

The Michigander



★ Michigan Region Rocks! ★ By Regional Coordinator Kari Kahler

The stars aligned in Nashville, Tennessee for the weekend of April 12 – 14, 2012 and the stars were you—the Michigan Region! Congratulations to the Michigan Region for being named one of two Distinguished Regions. The Distinguished Region Award recognizes achievements in the areas of programming, regional meetings, membership growth, quantity and quality of chapter participation in Society programs---this is our Region and all of our collective efforts paid off! Congratulations!!!

Also, during the Opening Session, **Michael J. Wisniewski Jr.** was named as one of the **top ten Regional Officers** in the country. Mike traveled extensively in Michigan this past year and we are grateful for his energy and passion for Phi Theta Kappa.

Dr. Patricia Dolly from Oakland Community College--Auburn Hills and Dr. Conway Jeffress from Schoolcraft College received the **Shirley B. Gordon Awards of Distinction**. These awards are for College Presidents for support shown to their chapters and promoting the goals of Phi Theta Kappa. This is a great way to show appreciation for your college president and I strongly encourage all chapters to nominate your president or another campus administrator for awards.

On Saturday evening, Michigan rocked the Gala Awards Ceremony winning an award (or more) in every category. Congratulations to the following individuals, chapters and again--the *Michigan Region!*

Distinguished Member Award:

Elaine Langlois--Omicron Iota--Schoolcraft College
McKenzie Campbell--Alpha Rho Pi--Northwestern Michigan College

Distinguished Chapter Officer Award:

Sean Feehery--Alpha Omicron Omicron--Mid Michigan Community College

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Distinguished Chapter Officer Team Award:

Alpha Omicron Xi--Oakland Community College--Orchard Ridge

Alpha Rho Pi--Northwestern Michigan College

Beta Lambda Kappa--Macomb Community College



Paragon Advisor Award--(for advisors with less than four years of service):

Jamie Valente--Beta Lambda Kappa--Macomb Community College

Distinguished Advisor Award--(for advisors with at least four years or more of service):

Earlene Williams--Alpha Upsilon Zeta --Wayne County Community College District

Continued Excellence Award for Advisors--this award is given to advisors who previously received the Distinguished Advisor Award.

Jenn McCabe--Beta Lambda Kappa--Macomb Community College

Distinguished Honors in Action Project Awards:

The Honors in Action Project Award recognizes the top chapters whose Honors In Action Project entries demonstrated excellence in academic research into the Honors Study Topic, leadership roles and leadership development activities, service learning and collaboration.

Alpha Rho Lambda Chapter--Jackson Community College

Alpha Rho Pi Chapter--Northwestern Michigan College

Distinguished Issue Award--Honors In Action:

This award recognizes chapters whose Honors in Action Project entry scored highest in each of the 10 issues related to the 2010-2011 Honors Study Topic, The Democratization of Information: Power, Peril and Promise.

Issue 3: The Individual and Community--

Alpha Rho Lambda Chapter--Jackson Community College



Distinguished Chapter Awards:

Chapters must submit both a Honors In Action Project and a College Project award entry. The scores are averaged to determine a chapter's overall ranking and awards are presented to chapters in the top 10 percent of chapters entering both categories:

Alpha Rho Pi Chapter -- Northwestern Michigan College

Top 100 Chapters (based on the combined scores of Honors In Action and College Project entries):

Alpha Omicron Omicron Chapter-- Mid Michigan Community College

Alpha Rho Lambda Chapter -- Jackson Community College

Alpha Rho Pi Chapter -- Northwestern Michigan College



Congratulations again to the entire Michigan Region...you did yourselves proud and now we look forward to celebrating a lot more accomplishments at our Regional Convention! Ready to be a star?



Feeling Like a Rockstar!

By Michael J. Wisniewski, Jr.



I would like to preface this article by saying that it has been my privilege to serve this region as the President.

