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The Scroll & Pen

Newsletter of Pi Theta Epsilon, The National Honor Society of Occupational Therapy

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Inside This Issue

Outstanding Scholar	page 2
Call for Nominations	page 3
Reader's Corner	page 4
PTE Timeline	page 6

President's Message

In the past year, PTE has promoted research, leadership, and scholarship through various avenues. At the 85th Annual AOTA Conference & Exposition in Long Beach, California, PTE presented the Mary J. Bridle First Research Award and sponsored a plenary session, "Taking It to the Streets: Occupational Therapy Practitioners in Disaster Response." At the 15th Annual PTE Business Meeting, we lost two wonderful executive board members but gained two new and exciting ones. In addition, in November, the national office supported the Sigma Chapter (University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio) as it sponsored "Taking It to the Streets" at the Mountain Central Conference. The session was a huge success.

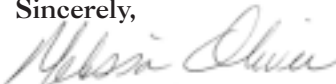
The PTE Executive Committee has diligently reviewed the mission and vision of PTE and set goals that address the needs of chapters, members, and alumni. To meet the financial needs of our graduates, PTE this year offered a Graduation Coupon, whereby after graduation the first year's membership is only \$10. We will continue offering the coupons to new graduates in the upcoming years.

Every new year we make resolutions. The PTE Executive Committee is excited to report that it has kept one of its resolutions, which is to provide better communication with members. We are doing this through an update of the PTE website. Please visit the website, www.pithetaepsilon.org, and watch our progress.

PTE continues to provide opportunities to educate the occupational therapy profession about the latest research, cultural, and social needs in local communities. At AOTA's 86th Annual Conference & Exposition, April 27-30, in Charlotte, North Carolina, PTE will sponsor a workshop, "Social Justice and Health Disparities." This workshop will consist of a panel of experts from around the world, with Frank Kronenberg as moderator. We hope to see you all there to support PTE as well as to learn how occupational therapy and you can help achieve social justice. Also, mark your calendars for April 26, 2006, the date of PTE's 16th Annual Business Meeting.

I have enjoyed serving as your president this past year and working with each chapter as well as the executive committee. I look forward to seeing and speaking with chapter representatives and alumni at the PTE meeting and the AOTA conference.

Sincerely,



Melissa Oliver, MS, OTR/L

Chapter News

Zeta Chapter

During the week of September 19-23, 2005, the Student Government Association of Mount Mary College (Milwaukee, home of Zeta Chapter) hosted a fundraiser for the refugees of Hurricane Katrina. The fundraiser was entitled Band-Aid: Banding Together to Heal Wounds. It was a campuswide event to collect supplies and money. Supplies collected included health and hygiene items, school supplies, and winter clothing. At the conclusion of the collection drive, health items were sent to refugees in Louisiana while the school and winter items remained in the local area and were given to families who had relocated to the Milwaukee area after the storm. Final totals of funds raised have not been made available to us, but we have been told that the fundraiser and the supply drive were a great success.

The Mount Mary College chapter of PTE took a leading role right from the start. First, a representative from our organization attended initial planning meetings for the weeklong event. Then our organization committed to staffing one of the collection sites for the entire day on

—continued on page 2

Tuesday, September 20, 2005. We were the *only* organization on campus to make such an extensive (full-day) commitment to the effort. Staffers representing PTE included PTE members, student occupational therapy association members, and occupational therapy department faculty. In addition to staffing the collection site, many of our staffers donated funds and supplies. Through our participation in this event, we did our part to assist in the relief effort and ensured the visibility of PTE at Mount Mary College.—*Kim Berndt*

Alpha Epsilon Chapter

The Alpha Epsilon Chapter, at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (Lubbock), sponsored a luncheon on the topic “Growing Women Leaders,” on November 3, 2005. The featured speaker was Dean and Professor Alexia Green, RN, PhD, FAAN, of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center. She spoke on how young women learn and grow to become leaders in their profession while balancing the demands of the home and the workplace. She also spoke about the importance of getting involved in the community and being a part of occupational therapy state and national associations. The students and the faculty enjoyed this hour-long luncheon on women leaders.

The Alpha Epsilon Chapter held an occupational therapy awareness event on October 22, 2005, at the South Plains Mall in Lubbock. The event focused on

—continued on page 3

Outstanding Scholar

Mary Corcoran: Curious, Logical, Inquisitive, Detail-Oriented

Kelly Fleming

Curious, logical, inquisitive, detail-oriented: All these words come to mind when you think of a person interested in research. Therefore it is not surprising that Mary Corcoran, editor-in-chief of the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, uses these words in describing herself.

