

# A Slice of Beta Pi

## Staying Home by Carole Gallis

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There's no doubt about it, I need people. These days as we are confined to our homes except for essential trips, I am struggling to keep busy. I have already cleaned bookshelves, cabinets, drawers, and polished silver! I have watched more tv than I ever wanted to. I have driven my husband crazy (well, almost). I have chatted by phone with friends and family, have read several books, played games on my iPad, and finally put pictures from my trip to Scotland (2015) in an album. I even dragged out some music and played the piano (my dog was not amused). Each day I take a long walk with my dog which makes us both happy and I am looking forward to working in the yard. However, I miss being with other people.

I completely understand that all of the stay at home and social-distancing policies are necessary and we need to adhere to them. I am also worried about the corona virus pandemic. In our lifetime we have never had to deal with a global crisis like this. It is, to say the least, worrisome. I am hopeful that the warmer weather we usually enjoy in April and May will lessen the "germs" and we will gradually be able to resume our daily lives. Those in charge are also handling something they have never encountered and are working diligently to get us through this pandemic. I am optimistic.

As I reflected on the changes all of us have had to make in our daily lives, I thought I would reach out to several Beta Pi sisters, those

retired, working, and those with young children, to see how they are managing in these unusual times.

I spoke with **Terry McLaughlin** who lives in Shannondell. She said the residents are confined to their apartments and meals are being delivered to them. She misses the socialization, but has completed the usual cleaning out chores, is working on a 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle, and doing research for Art Goes to School. She is contemplating going to North Carolina to be with her daughter. I also spoke with **Clare Shank** who has taken five or six virtual tours of some Pennsylvania museums which she found very interesting and informative. She also allots time for exercise doing an online yoga class. She is reading and catching up on things she usually likes to put off. She says she is Not Cooking! **Valerie Hagopian** is similarly spending time decluttering and purging and also finding time for nature walks and reading. I think each of us is enjoying the time we get to be outside for a while.

Some of our friends are still working and they have spent time preparing for distance learning. **Kristin Zinicola** has been working with her fourth grade team on their distance learning plan. It is a new way of teaching for all of them so they are working hard. She is eager to get back to her students. She has also spent time planning and organizing her house and donating things to others. **Mary Molyneux-Leahy** works for

McGraw Hill Education and all of her business now is WebEx, webinar, or Face time. She is busy helping customers move toward distance learning. Outside of work, Mary makes a list each night so she can balance work with time for reflection and exercise. She is using technology to stay connected with friends and family and recently enjoyed a Face Time birthday party with her grandson. Socially, she and some other Beta Pi sisters enjoyed a Face Time happy hour. (What a great idea!)

**Tina Selvaggi** is also busy working on distance learning which begins shortly for her West Chester University students. It is quite an adjustment. One of her biggest challenges, however, is coordinating student teachers since the schools are closed. Her days are spent on Zoom with students and co-workers. For fun she is enjoying virtual happy hours and being outside when it is not too cold.

Next, I moved on to our moms with children. Wow- talk about being innovative and energetic! **Staci Schettone** has been busy with her little girl enjoying virtual story time from the Upper Marion Library, watching Zoo School- a video by Elmwood Zoo which spotlights one of their animals. Scholastic Learn is part of their daily routine which includes a topic for the day, two bookflick stories- one fiction, one non-fiction- a watch and learn video, and a hands-on activity. (Super!) (continued on next page)

**Staying Home (continued)**

They are also working in handwriting, alphabet, numbers, and social skills. Charlie has also via face time colored on an iPad with her cousin in Colorado! Together the family cooks, takes walks, and watches Disney movies. Grown-up time is game night! **Bekah Stefanawicz** has also been very busy with her children. They are doing schoolwork, finding reading resources online, using magnet blocks, and playing school. She and her children are building an obstacle course outside. What a great way to get some exercise! Soon, she and her family are going to try to make their own bread. Sounds like fun!

