my book:

One-Hour Webinar Podcast and About Flipping a Switch:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsQYmwAmmrs&feature=youtu.be

42-Minute Podcast:

Gail Shellberg, Zeta Chapter / Colorado, Past President & Executive Secretary-Treasurer

From the time Bob Clark pushed me to become active at the regional and national levels in the 1970s, the journey has been exciting to see ESP become the face of the Extension Professional.

I am so pleased to see the direction ESP has taken since my years of involvement in the 1980's and 1990's. It is my pleasure to still be able to follow all the grand achievements of ESP. My health issues begin to limit me. But like the Energizer Bunny, I just keep going. At almost 90, my goal is to reach 100.
Kendra Wells – Tau Chapter Life Member

Tau Chapter is happy to celebrate and congratulate Life Member, Kendra Wells who is being inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame! Kendra is a stellar example of the extension professional! Her career exemplifies the ESP spirit of service having served the Maryland 4-H Program, National 4-H Council and youth around the world as the 4-H Military Liaison. The daughter of a career extension educator, Kendra grew up in the 4-H program, spent a summer as a work study student and, upon graduation from college, continued what would be a lifelong commitment to the values of extension in the area of 4-H youth development.

Her career focus was outreach and expansion of high quality, positive youth development programs to meet the needs of children, youth, families, and communities. Much of her work was grounded in the belief that youth, volunteers and communities possess the knowledge and leadership skills to create the programs and opportunities that meet their interests and needs. Kendra’s work and dedication led to a number of years of service at the Maryland 4-H State Office as the Extension Specialist for Youth Development, and as interim State 4-H Program Leader prior to her retirement. During that time Kendra was a part of the Tau Chapter Committees that hosted the National ESP Meetings in Annapolis – both times! Her national work included serving as the Maryland Host for the National CYFAR Conference held in Baltimore in 2009.

In 2010, Kendra retired from her position as 4-H Extension Specialist with more than 37 years of experience working with youth, volunteers and extension professionals. In retirement Kendra turned her focus to both local and national youth development pursuits. From 2011 through 2014, she was the 4-H Robotics Education Coordinator for the National 4-H Council with responsibility for expansion of 4-H robotics training for volunteers and staff and the implementation of 4-H robotics curriculum across the United States. She was appointed by the County Executive to the Montgomery County Collaboration Council and served two 3-year terms as co-chair of the governance committee and a member of the Child Well Being working group. She was also tapped for her 4-H youth development experience to provide guidance for three of the National 4-H Council’s core service areas – Out of School Time, Social Justice, and Youth Development Community of Practice. At the same time Kendra joined the National 4-H History Preservation steering committee and helped initiate efforts to document 4-H history as a part of the Voices of 4-H History celebration of Extension’s 100th anniversary.

Kendra’s extension career certainly makes her the perfect inductee to the National 4-H Hall of Fame. Her dedication to 4-H is highlighted here but certainly her role as a valued Extension Professional is emphasized through this role as well an ESP member. Kendra has served on numerous state and national committees as well as serving on the National ESP Board as the Northeast Regional Director – before we were Regional VP’s!!

Tau Chapter is proud of our many dedicated life members. We salute Dick Angus who mentored so many of us to become active ESP members. We have a number of Tau Chapter life members who are National Past Presidents of ESP and then we certainly share the expertise of David and Debbie Ross, life members who continually are called upon to give leadership and help ESP fundraising especially with their expertise at National ESP Auctions. We send a large delegation to each of our National ESP Meetings and are happy to have many life members serving on National Committees. But today Maryland Tau Chapter Life Members are happy to join our 4-H Youth Development colleagues in celebrating the accomplishments of our own Kendra Wells!
ESP Kentucky Retiree Service Award-2020

Many professionals take the service part of our Ky Extension Service name to heart. This year’s ESP Retiree Service Winner, Curtis Absher did in his 35 Year career and in his retirement. As a 20 year retiree, service has been his mission.

Curtis works to insure that those who are food insecure may have something to eat thru his service with the Jessamine County Food Pantry. He works for the best education of students thru his service to the Jessamine County Education Foundation. He helps beef producers provide the very best product with his involvement with the Jessamine County and Kentucky Beef Cattle Association. He also is strongly involved in the objectives of the 4Kids Leadership Academy, Friendship International, International Farm Youth Exchange, and Natalie’s Sisters as well as his active participation in his church. Curtis Absher’s servant leadership style is evident in all of his service projects. Curtis continues to live in Jessamine County, Kentucky with his wife Kay. He is the proud father of 5 children, 17 grandchildren, and 4 great grandchildren with more arriving later this year.

Nifty 50’S Retirees Cruise 2020
Submitted by Nancy & Mary Schuman, Alpha Lambda Chapter

The 11th Nifty 50’s Retirees Cruise, January 26 to February 5, 2020, is in the books! Fortunately, this was prior to the coronavirus outbreak on cruise ships so we weren’t worried about illness. Unfortunately, it turned out to be bittersweet and unforgettable in its’ own right with the tragic loss of Bryan Metzger in Barbados and the serious illness of Norm Long’s wife, Cay, on the last day which resulted in a 21 day stay in the hospital in Ft. Lauderdale before returning home.