In the middle of March I had been given the honor of being asked to be the flag bearer for the opening ceremony, which meant that I had to arrive before my chapter. I arrived at the appointed place for flag bearer practice. Kari Kahler was given the honor of pushing my wheelchair up the ramp while I was waving our State's flag. We arrived at the appointed time and place during the first general session. Kari pushed me up and down the ramp like a trooper. After returning the flag to its home, we went to our place at the front of the conference hall.

Headquarters had changed up the order of ceremonies, in that they started distributed Hallmark Awards directly after the opening of the first general session. At the 93rd Annual Convention held in Seattle, WA all Hallmark Awards were distributed during the third general session on Saturday night.

The first award that Headquarters distributed was the Distinguished Regional Officer Hallmark Award. They stated that there would be ten recipients. They began calling names from throughout the conference center. I did not know if I had been nominated for the hallmark. However, just like every other regional officer, I waited for my name to be called. They called five names and had a long pause...I began inquiring of those sitting around me, "Is that all?" I received my answer as they resumed calling names. I thought I was counting properly, and I reached ten and thought "I guess I didn't get the award." Then all of the sudden on the jumbotron sized screen in front of us had my name on it. The entire Region erupted with cheers. Hope Buell, the Michigan Regional PR/Historian, grabbed my chair and pushed me up the ramp to receive my award. I had a smile that no one could take off my face. Hope pushed me down the ramp and to our assigned place.

The next announced award was the distinguished regional officer teams and unfortunately they announced all three regional teams without saying our name. The very next award was the Distinguished Region award. There were only two awarded this honor. I began praying we would receive this award because my fellow regional officers had worked just as hard as I had, and they deserved to be honored as well. Thankfully, my prayers were answered almost immediately. The Michigan Region was one of two regions selected. The entire region erupted in cheers, and if possible, they seemed louder than before. This time Kari Kahler, Michigan Regional Coordinator, grabbed my wheelchair and pushed me to the stage to receive this award. I received the award and returned to our assigned area and passed the award to the Regional Board.



(Continued on the next page)

What a rush...I had been wheeled before over 4,000 members three times in the first fifteen minutes of the convention. Little did I know that these events would propel me to "Rock Star" status through the entire weekend.

I no sooner left the convention hall when strangers would approach me and shake my hand, or give me a hug and tell me congratulations. My immediate instinct was to say that I was at the front of the line with a wonderful Regional Board and Region behind me. This happened no fewer than one hundred times throughout the weekend. A friend of mine from New York quipped "you were on stage more frequently than Dr. Rod Risley".

One of the most notable times was when myself and chapter officers went to the outlet mall for lunch during the down time on Saturday afternoon. We 'walked' through the parking lot to get to the mall, but decided to take the shuttle bus back to the hotel. We were waiting in line as the bus arrived, I began moving to the front to access the handicapped spot and someone yelled from the crowd "Get out of Mike's way". That was truly when I realized that I had achieved "Rock Star" status.

As with all good things, this too had to come to an end. ★

I would like to thank the advisors, officers, and members of: Kirtland Community College, Lansing Community College, Henry Ford Community College, Macomb Community College, Oakland Community College—Auburn Hills, St. Clair County Community College, Wayne County Community College District. Each school had placed trust in me to accurately represent Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

The Junior Journalism Program ★

By Twana Pinsky

I believe that if you tell a child that they are at risk and under privileged, they will be. I believe even more that if you tell a child they can be anything they want to be and that they can reach for the stars, they will.

As Editor-in-Chief of my college newspaper, "*Erie Square Gazette*," our community service project collected coats for needy children in Port Huron Michigan. I received a phone call from teacher, Hannah Palmer, thanking me. Her students at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School had received some of our donated coats. Palmer shared that



her kids didn't get the breaks some kids did and they had been labeled as "at risk." What I saw was a group of bright kids who had great potential as writers, thus the "Erie Square Gazette" Junior Journalism Program was born.

Journalism students from our college visited the local school, teaching the children the basics of sentence structure, the inverted pyramid and "what makes a good news story." The children published their school's first ever student newspaper.