Corcoran received her occupational therapy degree from Indiana University and her master’s degree in gerontology from the University of Pennsylvania. In 1992 she completed a Ph.D. in planning with a focus on decision making, also at the University of Pennsylvania.

Before embarking on a career in academia, Corcoran worked in several settings, including home health and nursing homes. She also did some private consulting. Currently she is a full-time research professor at George Washington University, in Washington, D.C. She also is a part-time faculty member in Shenandoah University’s occupational therapy program, in Winchester, Virginia.

Despite her love for teaching, Corcoran’s true passion is research. Her personal research endeavors focus on how caregivers of persons with Alzheimer’s disease use the environment to solve problems. In addition to participating in research studies, Corcoran daily reviews the studies that other people in the profession are conducting. The editor-in-chief of *AJOT* since July 2003, Corcoran says that the best part of the position is the opportunity it presents to “read what everyone in the profession is doing.” She believes that she has “gained a great deal personally by critiquing other professionals’ work.”

Asked about tips for students or practitioners interested in participating in research, Corcoran offered two suggestions: start small and team up. She also advises occupational therapy practitioners and students to consider the data that they collect on a daily basis for research and encourages them to consider publication. According to Corcoran, the writing process “keys into a person’s thinking.”

Finally, Corcoran reminds occupational therapists of the continuing need for better scientists in order to ensure the future of the profession: “We must establish evidence and use it, or, in a whisper, the profession will go away.”

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President—Melissa Oliver
Vice-President—Mary Way
Secretary—Kirsten Brandt
Treasurer—Kelly Fleming
National Coordinator—Jessica Halterman
AOTF Liaison—Nedra Gillette

PTE Seeks Nominations for Vice-President and Treasurer

PTE seeks candidates for the offices of vice-president and treasurer. Terms will begin in April 2006 and run until 2008.

Individuals may be nominated, or may nominate themselves, for one of the two positions. Interested members can obtain a copy of the nomination form by calling the PTE National Office at (703) 726-2547 or by contacting their local PTE chapter. Nominees must submit a record of leadership experience, a personal reference, and a brief statement explaining why they are qualified and desire to hold the office. Send three copies of the completed nominations to Jessica Halterman, PTE National Office, 4720 Montgomery Lane, 5th Floor, Bethesda, MD 20824-1220.

Nomination material must be received by the PTE national coordinator no later than February 15, 2006. Nominations received after the deadline will not be considered.

Nominees for vice-president or treasurer must meet the following qualifications:

- Be members in good standing of their respective chapters of PTE.
- Be active members of PTE for a minimum of one year before taking office at the PTE Annual Meeting.
- Possess demonstrated leadership skills.
- Possess good organizational skills.
- Be able to express ideas clearly and concisely through oral and written communications.
- Be able to establish and maintain good working relationships with peers, professionals, and the general public.
- Be able to attend the PTE Annual Meeting and Executive Committee meetings, held in conjunction with the AOTA Annual Conference. (Note: Expenses incurred to attend these events will be covered by PTE.)
- Be committed to the development of scholarship among occupational therapy students and occupational therapists.
- Be committed to the purpose and the objectives of PTE and to furthering the development of a strong organization on the national level.

The vice-president assists the president in carrying out the latter's duties. He or she presides over all meetings in the absence of the president. The vice-president serves as liaison between PTE and AOTA. The vice-president also composes articles for journals to publicize the events and the programs of PTE. If for any reason the president is unable to complete the term of office, the vice-president assumes the office of president for the remainder of the term.

The treasurer maintains all financial records and prepares the annual budget for PTE, working with the national coordinator. The treasurer also serves as the national liaison between PTE and AOTF.

—Chapter News, from page 2

promoting awareness of children's developmental milestones. Members of PTE handed out flyers with information on gross motor, fine motor, social, and cognitive skills for children from newborn to seven years old. The students also spoke with parents about the roles of occupational therapists in pediatrics and the importance of early intervention. The event had a good turnout, and the parents were excited to learn about their children's development.—*Heather Richard*

Beta Omicron Chapter

In December 2005, Donna Burns, Kimberley Dominique, Shannon Fogarty, Jennie Gilchrist, Hoa Luu, Megan Mahaffey, Katherine McClure, Jenna Pastor, Shontell Robinson, Natalie Smith, and Trisha Ventura were inducted into the Beta Omicron Chapter, at Louisiana State University Health Science Center (LSUHSC), in New Orleans. This was quite an accomplishment, considering the unprecedented semester we experienced.