Lastly, I contacted **Joan Kellett** who spends winters at her home in The Villages in Florida. I was curious to see how she was coping. As always, she is not sitting still! Recently, Joan celebrated her 89th birthday with her husband and daughter at a dinner theatre on its last night before closing for social distancing. She was also in the midst of having some renovations completed, but the contractor was able to continue to work and Joan was able to still get to Home Depot! She admits it has not been as difficult there as it has been here, but she does miss her bridge playing and French conversation groups and the various luncheons as well as exercise class. However, she was able to play in

the Super Seniors Golf Tournament. She has also been reading and reminiscing with her husband about family, retirement, and travels. She keeps busy and is enjoying Florida, but is hoping she will get to her shore house as planned.

It is easy to see that Beta Piers are creative, innovative, and much more comfortable with technology than I am. As we move into April and the beauty of spring and maybe being able to be outside in our gardens, I am reminded of this quote by Marcel Proust that I read a while ago—"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." Happy spring!

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## Close Call at Winter Breakfast

*My dear Sisters of DKG,*

*I wanted to thank you for the "MAD" money to help with my kindergarten project.*

*It was very thoughtful and kind! The children and I truly appreciate it.*

*Fondly,*

*Jess Shepherd*

"I'm sorry, but she never does anything wrong." Those words, spoken by **Lois Balcer** to the director of Shannondell Dining Service, were the result of a harried phone call from **Terry McLaughlin**. For just 15 minutes before, this ever-efficient sister called to make sure that all ducks were in a row for the DKG Breakfast Meeting. Imagine her shock and surprise when she was informed there was no record of that date being reserved! Not wasting a minute, a lump in her throat and a sick feeling in her stomach, this Beta Pier shakily punched in Lois's number. Having been an administrator for many years, when Lois heard the news,

she immediately went into default mode. It took two full days, but thankfully, the situation was resolved.

So it was that these two ladies, quite circumspect about their entire ordeal, watched as sisters entered the dining room carrying their generous contributions to the Children's Library of Upper Merion. They smiled with relief as **Sandy Rodman** read a reflection, and **Rose Cavalieri** offered the invocation, aware that DKGers had a close call in not experiencing these inspiring messages. They looked knowingly at each other when everyone oohed and aahed over the

delicious buffet. They felt pride when **Pat Ryan**, chair of the Outreach Committee, shared how the allotted monies were being dispersed, and like everyone else present, they wanted to aid Puerto Rican schools. They delighted in the idea that **Jess Shepherd** was the recipient of this year's Monetary Assistance Dollars (MAD) money and that Beta Pi was planning to reach out to Greg Mantzner, gifted and talented STEM teacher, to fulfill President Eileen Little's state project. And finally, they were able to kick back, enjoy the third annual White Elephant Swap and congratulate each other on a job well done.

## Many Girls on the Run

Ray Erwin just happened to be in the parking lot of Good Shepherd Church when **Marilyn Rogers**, having returned the church key, was walking out to her car. Recognizing her from last year, he quickly approached her and then began apologizing profusely. Somehow, he got the day mixed up and thought that he was to set up for the Covered Dish the next day.

Marilyn simply laughed. The previous year the tables and chairs had been set up perfectly, the podium brought down from the stage, and extension cords set out for ready use. Consequently, when **Heather Lilienthal**, **Pat Ryan**, and Marilyn entered an empty room this year, they knew some glitch had occurred.

So it was that these three women literally became “girls on the run.” With just a half an hour until Beta Piers were to arrive, the trio hauled out tables and chairs covering them with tablecloths, located the podium on the stage and moved it down, and began setting up the

food and drink stations. And, in true DKG fashion, early arrivers saw what was happening and pitched in to help. By the time speakers Glynis Brown and Lauren Psmaris from the Girls on the Run corporate headquarters arrived, all was well; sisters were socializing with one another while enjoying appetizers.

It was then that President Marilyn was informed that one of the speakers was double booked; she had a birthday dinner for her mother that same night. This time, on the run to the podium, she quickly got the crowd seated and settled, introduced the speakers, and then **Barbara Bradigan** give the invocation. A delicious meal followed. No surprise as Beta Pi has a very large share of superb cooks.