We have just completed our second year of the junior journalism program, and it has expanded. We are in our second year at Woodrow Wilson Elementary School and are now working with students at Cleveland Elementary School here in Port Huron. A total of three classrooms of children participate, and both schools' student newspapers are linked to our online newspaper at the college.

Each school publishes two hard copy issues of their own papers; "Palmer Town News" and "News from the Hive, the voice of Cleveland Elementary School. In addition the students are now using their new-found journalism skills to write records and produce their own "Junior Radio Program"- the "Palmer Rock Radio Show."

The program is making a difference in the lives of these children. As Phi Theta Kappans we can use this program to reach hundreds of children all across our state. It is a great way to give back to those less fortunate than us.

A little boy named Ethan was on staff for the inaugural issue of his school's paper. When the papers were delivered, Ethan saw that his photograph had been used. The child approached me and said "That says Ethan that's Me!" To see the pride and self-worth on this young boy's face is something I will never forget.

I am asking each Kappan that reads this to please take the "Junior Journalism" suggestion to their college's newspapers. It is my hope fellow Kappans across the state can help start similar programs in their communities that will make a difference in these children's lives.

Alpha Omicron Gamma Officer Wins Coca-Cola Leaders of Promise Scholarship

By Kevin Howe

Chapter Vice President/Public Relations officer Kevin Howe was one of a very few students nationwide to have the honor of winning the Leaders of Promise scholarship offered by both Phi Theta Kappa and Coca-Cola. The scholarship revolved around a student's activity and leadership roles both on and off campus. Kevin is the student representative on the Curriculum and Instruction Committee, VP of the student senate, and a chapter officer. He has been awarded departmental scholarships by Kirtland Community College and is very active both on and off campus.

A Lifeline

By Ashley Flees

At times, it is often felt that we are adrift, lost among an onslaught of circumstances, and assaulted by the constant current of life. In tragic times, this current can toss us off our chosen paths. It is in such moments in which we need lifelines. The Oberndorf Lifeline to Completion Scholarship is the lifeline that is available to Phi Theta Kappa members who have been caught in a tragic current of life.

When members experience life circumstances, such as devastating acts of nature, sudden illness, and unanticipated circumstances, and their education is in danger of being swept aside, the Oberndorf Scholarship is there offering its aptly named lifeline. In 2011 Phi Theta Kappa, benefactors Lou and Rosemary Oberndorf, and the 2011-2012 International Officers Team announce the creation of the scholarship and set out with a goal to make it last. Since its unveiling, a challenge to raise funds to be matched by the Oberndorfs one-to-one has been set forth.

In Nashville, Tennessee during the Phi Theta Kappa 2012 Annual Convention, a challenge was presented to all present chapters: to make it the last little way to meet the original challenge of \$125,000 set before members when the scholarship was initially announced. As a region, we rose to meet this challenge, in less than three hours we raised a total of \$2,500! The challenge was met in Nashville and it now continues. A second challenge of \$125,000 has been now set before the members to continue to raise the funds that will be there for years to come to act as that needed lifeline.

There are multiple avenues that one can take in order to give to this endeavor. Individuals can look to the Phi Theta Kappa website to give electronically or start their own chapter fundraisers to contribute donations. By contributing to scholarships that as members we reach out to when we go to take our next step we are helping each other. We are contributing to the rope that helps hoist members out of the current and back onto their path towards success.

Officers Volunteer Time Being Shuttle Drivers

By Kevin Howe



Chapter President Brandy Howe and Vice President/Public Relations Kevin Howe were approached by the Kirtland Foundation for help with the First Annual Regional Chamber After Hours Discussion Session on Thursday March 8th. Kirtland President Dr. Quinn and the Kirtland foundation hosted the event for local business owners and chambers of commerce to get together and chat about the future goals of Northern Michigan. There were eight chambers present and business

owners covering 11 counties. We even had a few visitors from the Capital building in Lansing.

