



# GAMMA CHAPTER NEWS

THE DELTA KAPPA GAMMA SOCIETY INTERNATIONAL

COLUMBUS, OHIO

*The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International promotes professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education.*

Reba Kanning, President (614) 451-4992

Visit our website at [gammaohio.com](http://gammaohio.com)

February 14, 2009

Hello Gamma Sisters,

I had a wonderful surprise around dusk this evening as I looked out my window! A beautiful rainbow was shining in the sky with a full arch from earth to sky to earth! I took pictures of it but my little camera just couldn't capture the magnitude of its size or beauty. It was a wonderful sight, just right after a downpour Wed. evening Feb.11, 2009. Did you see it? The whole experience reminded me of promises, hope, future expectations and the many things we anticipate in our lives.

Welcome back to our Gamma Chapter meetings. It will be fun to see you again this coming Saturday on Valentine's Day! With the ideas of a rainbow image I am looking forward to sharing with you our new projects for this year. A special thank-you to Willa Mullins, Katherine Wheeler, Linda Wright, Cathy Jones, Kathy Thomas, Linda Ruehrmund, Janet Halter, and Reba Kanning for braving a cold and snowy evening to explore various projects for our Chapter. Gamma has many unique opportunities to touch the lives of others and just like a rainbow offer the anticipation of hope and new horizons to many. May your personal involvement in these projects be something that will also extend you to the life of someone else in a meaningful way.

I hope many of you are planning to attend our Alpha Delta State Convention April 24-26 at the Cincinnati Marriott Northeast. It is a great way to gain a broader perspective of the visions of Delta Kappa Gamma on the State and International levels. I attended this convention last year and really enjoyed making many new friends, seeing what other Chapters were doing and receiving a glimpse of the greatness of the outreach possibilities of our society. I highly encourage you to try our State convention, carpool in the process, share a room and sing in the chorus. Be sure to sign up by March 14, 2009. The registration form came in the January **Voice**, our Alpha Delta State newsletter. May you have a very rewarding experience and be proud of our Gamma Chapter.

As I look ahead at the next few months I look forward to each one of us intentionally finding ways to encourage members of our Chapter to connect with one another. Look for opportunities to invite new members too and continue to enjoy the opportunity of building lasting friendships with fellow teachers. We all need the depth of meaningful relationships and our Chapter is a great place to find those treasures.

Next month on Thursday, March 12, at 4:30 PM our Gamma Chapter will be meeting at Tremont Elementary School. This is where I teach and I am very excited for you to see our computer lab and hear Katherine Ostrowski, one of our new members, talk about the "Uses of Technology in Today's Classroom." Katherine is an expert in this area and it will amaze and inspire you to see and hear how our educational systems are being affected by technology. This meeting will be an excellent one to invite potential members. Be sure to plan ahead for this meeting and when Esther Panning sends out the information and asks for an RSVP be sure to respond. Your response helps the hostesses and Esther to prepare the right number of newsletters and any other items passed out. We want to ensure that everyone who attends our meetings receives what we have to offer.

In April we will be having an opportunity to initiate new members into our Chapter. Be thinking about the teachers you know and give them an opportunity to explore this Society and its many facets. Investing their lives will also enrich yours.

Happy Valentine's Day to you and to those you love,

*Reba Kanning, president*

**Next Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 12, 2009**  
**4:30 PM**

**Meeting place: Tremont Elementary**  
(Upper Arlington Schools)  
2900 Tremont Rd.

**Program:** "Uses of Technology in  
Today's Classroom"

**Presenter:** Katherine Ostrowski

**Hostesses:** Carolyn Bordelon, Reba Kanning

**Thought for the Day:** Willa Mullins

**Supper:** MCL at Kingsdale Shopping Center

### A DIFFICULT CHOICE

Some you have read in the *CEA Voice* that I have started a David and Joanne Katonak Arts Enrichment Fund for the Columbus Public Schools. I did this for two reasons. It seems that there is always money for sports programs in the schools. But when budget cuts are made, the arts programs are the first on the chopping block.

Secondly, Dave grew up with an extensive musical background. I had almost no exposure while in school. My life has been greatly enriched by art and music as an adult. In my own little way, I hope I can make a difference in a teacher's classroom and students' lives.

This grant will be given annually to an art teacher or a music teacher for some project in his or her classroom. The sad part is that there is only enough money for one small grant.

I have 50 applications to review and choose from. I wish I had 10 times as many dollars as I have available. How am going to choose?