Despite the sad times, the 55 cruisers, the largest Nifty 50’s cruise group to date, remembered the good times, renewing friendships, the camaraderie with former co-workers and new friends and enjoying the warm, sun-shiny days on the beautiful blue waters of the Caribbean! The theme for this cruise was “Celebrations!”, and we celebrated at our group gatherings throughout the cruise with “fabulous prizes”….birthdays, anniversaries, newlyweds, newly retired, still working, winners of our contests, and just being on the cruise!

The cruise was aboard the Crown Princess on a 10 day Eastern/Southern Caribbean Voyager. Everyone enjoyed the port stops and a chance to get off the ship and explore the islands on tours or just shop at the port. Six islands were visited during the 10-day cruise including Antigua, St. Lucia, Barbados, St. Kitts, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, Grand Turk, Turks & Caicos.
Have you ever wondered - why is there an Epsilon Sigma Phi (ESP) organization and when did it begin? The history of ESP can be found in the National Newsletters which were published beginning in April 1930 recording the activities of the organization. In 2018, Zeta Chapter was fortunate to receive ESP National Newsletter files from Zeta Life Member Gale Shellberg who also had served as National ESP Exec. Director after his retirement. From this information we had a history display at the National Conference in Colorado Springs and have included a brief history review in the Zeta newsletters.

Epsilon Sigma Phi was organized in Bozeman, Montana January 11, 1927 so Montana is the Alpha Chapter (or Mother Chapter). Members met at the home of Dr. M. L. Wilson, one of the first county agents in Montana who was head of the Agricultural Economics Department and actively engaged in Extension work when ESP was formed.

Chapters in many of the Western States were organized in 1927. Chapters began organization in Eastern States in 1928. In the 1929 membership report, 40 chapters were organized with a membership total of 990. Hawaii had a chapter as well as one had been organized in Canada. Only 10 state Extension programs did not have an ESP chapter according to the April 1930 newsletter. Dues for 1928/1929 were $2.00 per member.

As with any new endeavor, and especially starting a national organization, there were growing pains. With 40 Chapters organized in 1928 and 1929, P.H. Ross, Grand Council Secretary, reported the largest expense for the organization was printing. The only equipment Grand Council had was a one-drawer filing cabinet and they were using a typewriter which belonged to Extension Service. The secretary proposed purchasing their own typewriter in another year.

The secretary of the Oklahoma Chapter was reported to be sending out quite a few mimeographed (anybody remember using that machine?) newsletters to keep the members updated on activities and had always mailed a copy to Grand Council.

The Grand Council Executive Committee found it necessary to conduct a ballot by mail in January 1929 of Executive Committee members on issues which were being proposed for the business meeting of the National ESP Convention in November. Item being considered were:

a) appointment of a committee to investigate making all Extension employees eligible for Federal Retirement - 7 affirmative, unanimous;

b) committee to investigate having a national quarterly publication which contained chapter news and professional papers - 6 affirmative, 1 favored chapter newsletters rather than national;

c) approval for Extension Service stenographers to be members of ESP - 2 affirmative, 5 opposed;

d) there were 2 different member emblems and Grand Council EC voted on whether either emblem could be worn by men and women; or whether the respective emblems should be rigidly standardized - 1 vote for standardization, 4 votes for choice, 2 votes for having one pin for both men and women;

e) should chapters only use Greek letters for designation of Chapters -2 affirmative, 4 opposed.

(ESP History Continued on page 9)
The National Convention of ESP was held November 14, 1929 in Chicago. Delegates represented 35 of the 39 chapters. W.A. Lloyd of the Alpha Omega Chapter in Hawaii was elected Grand Director. H.J. Baker of New Jersey Alpha Xi Chapter was elected Grand Vice Director, and P. H. Ross of Arizona Kappa Chapter continued as Grand Secretary-Treasurer.

Business before the Grand Council Delegates and results were:

- Extension Stenographers would not be eligible for membership, but in the event a stenographer is promoted to extension secretary or extension assistant and has 5 years of extension work including time as a stenographer, they would be eligible.

- Take immediate action to incorporate the Grand Council as a national organization.

- Affirmative vote favoring adhering to the present-sized emblem allowing either style to be worn by men or women. The ladies’ ESP emblem could add a chain and guard.

- Committee was appointed to investigate the possibility of Extension employees being eligible for the Federal Retirement Act.

- Committee appointed to investigate a Grand Council quarterly publication containing ESP Chapter news and professional papers.

- ESP Chapters could not have names other than those with Greek letter designations.

The Grand Council financial report showed $585.80 checking balance and $1018.33 savings. Total receipts for the year were $1164.50 and disbursements $1066.06. The interest earned on the savings account was $18.33.

Finally, Grand Director W.A. Lloyd suggested Epsilon Sigma Phi consider having their own national meeting where all members could attend. Current Grand Council meetings are held in conjunction with another Extension or Land-Grant Association meeting.
Charitable Giving Enhancements in CARES Act

Doug Beech, Resource Development and Management Committee Member, and Life Member, Alpha Rho Chapter, Kansas

In just four short months, the Coronavirus pandemic has changed our lives in so many ways. Many of our fellow citizens are now facing enormous health, financial, and social challenges.