After the first week of the fall semester, the threat of Hurricane Katrina forced LSUHSC students and faculty members to evacuate dormitories, apartments, and homes throughout the New Orleans metropolitan area. Familiar with the hurricane evacuation drill, students and faculty grabbed only a few essential items and some clothing, planning to return in a couple of days. Unfortunately, this time we were unable to return to New Orleans.

—continued on page 4

Scattered across the country, students and faculty pondered the fate of LSUHSC and the city of New Orleans. Weeks after the hurricane, many students and faculty still could not reach their homes. Those who did make it back encountered myriad experiences. The level of damage to property and possessions ranged from none to total loss. The LSUHSC complex sustained significant damage due to flood waters. Regardless of the level of damage, New Orleans was uninhabitable.

Amazingly, the administration reestablished LSUHSC in a temporary location in Baton Rouge, and classes resumed less than a month after Katrina. Finding housing for students and faculty was a major hurdle faced by the administration. The population of Baton Rouge had doubled in size. University personnel and students moved into the homes of family, friends, or strangers who were willing to open their doors. Some endured long daily commutes. Others opted for housing on the Finnjet, a European ferry boat secured by the LSUHSC administration to house faculty, staff, and students.

Completing the semester was challenging, for many of the faculty's materials and students' notes and books were destroyed in flood waters or irretrievable from New Orleans. Faculty relied on occupational therapy colleagues throughout the country for lecture materials and resources until New Orleans became accessible and they could retrieve their own materials. Students relied on one another, by sharing textbooks and scanning materials.

—continued on page 5

Reader's Corner

Spirituality: New to Occupational Therapy?

Mary Binderman

I am writing this article during the “holiday” season. If the reader lives in the United States, he or she is probably aware of the controversy over substitution of the more secular word *holiday* for the religious celebrations of Christmas, Chanukah (or Hanukkah), and Kwanza. Luboshitzky and Gaber (2001) saw a connection between holidays or celebrations and spirituality, and considered them opportunities for spiritual occupations and therapeutic interventions by occupational therapists.

There is the question of whether or not the terms *religious* and *spiritual* are interchangeable. This short article cannot even begin to address that question, and I do not possess the background to facilitate a discussion of it. I think readers will agree, though, that in the last decade or so, an increasing number of people who are not members of a denomination or a religious sect, do not adhere to a system of religious tenets or a creed, or say they do not believe in God, do profess to have a spiritual life. I believe these people recognize that they possess a core, a soul, or a spirit that is intangible, is essential to who they are, and must be intact if they are to be physically, mentally, and psychologically healthy. Certainly, as an occupational therapy practitioner or student, the reader supports the idea of a mind-body connection and a holistic approach to care.

Mirroring the broader society, members of the occupational therapy profession have been writing about and debating the validity of addressing the spiritual lives of clients in the occupational therapy literature for more than 15 years. The first article I found in OT SEARCH was written by L. Gutterman in 1990. She wrote in her abstract, “The health promotion framework and the use of holistic modalities address the spiritual aspect of the individual and how occupational therapy and spirituality might interconnect” (p. 234).

Surprisingly, not until the latest (10th) edition of *Willard & Spackman's Occupational Therapy* does a chapter on spirituality appear, by Suzanne Peloquin (2003). In the glossary of this edition, the definition of “spirituality” is “Fundamental orientation of a person's life, that which inspires and motivates the individual” (Crepeau, Cohn, & Schell, 2003, p. 1034.) Certainly, motivation is recognized as necessary for a successful therapeutic intervention (Kielhofner & Nelson, 1983).

In her chapter, “Spirituality: Meanings Related to Occupational Therapy,” Peloquin (2003) writes, “A discussion of spirituality is not just a recent event” (p. 122), and she cites writings of three of the profession's founders from the early 1900s: Barton (1920), Dunton (1919), and Kidner (1929).