**Joanne Katonak**

### Redbook Update

Alida Pletcher has a new e-mail address:  
[pletcher@nexgenaccess.com](mailto:pletcher@nexgenaccess.com)

The address for Ruth Flowers is incorrect in the Redbook. It should be **168 E. Northwood Ave., Columbus, 43201.**

### Birthdays before the Next Meeting

February 15	Janet Halter
19	Ruth Flowers
21	Mary Anne Wiedenheft
26	Dr. A. Jeannette Sexton
March 1	Ginger Cermelj
6	Jeanne Line

### Member (and Past Member) News

**Dr. Jane Porter** had cancer surgery recently, and will require a second surgery February 26. She says she's doing fine and will do her best to come out of this OK. Cards may be sent to her apartment.

**Carol Meade**, who broke her elbow last fall, will be having surgery February 18 to have the pin removed.

**Virginia Shoemaker** had planned to attend today's meeting. However, she learned last week that her brother in Texas had only a few days to live.

**Mary Cardinal** and her husband, John, plan to be in Florida as we meet. It is the first time they've gone on vacation in February, so she's very excited.

**Mary Clark-Smith** says her free time this past month has been dedicated to caring for her mom. She's doing better, but needs extra care.

Katherine Wheeler reports that **Angie Clark** had eye surgery February 10.

**Lucille V. Oliver**, a fifty-three-year member of Gamma died, January 12, 2009 at Scioto Community Living, at the age of 99. Lucille graduated from Asbury College in 1929 with a degree in Education and taught for the Columbus Public Schools for 30+ years,



last teaching at Westgate Elementary. Lucille also received her Doctors of Sociology May 12, 1970. She became a member of Gamma in 1956.

Mariruth Seubert shares the following from **Florence Grummer**:

Dear Gamma Members, I know your December meeting is over but want to thank those who were so kind and generous in sending cards back in July for my 90th birthday.

I really was surprised to receive so many cards and notes and have saved them all to enjoy reading them over again. Mariruth does a fine job in keeping me informed.

It means a lot to hear from old friends, but I know all of you have lots of things to do besides remembering past members.

I'm not in the best of health, but better than many around me. Therapists keep me well occupied every day and I manage to do things that need to be done. Best wishes to all of you in the coming year.

Fondly, Florence

A note from **Thelma Highfield's** daughter:

Thanks for remembering Mother with your cards. She was 99 on Dec. 1st and I think she has a good chance of making it to 100.

Send correspondence through Carolyn Hawkins, 7050 Oakwood Rd., Circleville, Oh. 43113.

**This is an excerpt from a letter Ellen Clark received commending her for the website she has created for Gamma. Thanks, Ellen, for the work you do to keep the website current.**

Dear Chapter Webmaster:

The International Communications Committee has reviewed your website and commends you for your dedication to the members of your chapter. Your website is a valuable resource because you keep it updated. We were so impressed! The postings of your newsletter, committee news, forms, applications and member information, are critical. Keeping your site updated with the latest information, photos, forms, etc. is necessary to getting your members in the habit of checking the website.

Thank you for being a partner with the International Communications Committee in "Creating a Buzz."

Thanks again for all that you are doing.

Beverly Helms, Ed.D, Chairman  
International Communications Committee 2008-2010

**Minutes of the General Meeting—December 13, 2008  
Mary Kelly's Restaurant - Holiday Celebrations**

Call to order: 10:10 AM by Reba Kanning, President

Moment of Inspiration: Dorothea Fuhrman presented an inspirational topic about gifts.

Announcement of holiday program:

Holiday Music Concert: There was a string duet performance of Christmas carols by Jill Valentine on the viola and Steve DeNiro on the violin who are juniors from the Upper Arlington High School Orchestra. Reba Kanning presented a \$75 check for the UAHS orchestra program from Gamma Chapter to John Deliman, the orchestra director.

Gamma music leaders: Linda Wright and Alida Pletcher used the tunes of Christmas carols and changed the words to fit DKG traditions and ideas. Alida with her beautiful voice led the Gamma Chapter members as we all joined in the singing fun, accompanied on the autoharp by Linda Wright.

Minutes: Joanne Katonak moved to accept the minutes as written from November and Kathy Thomas seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

Report of the Treasurer: Katherine Wheeler presented the treasurer's report which was filed for audit.

Correspondence: Nancy Zimmerman read a thank-you note from Katherine Wheeler for the honor the Gamma Chapter bestowed upon her in November. A thank-you was also received from Ida Lou McDaniel for the \$8.00 she received because she over-paid her dues. Mariruth Seubert mentioned that Florence Grummer had a stroke. Her address will be posted on our website for members who knew her to send her a card. Joanne Katonak mentioned that there will be an old-fashioned English Tea in memory of Linda Parks Dec. 14 at 2:00 PM at the Charlestown Lakes party house in Canal Winchester.

