



**PHI DELTA KAPPA INTERNATIONAL**  
**UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO**  
**Chapter 0085**

*OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER*

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April 2004



Susan Seidman, President, PDK-UT and the Hon. James Bartleman, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

**President's message**  
**Susan Seidman**

The annual general meeting and initiation held at the Faculty Club on April 15th was a huge success. The Lieutenant Governor arrived during the social hour and made a point of meeting as many Kappans as he could. He was gracious and personable.

Membership recognition went to Ouida Wright, who has been a member for 30 years, and to Elizabeth Manker, who made the trip to the AGM from Niagara Falls to celebrate 10 years of membership. Gene Miller, who celebrated his 20 years of membership last year, finally got his longevity pin at this year's ceremony.

The Phi Delta Kappa initiation ceremony was impressive as always. As usual, the readers were wearing academic regalia. A special aspect was that two of the readers were Kappans sponsoring the new initiates-- Carolyn Moras who sponsored student Pauline Shou and Viv Smith, who was part of the team that initiated his daughter, Sheila Bennett. You will find introductions to our new initiates in this newsletter. David Graham and Stephanie Fetterolf were other readers during the ceremony. Jocelyn Badovinac did her usual superb job ensuring that we had the plaques containing the PDK symbols and other regalia, and drawing our attention to them during the ceremony.

The Hon. James K. Bartleman spoke about the

highly successful Lieutenant Governor's Book Program. Mary El Milosh has done a write up of his remarks for this newsletter.

In the Meeting portion of the evening, the minutes of the 2003 AGM were adopted, and the treasurer's report for 2004 was adopted. Thanks to Charles Manahan for his usual good job. The revised chapter bylaws were presented and adopted by the meeting.

Area 6 G Liaison John Stewart presented information about the reorganization of PDK regions and the upcoming elections for Phi Delta Kappa officers. We now have a different voting system: *One Kappan--1 vote* instead of the previous *One Chapter--1 vote*. This means that it is very important for each Kappan to read the information that was sent to them with the ballot and vote. Frank Nappi has been acclaimed as our region's candidate for president-elect. He is also running for the position of one of nine regional representatives. His campaign statement focuses on fiscal accountability. The other candidate, Robert Prinz, focuses on membership. He is interested in enhancing international memberships with a special focus on developing countries.

John Stewart also stressed that, in the previous election for president, only 34 votes separated the winner. The message to us, then, is - VOTE! (And ensure you have sufficient postage on the envelope!) We particularly thank John Stewart and his wife Barb for attending the AGM, even though they had a long drive home to London.

Peter Ross's donation of two sets of Fastbacks for draw prizes added to the fun of the evening. Nick Fok, a guest of Jocelyn Badovinac, won one set. The other was won by PDK's own David Graham, who kindly added them to the donation for the Northern Book Program.

We have three more events this year: the first with an *artistic focus*--the *Trinity Chamber Concert* on May 2nd.; the second with a *research focus*--Teacher performance appraisal on May 4th, and the third, a *social* at Bluffers Restaurant on June 2nd. See the details in this newsletter.

As always, we welcome your views. We are holding our first ever "Run for Education." If you have interest or expertise in organizing events such as the run, please contact Stephanie Fetterolf. Please call me if you would like to offer your input and assistance in planning our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year. Susan Seidman

## **DATES TO REMEMBER!**

**May 2, 2004 Trinity Chamber Ensemble**

**May 4, 2004 Teacher performance appraisal**

**June 2, 2004 Bluffers Restaurant**

**See you there!!!**

## **Meet our initiates**



**Sheila Bennett** This April, Sheila Bennett (shown here with President Susan Seidman) became the second generation of her family to join PDK. Her father, Dr. Vivian Smith assisted in the initiation ceremony.

Sheila holds a BA and B Ed from McGill University and has taught since 1990 in the Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland, Clarington CDSB. In addition to a variety of academic and sport leadership activities at the school and inter-school levels, Sheila is a Curriculum Council Chair and Math mentor. Sheila has an ongoing interest in curriculum development and has been involved with writing, piloting and assessing the outcomes of new curricula, including service on E.Q.A.O. marking teams.

**Welcome Sheila.**



**Pauline Shou**

While pursuing her Undergraduate degree in Computer Science and Human Biology at University of Toronto, St. George Campus, Pauline began volunteering at H. A. Halbert Junior Public School. The volunteering experience twice a week in a grade 6 classroom strengthened Pauline's desire to educate young adults. After attaining her Hon. Bachelor's of Science degree, she was hired as a supply Educational Assistant at the Toronto District School Board.. Since September, Pauline has worked at H.A. Halbert Junior Public School as a Special Needs Assistant. She is in the process of completing her B. Ed. in Adult Education from Brock University and has recently been accepted to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology for the Intermediate/Senior program. It is Pauline's desire to strengthen the presence of technology in education while maintaining a well-balanced curriculum and a personal approach to learning.