Trying to run the program a bit earlier, the featured speakers were introduced prior to the dessert portion of the evening. Glynis and Lauren gave an informative presentation about Girls on the Run, a program that

utilizes a “fun, research-based curriculum that creatively integrates running, inspiring every girl to reach her limitless potential.” Yes, one of the presenters had to leave early, but sisters were engaged, asking pointed questions. Obviously, the speakers appreciated the high level of interest, and were delighted when many in the audience, hearing about the culminating 5K Run, became excited about the possibility of volunteering their help. Everyone in the room was pleased when **Pat Ryan**, chair of the Outreach Committee, announced that we were supporting this organization with a donation to cover the purchase of lanyards for the upcoming race.

All that running was worth it – a delicious meal, fabulous desserts, great speakers, and great friends. Thanks to **Jean Olexy** for making the arrangements for the room, to **Staci Schettone** for booking the speakers, and to **Heather Lilienthal** for chairing this event.

### Editor’s note –

Due to the Corona virus Outbreak, the “Girls on the Run” 5K event, which was scheduled for May 30, has been cancelled.

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## Meeting Heralded as a Success

The following is a blue-ribbon recipe for a successful event: Take one extremely organized sister (**Mary Molyneaux-Leahy**). Add a beautiful basket assembled by a skilled craftswoman (**Katie Kovalich**). Mix them with a

fascinating speaker who lives locally and is looking for volunteers for a worthy cause (Arlene Rengert – founder of the Laundromat Library League. Pour these into a large top-notch container (The Desmond Hotel).

Serve over twelve Beta Pi sisters. Note – good conversation, laughter and a productive general meeting pairs well with this wonderful dish.

## President's Letter

Dear Sisters,

Yes, one of the effects of Covid-19 is that a new format for Slice had to be used. The reason? Let's just say that your technically challenged president previously cut and pasted the newsletter together using scissors and scotch tape. Now, unable to use the self-

service copying machine at Staples, the newsletter had to be sent digitally. Thankfully my brother is currently staying with me, so he lent a hand.

But looking over this publication, I noticed a theme: That of "soldiering on." Whether it be dealing with not having the

breakfast scheduled as planned, quickly setting up a room that was supposed to be set up, or cancelling a highly anticipated author visit, Beta Pi ladies problem solve and keep on moving forward. I firmly believe that as women in education, it's part of our DNA.

### Cancelled DKG Events

April 21 – Spring Tea

May 1 – One Hope Wine

May 21 – End-of-the-Year Dinner

### Events Currently Scheduled

June 12-14 – PA State Convention

July 7 – 11 – DKG International Convention

## In Memoriam – Sibylla C. "Billie" Cressy

By Pat Juenger

On Friday, January 24, Billie's family and friends joined to Celebrate her Life. All were handed a program for this solemn ceremony, and glancing down the cover we could read why we were there, "Remembering with Love." This sentiment was followed by a quote from Scripture that reminded, "The memory of a good person is a blessing" (Proverbs 10:7). What a wonderful thought!

Some of Billie's biographical information was sent earlier to us by President Marilyn who told us of her happy 68 year marriage to Roy and about their four Children and spouses, three Grandchildren and two Great-grandchildren. Billie had a busy fruitful life, and like many women, managed to balance parenting with teaching. Her good friend Jean Olexy remembers her as a "woman for all seasons" with commitment and precise career goals. Rich Manser, a colleague in the Social Studies Department, remembers that she and Roy hosted fun faculty parties at their home in Downingtown, but in school Billie was "all business and pretty much kept to herself."

