



KAPPA TALK

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A LETTER FROM SIMKHA LAEL

October 29, 2017

My dear Friends and Former Colleagues,

It is with much gratitude and appreciation that I greet you and thank you for your most thoughtful gift, kind prayers, and genuine good wishes.

Almost two years ago, when I retired, I looked forward to a life of sunshine, beaches, and relaxation. I had retired and my goal was not to complete a "bucket list," but to live a simple quiet life tinkering with my beads and wires, making jewelry, sewing and painting tropical fish and flowers on clothes, hand towels, and pillow cases to sell to street vendors as souvenirs they can sell to tourist. I had just gotten a section of my one bedroom, (which is in a beautiful one bedroom apartment, on a hill overlooking the harbor) organized and was planning a schedule for production when my plans changed by the passing of two category five hurricanes- Irma and Maria.

On September 5, 2017 hurricane Irma destroyed St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island in the US Virgin Islands Territory of the Caribbean Sea. She also destroyed Tortola and several other islands in

the Lesser Antilles of British Territory of the Caribbean Sea. The visual devastation of the Island was numbing to see. The only relief from the grief of it was the knowledge that you were alive. So few deaths occurred and there was only one horror story of a woman who had been blown out of her dwelling as her children watched helplessly. Please pray for them to recover from the trauma and shock of such an experience. Irma was a hurricane of many tornadoes. Its passage was during the daylight hours. I was to peek out of the small window at the top of my door and watch from time to time as she raged on and on for hours. She tore through the hills and valleys tearing off roofs bit by bit. She flung garbage hither, thither, and yond. The tornadoes grabbed and wrung tree branches, twisting and snarling their limbs into unbelievable masses of splintered wood, removing every leaf, bud, nib and much of the bark. What remained covered the landscape with the appearance of a "field of stalks and straw of which the corn has been eaten up (Holy Quran; Surah 105, verse 5). After 18 hours of constant fury, she left and skirting pass Puerto Rico, headed to Florida to wreak more havoc.

When I came outside the next day, from my porch I

was able to see the details of the island as never before. Every nook and cranny was naked and bare. Nothing was hidden from view. There was no cover, no secrete places; all exposed. The houses that had been damaged 29 or so years earlier during hurricane Marilyn (1995) had been repaired in accordance with the renewed V.I. Housing Construction Code. They had retained their roofs. Those houses with owners had found a quick cheap way to avoid the code requirements paid dearly now, they had no roofs.

The island was ordered under curfew by the Governor. Irma had not only mangled trees, but electrical wiring grid of the whole island laid waste. Telephone poles left broken like match sticks and the downed wires made mesh maze across the narrow winding two lane roads. The roads were inundated with water, rocks, and mud that washed down the tops of mountains finding and remaking old paths that nature had given them many decades ago, before "modernization" had altered their course.

For the first 48 hours we were required to stay in (under curfew) to avoid the danger of downed wires and compromised roads. At night a few fortunate islanders and

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A LETTER FROM SIMKHA

(Continued from p. 1)

businesses had generators. You could hear them humming into the wee hours of the mornings. You could see the hillsides dotted, looking like fire flies with those lighted houses. It rained for two more days after Irma, both a blessing and a curse. People with no roofs were drenched. Those of us with roofs were for the rain fresh water and found every available containers to catch water. Cisterns overflowed, but were mostly contaminated by debris from the hurricane, by the third day after the “event” cistern water was visibly infested with mosquito larvae and had to be strained, then boiled and bleach added before use, but still could not drink. For drinking, washing food, cooking, bodily washing- bottle water was used.

Over the next 10 days as islanders had just begun to adjust to life without electricity, the warning came about hurricane Maria. By now the curfew was being ignored so blatantly that the governor threatened to jail violators. FEMA distribution stations were opened and people were given 2 liters of drinking water and 3 MRE packets each (Meals Ready to Eat). The lines were long. Islanders were required to return daily for their ration of water and MRE. By the end of the week public protest was so strong FEMA was ordered to give each person a case of water (12 liters) and a case of MRE. Getting food and water from FEMA

was a 2-4 hour ordeal.

Governor Mapp had promised there would be tarps distributed for those who had lost their roofs. Tarp distribution kept being delayed. There was a shortage. Some arrived 2 days before Maria and were given to the families of “first responders” who had no roofs, so they could be available for “emergency service”.

It has been helpful to write about it. Keep us in your prayers. Stress reflects in ways we don’t even consider stress related. God bless and keep all of you.

Simkha

(To be continued: Part Two: Maria)

ANITA LYNN LEE



Anita Lynn Lee was the guest speaker at our October meeting. She enjoys observing nature, reading, writing, playing the piano, traveling, doing puzzles, and being with family and friends. She began writing for pleasure at the age of ten when she received her first diary. She loved to write poems about the things that she saw and the feelings that she had.