**Old Business:**

World Fellowship: Mariruth Seubert passed the basket around for the second time to collect for the World Fellowship Scholarship Fund. The Scrivener funds will match whatever we collect. The total collected today was \$112.00. The total from last month was \$164. The grand total is \$276.00. With the Scrivener funds, our total donation to this fund is \$552.00.

Judy Valentine reminded our Chapter members of the \$7.50 volunteer contribution for our Alpha Delta State 75<sup>th</sup> year celebration. Checks can be made out to Gamma and mailed to Katherine Wheeler. Be sure to write "75<sup>th</sup> year celebration of Alpha Delta State" on the memo line of the check.

Reba Kanning passed out the list of project ideas that Gamma Chapter Members had suggested. She encouraged us to pick projects that line up with our Delta Kappa Gamma vision statements. These projects have been listed on our Gamma website for all to review.

Scrivener Fund History Lesson: Katherine Wheeler and Kathy Thomas presented the report on how we acquired the Scrivener Funds. The original committee of Eileen Young, Katherine Wheeler, Michele Koenig, Kathy Thomas (president at the time), Linda Parks and Linda Ruehrmund recommended the use and care of these funds. Linda Wright will be taking Linda Park's place whenever this ad hoc committee is needed in the future. We are thankful to Dorothy Scrivener for her

generous gift which has provided our Gamma Chapter opportunities to contribute to many educational activities from the interest this money has generated over the years. We want to continue to be good stewards of this gift now and in future years. These funds are currently in 5 CD's at MECU and one at Bank of America; 2 in 24-month CD's, 3 in 12-month CD's and 1 in a 6-month CD.

For further reference of the original intent of the use of this money please refer to the Scrivener Estate Committee record of the meeting on Jan. 17, 2005 copied below:

#### **Scrivener Estate Funds Committee**

*Eileen Young, Katherine Wheeler, Michele Koenig, Kathy Thomas, Alida Pletcher, Linda Parks, and Linda Ruehrmund met prior to the Dec. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004 meeting at the Berwick Party House to discuss and recommend the use of the funds received from the Dorothy Scrivener Estate.*

*We recommended dividing the money into two parts—one part which could be used for current educational programs and supporting classroom needs, and the other part to be interest bearing for future use.*

*1. Discussion followed of the Franklin County Retired Teacher Association's establishment of the Peggy Grate Memorial Scholarship Fund. The fund lacked about \$6000 of having enough to be recognized by the Columbus Foundation. Since Dorothy had been a member of FCRTA and involved in its leadership, Katherine Wheeler moved we recommend giving \$6000 to the Peggy Grate Memorial Scholarship fund. Alida Pletcher seconded the motion. The motion passed. Discussion followed on the possibility of adding her name to the name of the scholarship.*

*2. Another use of the funds was moved by Eileen Young. It stated that we match funds donated by Gamma members for chapter-approved projects and donations, (e.g. World Fellowship) with these funds. Katherine Wheeler seconded this motion. Motion passed.*

*3. The third designated use of the funds, moved by Linda Parks, was to be able to budget some money for programs, speakers, or meeting expenses as determined by the budget committee. Alida Pletcher seconded the motion. Motion passed.*

*4. The fourth recommendation was made by Michele Koenig. It stated that the Scrivener committee be allowed to research setting up grants for use by current teachers or after-school programs. Seconded by Linda Ruehrmund and passed by the committee.*

*Kathy Thomas recommended taking the half, and dividing it into 2 parts—investing it in CD's maturing at different times. Linda Parks seconded the recommendation and the committee passed it.*

*All of these recommendations were presented to the chapter during the business meeting and voted on by the membership present.*

*Submitted by: Linda Ruehrmund*

#### **New Business:**

Bev McPherson made a motion that Gamma Chapter give \$1400 to Charity Newsies again this year. Mary Clark-Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed. Katherine Wheeler will hand-deliver this \$1400 donation next week to Charity Newsies.

Joanne Katonak gave an update and short history of the Aunt Mary's Storybook Project which we still support.

Reba Kanning invited the current Executive Board of Gamma Chapter to a meeting Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2009 at Mill Run Panera Bread Restaurant at 5:30 to listen to new projects details that members want to support. Members who want to share information about their project interests are encouraged to attend this meeting. The Executive Board will make a recommendation to the Chapter at the Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> meeting concerning the ones picked for this current year to support.