As a teacher she interested her students in sensitive issues for the time period such as exploring human relationships and understanding coping mechanisms to handle depression, substance abuse, and

anxiety. Her students' interest prompted Billie to establish an elective in psychology. She took ownership of the course and turned it, as Rich says, "into the most popular senior elective offered." Jean Olexy's daughter Elizabeth remembers Mrs. Cressy with fondness and esteem, specifically for her avant-garde approach to instruction on human rights abuse. During Billie's tenure at Upper Merion, Norristown State Hospital existed which was established as a long-term psychological facility that served those with severe and persistent mental illness. It was the first institution in the country that recognized female physicians and the first to have a pathology department. The Hospital was committed to service in support of recovery. Elizabeth remembers that the students referred to it as the "lunatic place," only "crazies" lived there. Nevertheless, looking at her course objectives, Billie thought it was an ideal resource for teaching her students; despite some administrative and parental objections, she was able to schedule a field trip there for her psychology students. "Lizabeth" says Mrs. Cressy's classes directed the vocations of many students (including hers) to education or public service.

Billie's staunch feminist approach and educational pioneering caught

the attention of fellow teachers, some who were members of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. She was invited to join Beta Pi, a local Chapter in S.E. PA and on October 18, 1989 was inducted. Billie felt that membership was a privilege and eventually embraced leadership responsibilities to become 1st Vice-president from 1994-1996 and President from 1996-2000. During her tenure she began a one-page newsletter to keep membership informed of Chapter initiatives and volunteer opportunities. To meetings she brought speakers who were devoted to charitable purposes as well as to the growth and welfare of women and education.

After retirement Billie was an active member of the Order of the Eastern Star, a Masonic appendant body that, like Billie, was devoted to charitable purposes, education and scholarship. "The memory of a good person is a blessing," so we remember Sybilla Cressy.

Although little more than a month has passed since that day, a global pandemic has emerged, insidiously inserting itself into what used to be our quiet routines. It is truly a sad and anxious time for all. Perhaps it also is a time to stay connected to each other and remember our blessings and Billie.

*Dear Sisters of DKG,*

*Thank you for the beautiful red roses you sent in remembrance of my mother, "Billie Cressy."*

*She always loved DKG and her "Sisters."*

*Thank you again for your thoughtfulness.*

*Fondly,*

*The Cressy Family*

## Corona Virus Checkreins Activities

Covid-19 does have a silver lining for some Beta Pi sisters. For each of these women have been told to "take it easy," and now, with the sheltering at home directive, some ladies, chomping at the bit to get going again after their procedures, can now take the time to fully let their bodies recover.

**Tonya Reinbold** was given a boot to wear because of overstretching her ligaments and tearing the plantar fascia in her right foot. By the end of every day, when she returned home from work, her foot just throbbed. Did that stop her? Oh no! In fact, while doing some yardwork, she suffered a fall. This time injuring her left foot. The doctor informed her that she couldn't wear two boots and recommended switching the boot from the right foot to the left. He

instructed her to "take it easy," as she really should be in two boots.

An experienced nurse, **Fern Detwiler** is following all the necessary post-surgery protocol. And her vision has come back 100%. But she did just move, and there are plenty of boxes to unpack. Although she was discharged from her ENT doctor, her nose is not completely healed. She had to have a talk with herself. "Fern, you just had brain surgery. You don't have to be Wonder Woman."

**Betty Rippel**, just two weeks after surgery on her wrist, is now sporting a plastic cast which can be taken off. Her broken kneecap is healing, and a smaller cast has been put on in order to keep her

knee straight. Looks like that knee will be in a cast at least six weeks more. This forced sequestration is keeping her from doing too much, giving her body time to heal.

Sympathy is extended to sisters **Barb Guiffrida** and **Tonya Reinbold**. Both women faced the loss of a loved one in February: Barb's mother, Jean Sulpizio, was considered the "heart" of the family. Tonya's stepfather, Frank Vida, served in the Navy and was respected by all. It is a blessing that these sisters had the opportunity to gather together with family and friends to celebrate the lives of these beloved parents.