With a Master of Arts in Reading, she taught for 33 years before retiring in 2007 from the DC Public Schools. She began her career as a special education teacher and reading specialist in a private school. She then became a classroom teacher and a language arts/reading specialist in a public school, and later an International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme Coordinator at a school. During her years of teaching, she encouraged students to become authors by helping them create poems, stories, and plays that they could present to others. She often coordinated reading and writing fairs for students and conducted workshops for teachers at her school and within the city.

As an author her new life includes speaking at writing fairs, reading to students in classrooms, and attending literary programs. Mrs. Lee also uses a quiet time each day for writing.

Her works include *The Ghost and Me*, *Kenny’s Amazing Adventures*, *Princess Lea Lucia*, *A Thread Runs Through Herstory*, *Duke’s Story*, and *Favorite Family Recipes*.



NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

Kappa Talk is published quarterly. If you would like to submit an article for the newsletter, email your articles to m.j.l.dredlmusgrove@verizon.net. Send in items to let us know what you are doing, articles on educational issues, or any other item you feel would be of interest to the members. Newsletter articles must be submitted by **March 1, 2018**.

Education sharpens one’s curiosity about events. Members of the AU Chapter are curious about what fellow Kappans are doing. Let us know about your exciting events and careers.

Our newsletter is an important communication tool for the American University Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa. Share your knowledge.

AU CHAPTER RESEARCH PROJECT

Dr. Katherine James and Dr. Gwendolyn Means have been working diligently to ensure that the American University Chapter of Phi Delta Kappa International maintains its active involvement in research.

Makiri Pugh, one of Dr. James's students at Trinity University has communicated that they are still in the beginning stages of their research work and have begun the process of gathering data.

Makiri noted that there has been an

uptick in interest in regards to respondents, and he is excited about the diverse backgrounds and perspectives being gathered.

The purpose of the study that Makiri has undertaken is to investigate whether African American male teachers feel pressure to take on dual roles as mentors and disciplinarians at their school under the assumption that they intuitively know how to do so because they, too, are African American males. He will also look at whether African

American male teachers believe they are held to a different set of expectations than their colleagues are as a result of challenges related to educating African American male students.

The study will also suggest methods of intervention that can be implemented by teachers and schools to alleviate the pressure, balance expectations, and increase retention of African male teachers.

The American University Chapter will work to support this research effort.

A FEW NOTES



During the October meeting, President Thomas Jones presented awards to (at left) Gloria Smith, LaVerne Brown, and Adrienne Herriott; (at right) President Jones and Dr. Thomas Penn look on as Wanda Means-Harris places the award pin on her mother, Dr. Gwendolyn Means.



During our December 16, 2017 meeting we exchanged gifts by participating in the left/right gift exchange process. We had a great time and everyone left with a gift.

Pictured: Dr. Katherine James, Theresa McClurkin, Barbara McClurkin, and Cassandra Penn Lucas

FROM OUR ADVISOR

The February 17, 2018, meeting will be held at the American University School of International Service building, in the Founder's Room at 11:00 am.

As of Saturday, December 16, 2017, we have netted \$425.00 for the Stay At Home Tea. The Tea is very important to the organization because the money is used to finance the Student Symposium and the Teacher Appreciation Reception. We are still accepting donations, and ask that those who have not yet given will feel inclined to do so for two such important causes.

I would like to thank to thank the following members of the committee for their contribution to the Stay At Home Tea: Theresa McClurkin, Barbara McClurkin, and Joan A.T. Kelley.



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2017-2018 AU CHAPTER CALENDAR

August 19, 2017	Executive Committee—Planning Meeting
September 16, 2017	Membership Meeting—Challenging and Informative Topics of Discussion
October 18, 2017	Stay-at-Home Tea; 8:00 p.m.
October 21, 2017	Membership Meeting—Guest Speaker Anita Lee, educator, author and family historian
November 18, 2017	Membership Meeting—Celebrating AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK “Student Essay Contest”
December 16, 2017	Pre-Initiation and Holiday Meeting (Membership Meeting)
January 20, 2018	Executive Committee Meeting
February 17, 2018	Initiation Meeting Guest Speaker: Cheryl McCoy, Dean of Education, American University Location: American University Campus
March 17, 2018	20th Annual Scholarship/Education Dinner Dance Theme “St. Patrick’s Day”
April 21, 2018	Annual Chalk Walk for Education, Election (Membership) National Arboretum (10:00 a.m.—12:00 noon)
May 19, 2018	Awards/Installation of Officers/Educator of the Year Location: American University Campus

All meetings will be held at Greenbelt Marriott at 11:00 a.m., unless otherwise noted.



Mark your calendar now and plan to attend each meeting/activity.