The music committee of Linda Wright and Alida Pletcher were thanked for the Christmas singing and the hostess committee of Sue Kneubel, Mary Clark-Smith, and Joan Parsons were also thanked for the festive decorations and favors that added to our holiday program enjoyment.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Willa Mullins and Reba Kanning, substituting for Karen Carpenter, Recording Secretary

## DELTA KAPPA GAMMA, GAMMA CHAPTER EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

JANUARY 13, 2009

Attendance: Reba and Neil Kanning, Willa Mullins, Katherine and Richard Wheeler, Cathy Jones, Kathy Thomas, Janet Halter, Linda Ruehrmund, Linda Wright

The Gamma Executive Board meeting was held on January 13, 2009, at the Panera Bread Restaurant in Dublin, at 5:30 PM. Members of the Scrivener Estate Committee, along with those wishing to share project ideas were asked to attend. After dinner, President Reba Kanning called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming. President Reba remarked that she had wanted members of the Schrivener Estate Committee in attendance as well, so that funds would be properly honored and used as we selected future projects for our chapter. Projects were then shared in more detail.

Janet Halter was first to share her project idea. For the past seven years, children at Janet's school, West Broad Elementary in Columbus, have partnered with the Columbus Zoo in the program, Partners in Conservation (P.I.C.). Students from West Broad have donated and raised funds which the Columbus Zoo takes to Rwanda. These funds help to further education, buy home and school supplies, and even buy food sources, such as goats or cows. Pen pal letters have been exchanged, and Janet remarked that two very different worlds have been brought together. Janet Halter then shared pictures from Rwanda and a notebook that she has compiled about the Partners in Conservation Project. The Gamma chapter would financially support West Broad in its partnering with the zoo and Rwanda. Discussion and questions followed, and we encouraged Janet to check on the exact way money would be delivered to Rwanda.

Next, Reba Kanning shared her long-term project idea. Reba is working with the Educational Foundation in Africa that is building a school and plans to build a library. She would like to apply for a grant to apply for funds to buy books for the library. She is looking for someone to help her write a grant to send to Delta Kappa Gamma International to ask for funds to stock the library with books written in French. Another long-term dream would be to start a Delta Kappa Gamma chapter in Africa. We suggested Reba ask if someone would like to help her with the grant writing at the February Gamma meeting.

Linda Wright was the next presenter. Linda had several organizations and project possibilities, but we eliminated many because we wanted to be more "hands on" as a chapter, and decided to help locally with our Columbus Public Schools through a suggestion by Joanne Katonak. Linda Wright is a coordinator for the Unified Arts Department of the Columbus City Schools. Linda said that the upper elementary and middle schools are in constant need of musical instruments. One of her jobs is to buy and fill requests by teachers for these instruments. She suggested we use Scrivener funds to help in purchasing some of these used instruments.

Of course, our support of Aunt Mary's Storybook would continue and be ongoing.

Katherine Wheeler, our treasurer, shared that we have \$6,051.95 available to use on these projects. Linda Ruehrmund commented that we should use the funds without any "formula" to determine the amount given. Those in attendance decided to match the funds that would be collected from the West Broad students to send to Rwanda. As for the Unified Arts musical instruments project, the Schrivener Estate Committee, Finance Committee, and president, would meet to determine the amount given. However, we decided we would not deplete the total available, leaving at least one-third for future chapter expenses.

Our group decided that projects would be kept for a two - year period, which, at that time, would then be re-evaluated. New projects could then be added, if desired.

Donations need to be made as soon as possible. Linda Wright and Janet Halter were asked to share their projects at the next Gamma meeting.

We also decided that our recommendation be announced prior to the February Gamma meeting. We will ask Esther Panning to include our project recommendations in an email to all members, including the telephone callers.

In summation, we decided to support internationally, the Partners in Conservation with the Columbus Zoo, West Broad Elementary, and Rwanda. Locally, we plan to offer our support to the Unified Arts Department of the Columbus Public Schools to help purchase musical instruments, and to continue locally to support Aunt Mary's Storybook.

Reba Kanning, our President, adjourned the meeting at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cathy Jones, Corresponding Secretary

## Professional Affairs Report

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: (as of the last STRS Board Meeting, Jan. 16th, 2009) Rep. Scott Oelslager will introduce STRS Ohio's health care funding legislation sometime in February or shortly thereafter. Several procedural matters must be dealt with in the Ohio House of Representatives before it can be introduced. STRS does not anticipate any major changes to the bill from the language contained in House Bill 315. You will remember that this is legislation designed to create an ongoing, dedicated revenue stream for our retiree health care program.