Chapter officers, along with members of the Student Senate showed up early to help finish preparations for the evening. While some members were greeters, servers, table bussers and just plain gophers, everyone involved had a great time! Officers Brandy and Kevin got the privilege of shuttling attendees to and from their vehicles before and after the event. The evening was a huge success for Dr. Quinn, the Kirtland foundation, and every student that donated their time. Networking throughout the evening brought a few new contacts, possibly even friends.



Thanks to an Advisor

By Alpha Upsilon Zeta



It is not often you find a person with such a rare combination of qualities as those possessed by Ms. Lizzie Washington. The energy and dedication paired with the tireless work ethic she exudes is infectious. In addition the position of Student Services Administrator, she has served as our chapter's Lead Advisor at Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) for sixteen years. Since this time she has played an integral role in the success of the chapter as well as the members that have fallen under her leadership.

Ms. Washington is a consummate professional and relentless in her efforts to educate members on the benefits of Phi Theta Kappa on all levels. Her knowledge of Phi Theta Kappa and the vision she holds for our chapter has been an asset not only to members but to WCCCD as a whole. Her guidance has impacted members tremendously. Her ongoing commitment to propel the chapter in the direction of excellence is immeasurable. Ms. Washington's continual support and ability to empower members by showing us that we could accomplish any task is an understatement. She has single-handedly honed our leadership skills.

The growth and development of members is essential to Ms. Washington. She has utilized conventions as a guide and encouraged members to attend sessions that would benefit the chapter and enhance their personal development. This allowed our chapter to implement projects which would benefit our community and society. Her guidance has allowed our chapter to receive international recognition. We were Top 100 Chapter in 2009 and 2010, and earned a Service Hallmark Award in 2010. Ms. Washington was also the recipient of the

Distinguished Chapter Advisor Award in 2011.

Alpha Upsilon Zeta would like to congratulate Ms. Washington on her January 2012, retirement from WCCCD. We would be remiss as a chapter for failing to acknowledge Ms. Washington's leadership and dedication to the Alpha Upsilon Zeta Chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. We could not have accomplished the milestones without her guidance. More importantly, we thank her for her unwavering support and dedication for coming back as our Lead Advisor. Alpha Upsilon Zeta looks forward to reaching greater heights under her leadership.

Alpha Omicron Gamma Officers Put Kirtland CC

Back on the Map

By Kevin Howe

Kirtland Community College had the honor of nominating two selected students for the All-Michigan Academic Team! Vice President/Public Relations officer Kevin Howe and Treasurer Jeniffer Garner were hand selected by Kirtland to represent their school on the team!

The awards ceremony and luncheon hosted at the Radisson Hotel in Lansing on March 13th was attended by college President Dr. Quinn, Alpha Omicron Gamma advisor Terry Geary, Kevin Howe, and chapter President Brandy Howe.

After registration, the entire group walked to the capital for a special event. All Michigan honorees were allowed to sit in the West balcony and observe a Senate Session in progress! They stopped the session and honored the group of Phi Theta Kappa members!

I must say, being nominated by Kirtland for this was an absolute honor! It is something that I personally will never forget. The awards were awesome and the lunch was spectacular! The trip to the capital was a welcome addition as well! Seeing that enormous Senate room was very cool. I think the best part of the day was being able to share it with my wife, my advisor and my school president. Without the support of those individuals, I may not have had the drive to excel and succeed as I have. Knowing my school stands behind me means more to me than I can express on paper.



2012 All-Michigan Academic Team

★ **Communication Across the Divide** ★
By Clara Cherry, 2011/2012 President-Elect, MRAA

Even a communication pro can take a few pointers from history. Through colorful tales of the wizard Merlin, Knight Lancelot, powerful Excalibur and the vision and dream of Camelot, we find that King Arthur is the epitome of effective communication and management of multiple and regionally distributed teams. The tale of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table can teach us how to transform a geographically challenged group of individuals whose actions fall short of goals into a virtual team that gets results. And it all comes down to communication techniques!