For those of us who have not been impacted as negatively, we may find ourselves wondering about how we might help our hurting friends and neighbors without jeopardizing our own health. By now, we have heard many heartwarming and creative ways that others have used to reach out to folks in need. Of course, providing financial support to charitable organizations that address COVID-19 related needs and issues, or that have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, is another major form of assistance, and thus Congress included several charitable giving enhancements in the recently passed (March 27, 2020) CARES Act.

Two items are of particular note to individuals. First, taxpayers who DO NOT itemize deductions may take a $300.00 deduction from their 2020 taxable income for CASH contributions to public charities. (But not to donor advised funds.) It is expected that this change will encourage the 90% or so of taxpayers who currently cannot itemize deductions to make more cash gifts in 2020. Second, for taxpayers who DO itemize deductions, the usual 60% of adjusted gross income limit for cash contributions is increased to 100% for cash gifts to public charities in 2020. It is hoped that this change will open the door to attracting more major gifts in 2020 from donors who have the financial means to do so.

The CARES Act also waves required minimum distributions (RMDs) from most retirement plans in 2020. It is very important to note that even though RMDs are waived for 2020, Charitable IRA Rollovers (more formally referred to as “qualified charitable distributions”, or QCDs) are unaffected by the CARES Act. You can still do QCDs in 2020 if you otherwise qualify, and they still offer very significant income tax benefits to those IRA owners 70 ½ and older who currently do not itemize deductions, and who want to continue, or even increase, their support of charitable causes important to them in light of the current environment. For additional information on Charitable IRA Rollovers you might want to review a prior article that appeared in the May 2019 edition of the ESP Connection newsletter, archived on the National ESP website.

As always, please consult your tax advisors to determine how the above income tax provisions would work in your own particular situation. And be aware that additional COVID-19 related Congressional action is likely, which could result in further new income tax provisions or adjustments. Staying current on new tax law will be especially important in 2020.

Doug Beech can be reached by e-mail at dbeech@ksu.edu.

Make plans to attend the 2021 ESP National Conference in Savannah, Georgia
October 25-28, 2021

The conference will be held at The DeSoto Savannah, a Historic property overlooking Madison Square in the heart of Savannah’s Historic District.
“We ACHIEVED IT!!! . . . The $500,000 Goal”

Joanne Cavis, Member Resource Development and Management Committee

Visionary leaders in 1985 established an endowed savings account. Then, about 2004, the committee named it the Development Fund and set a goal of achieving $500,000 in donations. The earnings from the Development Fund are to be used to sustain professional development grants, scholarships and stipends, to develop the Extension profession and future professionals, through a continuing funding source.

As of December 31, 2019, ESP members and chapters have donated enough to reach $500,000. That means we reached our goal . . . You and your Chapter helped make this happen!!!

Many of you have been generous givers over the last 34 years, and we thank you for being a pace setter. Some chapters have also made contributions and achieved a Key Level of giving. “Thank You” to all for setting a good example for other individuals and chapters in supporting your profession.

In 2020, ESP National will be able to return $36,000 (money generated from the Development Fund) to its members and chapters in the form of professional development grants, scholarships and stipends because of the generosity of members and chapters over many years. (NOTE: Compare to 10 years ago when $17,000 was available.)

ESP’s most valuable asset is the quality of Extension faculty and staff dedicated to serving people across the nation. The Development Fund fosters even greater emphasis on “Partnerships in Professional Excellence” among ESP members and the Cooperative Extension System.

ESP Conference Pins

The National ESP Office has past conference pins which you can request with a $100 donation to the Development Fund. There is a limited supply of these pins, so first come....first served. Below is a list of conference pins available with your donation.

- ESP 75th Anniversary 1928-2003
- Charleston, South Carolina 2007
- Fargo, North Dakota 2009
- Jackson Hole, Wyoming 2010
- Syracuse, New York 2011
- Mobile, Alabama 2012
- Galaxy IV - Pittsburg, Pennsylvania 2013
- Indianapolis, Indiana 2014
- Coeur d’Alene, Idaho 2015
- Cape May, New Jersey 2016
- Wilmington, North Carolina 2017
- Manhattan, Kansas 2018
- Colorado Springs, Colorado 2019

You can donate online at www.espnational.org/donate and in the “Special designation / comment” box just let us know which of the above you would like to have and we will get it mailed to you. You can also mail your $100 donation check to the National Office, 55 Walton Place Dr, Newnan, GA 30263 and tell us which conference pin you would like.
Dear Life Member,

We are excited to provide you with this ESP Connection Newsletter. We hope you will find it informative and we encourage you to check out opportunities for Life Members to stay engaged with the ESP program.

Printed issues are limited. To receive all newsletters and programming announcements, please provide your email address and any updated contact information to the National Office at espoffice@espnational.org

Greg Price, Executive Director
National ESP Office

ESP strives to remain connected with our Life Members. Please keep the National Office updated with your email and mailing address.

espoffice@espnational.org
470-347-0394
Website: espnational.org