**Welcome Pauline.**

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## Governing Body July 2004-June 2005 University of Toronto Chapter, Phi Delta Kappa International

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**Thanks to our volunteers for their leadership!**

### The *Lieutenant Governor's Book Program* receives the Outstanding Educator of the Year Award 2004

This year, the University of Toronto Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International has presented the Outstanding Educator of the Year Award to an outstanding educational program. The 2004 award was presented to the *Lieutenant Governor's Book Program* which has provided books for First Nations schools in Ontario's north.

In her introductory speech, PDK President Susan Seidman spoke of the significant educational service to aboriginal communities that will result from this successful program, developed in response to the Hon. James Bartleman's appeal for books.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor told of his shock at finding empty bookshelves in schools during his visits to aboriginal communities as well as a very low percentage of young people pursuing post-secondary education. This caused him to ask "How can children, who have nothing other than textbooks to read, become leaders in their communities?"

Upon realizing the need, Mr. Bartleman sent out an appeal for books through approximately two hundred newspapers. To date, approximately one million books have been donated! Collection and distribution have been organized through O.P.P. detachments and volunteers. The books are now being sorted for distribution. Our congratulations to the *Lieutenant Governor's Book Program* and all those who have responded to the Lieutenant Governor's call to support the education of aboriginal students.

Mary Elspeth Milosh



Left to right: **Hon. James Bartleman, Walter Winchell, Susan Seidman, Robert Hookey, John Stewart**

### Standardized testing:

Fabian Yu

#### *Winner of the 2004 PDK-UT Scholarship for Prospective Teachers*

Standardized tests are exams developed by a government or an association of professional educators; the purpose of these standardized tests are to supposedly determine whether students of any discipline are grasping the required aspects of a subject field based on a set of data. Recently the administering of these tests has rapidly been growing and expanding. The growth in these tests is not fully accurate and does not represent all learners. Standardized tests do not evaluate how all students learn.

Using standardized tests to evaluate the performance of students is not an effective method. It does not determine the level of knowledge they possess. The idea of a test, which acts as a measuring device for learning, is ingenious, but not realistic. A student's test result does not necessarily relate to how well they learn and what he/she has learned. As well, the results that are issued do not represent the ideal standards that appeal to all students. The government has the liberty of setting the standard to any degree they wish. Rarely does the government ever address where the results originated. Standardized tests are merely used as a source of academic feedback, and state that students are being educated according to a set of standards. Writing these tests does not assess a student's ability. The marks cannot define any sort of achievement and only cause problems.

Those who have undergone these standardized tests are usually subjected to horrible effects. Those who have been tested are given the impression that they are only worth the grade that is issued. This causes the students with a more pleasing grade to feel superior over others. Those who

received a lower grade then become depressed. The testing causes them to develop a lowered self-esteem, and may lead to other social difficulties. It is obvious that the students who are adapted to the learning style of the tests will have a better performance than the others will. These tests are ultimately not beneficial because not all students learn the same way. Standardized tests are designed to make students concentrate their education to whatever is on the test. It does not encourage deeper thinking. The tests that are created assume that all students have the same equal readiness in all aspects of study. The creation of these tests causes students to narrow their study habits usually to memorization; therefore resulting in less creativity and other learning possibilities. There is a whole spectrum of methods to describe how people learn. Testing does not regulate, and cover all of style, and never will.

There are effective alternatives that can better assess students, which could replace the uses of standardized tests. These new options will ameliorate the way students perform. To fully replace standardized tests a variety of other analyses should be in use. An important technique is communication through interviewing students and parents. This can yield a great deal of information to evaluate a student, and easily mark the progress of the student. When they are interviewed, the students can express how they learn and their needs. Interviewing the parents will mark transitions in behaviors and other habits. Interviewing is an excellent form of testing that can fully understand the student. The best method to assess the academic portion of an education is with tests that are written by the teacher, or an individual who knows the performances of the class. This will aid the students so that their test will be made specifically to cover their requirements. An additional method is documentation, which is keeping a record of the work that a student has done. This can outline the changes in a student's academic ability. Also, if there is a problem it can easily be traced. These all methods when used in conjunction provide a meaningful assessment of a student's education, and cause no effects on the subject.

Standardized testing is an ineffective way to assess students on their learning. These tests are nothing but a problem; they are claimed to be written flawlessly; however, the fact is that not all children learn the same way. Testing promotes more problems than solutions to students. The debate about these tests has gone for a long period of time. Solutions must be made and alternatives are the only key. Learning is not an absolute that can be measured, but we can better understand it if we use better methods and end the appalling standardized tests. *Fabian Yu, 2004*