A true team is built on communication, trust, and a shared vision as well as a variety of skills and strengths of the team as a whole. Just as King Arthur found ways to bond the knights across England, successful chapters bond their knights (officers) in three ways.

First, recognize the emotional bond. Your "Camelot" (vision for the chapter) has to be a concept embraced by each of your members; bonding them through discussing and shaping the vision. Involvement starts when you ensure your members are heard no matter their position or campus location. Champion your members by hearing their ideas, listen to what they have to offer, but do not push to provide an answer. Instead share additional information to empower the members.

Second, find the intellectual link. Every member needs to have the same, clear description of the goals and vision of the chapter. Having a clearly written agreement that each member had a voice in defining reinforces and enhances the members commitment to such a level that he will strive to meet the overarching goals even when a leader is not present.

Third, identify an alignment tool - one question or statement that links people across distances throughout the project. The Knights of the Round Table qualified their actions by determining if it met the criteria "Might *for* Right". If not, the knight knew to change his actions or requested help from another.

King Arthur's success in building Camelot shows us the benefits of moving away from the idea that a team consists of a one leader, in one location, with a group of followers; towards a shared vision, shared values, and open and frequent communications all aid in taking the chapter to new heights no matter the distance.

When was the last time you read the tale? How can you transform your chapter into a Tele-Round Table?

★ The “Shift” to Alumnus ★

By Roger Hammonds Alumni Representative ★

The Phi Theta Kappa experience, as a chapter member, then as a chapter officer, really inspired within me a desire to share the opportunities available within the organization. I was graduating from my community college and pursuing my educational goals at a senior institution that had a local campus I could attend. Staying local helped make the transfer an easy one. Being a Phi Theta Kappa member and making the transition to alumnus, I saw an opportunity for me to still be involved as an alumnus if there was a need at my chapter and regionally.

Once I became an “active” alumnus, I found it to be very different from the “active” member role. The “active” member role is one of learning how to become a leader, learning how your actions affect and motivate other members. It is one of growth and enjoying the journey. Something you can look back on and say, “The decision to join Phi Theta Kappa had a major influence on my life and it helped me become who I am today.” The “active” alumnus role is one of mentoring members and teaching them to becoming great leaders. Helping out when called upon by advisors and chapter officers. Not taking over or doing it for them but teaching them a way it can be done and then letting them try it or not. They may even stumble, trip, or fall, but they’ll get back up. And you’ll let them, so they can learn from the experience just as you have.

The alumnus role may be a new role at first, you might even stumble, trip or fall yourself, but you’ll get back up just as you have in the past. And once you learn what this “new” role is all about and the rewarding journey you are experiencing, you will sit back, smile, and enjoy life. Now you will enjoy the journey for that special moment when you touch someone else’s life and spark a fire of inspiration, clarity, or simply a desire for more. Then you’ll be able to say, once again, “The decision to join Phi Theta Kappa had a major influence on my life and it helped me become who I am today.”



Would You Like to Write a Michigander Article?

Here Is How You Can!

We need articles, and you want to brag about how wonderful your chapter is! So tell us about it!

What has your chapter been up to lately that you would like to share with the Region? Write us an article about it and submit it to the PR/Historian, and we'll be happy to include it! Articles do not have to be very long, a couple of paragraphs will do. Pictures to add to the articles are always welcome!

Some ideas for articles would be: Your Honors in Action Project, your College Project, what your chapter is doing to promote the C4 (Community College Completion Corp.) initiative, service projects your chapter is involved in or needs help with, fellowship activities your chapter has held, recipes and other miscellaneous items, upcoming events for your chapter which are open for other Phi Theta Kappans to attend, a useful tool which your chapter has used that has helped them in some way, and *anything* to do with Phi Theta Kappa, of course!

If you have any suggestions for articles you would like to see in the Michigander, let us know!

Submit Articles to: miregionptk@gmail.com

This will be on the web! Check out the Newsletter page of our website after the Convention to read this at any time or print it out to share with other members of your chapter!

Visit our website at: <http://michiganregion.ptk.org>