It appears, then, that the answer to the question in the title of this article is no. Perhaps the profession was once again mirroring the context in which it functions when it began to regard discussion of a person's inner life as not appropriate for public conversation. Then in the late 1980s or early 1990s, the pendulum began to swing the other way again so that the condition of a person's inner or spiritual life came to have significance in his or her overall health. Of course, the hospice movement was in full swing by then.

An interesting means for determining when a concept has reached its tipping point for acceptance in the medical lexicon is its addition to the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) database developed and maintained by the National Library of Medicine. The subject heading *spirituality* was introduced in 2002, and the definition of the term in the database is “Sensitivity or attachment to religious values, or to things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests” (National Library of Medicine, 2006).

The occupational therapy literature shows that the profession arrived at the acceptance of the importance of a person’s spirit earlier than 2002. Certainly the 1990 Slagle Lecture by Susan Fine (1991), “Resilience and Human Adaptability: Who Rises Above Adversity?,” addresses the difference a person’s spirit or motivation can make. Fine writes,

We work in a world of traumas and triumphs. Most of the persons we serve come to us out of necessity, struggling with the sequelae of disease and illness or the aftermath of natural or manmade disasters. We bring our expertise and compassion; they bring their bodies, minds and comprised lives. (p. 493)

In 1997 two “Nationally Speaking” articles on the aspects of spirituality appeared in the *American Journal of Occupational Therapy* (Christiansen, 1997; Peloquin, 1997). “Spiritual” as a context is defined in “Occupational Therapy Practice Framework: Domain and Process” as “the fundamental orientation of a person’s life; that which inspires and motivates that individual” (AOTA, 2002, p. 633). Another recent official document of AOTA (2004) that includes the spiritual in the list of contexts in which clients exist is “Psychosocial Aspects of Occupational Therapy.”

Although spirituality is not a recent aspect of the relationship between the occupational therapy practitioner and the client or patient; although AOTA includes spirituality in its framework of practice; and although there is an abundance of literature on spirituality in occupational therapy publications, not all practitioners are confident about or comfortable with the role of spirituality in the therapeutic relationship. The reader will find literature that discusses the pros and the cons and the reality of the role of spirituality in occupational therapy practice (Belcham, 2004; Collins, Paul, & West-Frasier, 2001; Egan & Swedersky, 2003).

So spirituality is not new to occupational therapy or society, and in either context, skepticism about its significance, value, or very existence is alive and well. “Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose” (the more things change, the more they remain the same—Alphonse Karr, *Les Guêpes*, 1849).

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—continued on page 6

The educational challenges were compounded by many other issues faced by students and faculty. Loss of homes, loss of personal property, loss of automobiles, dealing with FEMA and insurance companies, separation from loved ones, and the uncertainty of the future contributed to extremely high stress levels among all in the occupational therapy program.

Although we struggled with the shock and upset in the first few weeks after Katrina, we came to realize that school provided some degree of normalcy and stability in what otherwise was a disrupted and chaotic environment. Our personal situations are still in flux, but we look forward to a more stable spring semester in Baton Rouge and to our eventual return to our campus in New Orleans later this year.—*Trisha Ventura*

Delta Gamma Chapter

The Delta Gamma Chapter of PTE, located at Gannon University (Erie, Pennsylvania), initiated charter members in February 2005. Since the birth of the chapter, Gannon occupational therapy students have been involved in community philanthropic endeavors and are planning to introduce scholarship and scholarly activity into their occupation as occupational therapy students and PTE members.

Members of the Delta Gamma Chapter were instrumental in supporting the STRIDES walk for a cure for breast cancer on October 1, 2005. Our chapter sponsored junior occupational therapy

—continued on page 6

class involvement (building a balloon arch), as well as individual involvement on the walking path.

Additionally, our chapter is planning the development of a tutoring program for other occupational therapy and health sciences students. The tutoring program is estimated to begin in the spring 2006 semester.

Through scholarship, philanthropy, and positive attitudes, our charter and newly initiated members are making a positive mark in the Gannon community.—*Bernie Hattjar*

Pi Theta Epsilon Timeline

February 1, 2006

National fee packets to be sent to chapters

Delegates' packets to be sent (60 days before annual meeting)

Nominations for President's Award due in national office

March 1, 2006

National fees due in National Office

Election ballots due in National Office

April 26, 2006

16th Annual PTE Business Meeting, Charlotte, North Carolina

April 27–30, 2006

86th Annual AOTA Conference & Exposition, Charlotte, North Carolina

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