*Covid-19 does have a silver lining for some Beta Pi sisters*

## Hope Helps

As Chair of the Professional Affairs Committee for DKG Pennsylvania State Organization, **Fern Detwiler** is under the gun to make sure all is ready for the Album of Distinction ceremony at the state convention. Add to that, organizing an entire new house while an old house still needs to be put on the market. Those two issues are enough to overwhelm anyone, but then there was also

the recovery from recent surgery to consider. It is no wonder that Beta Pi's treasurer requested a leave of absence. Fortuitously, when contacted by President Marilyn, **Hope MacDougall**, who has extensive experience in this area, agreed to come to the rescue. The two DKGers brokered a deal – Hope would take care of collecting all dues while Fern would electronically file them.

So Ladies, the dues are still the same - \$80.00. Please note that the deadline set by International has not changed – June 30. Consequently, you can check off that box on your to-do list by writing a check paid to the order of DKG Beta Pi and posting it to  ladies would be most appreciative.

## Did You Know that...

- **Betty Rippel** sends a BIG thank you for all the well wishes and cards?
- needed school supplies were sent to Puerto Rico via **Heather Lilienthal's** Amazon Prime account? The Outreach Committee
- approved \$250.00 towards this charitable act. Sisters' benevolence at the Breakfast Meeting added another \$216.50.
- **Staci Schettone's** list of resources and activities for PreK to Grade 12 were

placed on the state website and sent out to all PA Chapter Presidents by President Eileen Little?

- Beta Pi Dining Night at Habit Burger Grill brought in \$336.61 in sales and made \$67.32 for our chapter?

*...when I was in Florida, my sister and I were meeting my nephew for dinner. As we waited for him, someone came up and said, "Aren't you in my DKG chapter?" There stood **Elissa Sullivan**. You just never know where you'll meet up with a Beta Pi sister.*

Excerpt of email to Marilyn Rogers from Gail Schmerling

# German Chocolate Cake

(from the kitchen of Elissa Sullivan)

## A Slice of Beta Pi

### Editor:

Marilyn Rogers

### Staff:

Carole Gallis

### Contributors:

Pat Juenger

Heather Lilienthal

Jean Olexy

Betty Rippel

Elissa Sullivan

## Ingredients:

1 package yellow cake mix  
 1 package of instant vanilla pudding (4 oz.)  
 4 eggs  
 1 C water  
 ½ C oil  
 1 6 oz. bag of chocolate chips  
 1 bar German chocolate (Baker's green package)  
 Confectioner's sugar

Combine first 5 ingredients. Mix until well blended. Add chocolate chips. Grate chocolate bar and add ½ to batter. Bake in 13 x 9 inch well-greased pan at 350 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes. When still warm add the remaining grated chocolate. When cool sprinkle with confectioner's sugar.

## Hooked on One Bite



At the Covered Dish, one bite of **Elissa Sullivan's** cake made sisters seriously consider going back for a second piece. Not your typical heavy German chocolate

cake, the recipe for this delicious confectionary was given to her by Kathy O'Neill, a grade school friend who grew up to be a skilled hostess and a superb cook. Like

her fellow Beta Piers, one bite, and Elissa just had to have the recipe. For 50 years it has been a family favorite.

## Now four ways to find us!

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/betapikg/>

Web:

<http://dkgbetapipa.weebly.com/>

Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/dkgbetapi>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/dkgbetapi/>

## Spring Birthdays

Though birthday celebrations may be a bit different for DKGers who celebrate their birthdays this spring, it nevertheless will not diminish our best wishes for these gals.

Our first birthday celebrant is **Marie Kauffman**, whose birthday is on April 7th. **Clare**

**Shank's** follows on April 8th. After a 13 day hiatus, **Katie Kovalich's** special day arrives on the 20th of the same month, as well as **Dot Plantholt's** on the 22nd. May brings flowers and **Mary Beth Humbert's** birthday on the 4th. **Ann Roberts** follows on the 10th and **Elissa**

**Sullivan's** is right on her heels, celebrating hers on the 11th.

June 7th is **Patti Griffith's** and **Janelle Johnson's** big day. **Barb Giuffrida** has her birthday on the 23rd with **Peggy Taylor** rounding out our spring birthdays on the 27th