Gov. Ted Strickland unveiled an education reform package in his State of the State address on Jan. 28th. It is an 8 year phase-in plan which would call for a longer school year and longer school hours. Both the Ohio Senate and House must approve the plan. His proposal for school funding would lower the cap on property tax already in place which would prevent school districts from receiving additional dollars when property valuations increase. The state would make up the \$750 million lost to schools. Districts could ask voters for permission to collect more tax revenue. The governor is expecting Ohio to receive at least \$3.4 billion in federal stimulus money to help balance its budget. Some highlights include: an increase in the state's share of education funding from 55% to 59%, expansion of preschool programs, funding of universal all-day kindergarten, and elimination of the Ohio Graduation Test.

Top issues facing Governor Strickland and the Ohio General Assembly in 2009 are budget imbalances, college affordability, and health care.

At the federal level, H.R. 235 was introduced this month which would repeal two provisions in Social Security law -- the Government Pension Offset and the Windfall Elimination Provision -- referred to as GPO/WEP. The GPO law cuts Social Security benefits that some employees -- including widows and widowers -- would have received from their spouses while the WEP reduces benefits for public employees who also worked in private sector jobs where they paid into the Social Security system. Various legislators have introduced bills to repeal or modify the two laws with little success because lawmakers have been unable to find a solution to the estimated \$81 billion price tag of a full repeal. The chances of this bill going anyplace with the current economy are not good but we can hope. It should be noted that representatives from Ohio who sponsored the bill are Zack Space, Ms. Sutton, and Pat Tiberi. The bill has been referred to the House Ways and Means Committee and Pat Tiberi is a member of this committee. You can show support for bill H.R. 235 by sending an email to Congressman Tiberi at [oh12ima@mail.house.gov](mailto:oh12ima@mail.house.gov).

### STRS UPDATE

At its January 15th meeting, the State Teachers Retirement Board voted 6-3-1 to suspend the current Performance-Based Incentive (PBI) bonus plan for eligible Investment Department associates as of Feb. 1, 2009. Beginning July 1, 2009, a new bonus plan will go into effect that will restrict the level of bonuses in future years when STRS loses money in the stock market. Should STRS total assets climb back up to at least \$65 billion before July 1st (the fund currently stands at \$53.8 billion), then the new plan will have a February 1st retroactive date. The Board decision also removed eight positions (such as the STRS real estate attorney) from the eligibility list for bonuses. All of the details of the new PBI plan for fiscal year 2010 are yet to be finalized but a key provision calls for graduated incentive reductions as great as 60% should total fund assets fall by 20% in a given fiscal year.

During its January meeting, the STRS Board and staff continued with an Asset Allocation Study that began in Nov. of 2008. The current allocation for STRS' investments is 42% domestic equities, 25% international equities, 20% fixed income, 9.5% real estate, and 3.5% alternatives (private equity and venture capital investments). John Osborn from the board's investment consultant, Russell Investment Group, presented an option that would call for gradually allocating more assets to areas such as hedge funds, commodities, and infrastructure. The goal of this change would be to earn equity-like returns while lessening losses during equity bear markets. This study will continue at the Feb. Board meeting.

December ended with the first positive month of the fiscal year that began back in July. The total at the close of the calendar year is \$52.47 billion, up about \$1 billion for the month. This is the first good news to come from the STRS Investment Department in a long time but we must remember that the total assets have dropped 23.8% since that time.

The STRS Board election will be conducted through the month of April 2009. One active teacher member and two retired teacher members will be elected. To date, STRS reports that 12 candidates have requested petitions to run for the two retiree seats and only 1 candidate has requested petitions for the active seat.

STRS held a two day retreat on January 29th and 30th. The topics discussed at this retreat were Board governance principles and training, state & federal relationships, fiduciary and financial contingency planning, corporate governance and shareholder activism, STRS Ohio public relations, and Board self-assessment.

The next STRS Board meetings will be held on February 19th & 20th. Visitors are always welcome.

**Submitted by Mary Ellen Angeletti**

## **FEBRUARY LEGISLATIVE REPORT from State Delta Kappa Gamma**

*Portions of this report were omitted since the information was also included in Mary Ellen's report.*

Can you believe that it is February of this year already? Where does time go? It has been hard running around the net with all this snow. How about the Inauguration? Wasn't this something, truly a moment in history? Now down to business for the US and me.

### **STRS**

The State Teachers Retirement Board voted to approve a settlement of \$475 million from financial services company Merrill Lynch in connection with a class-action lawsuit.

### **STRS OHIO CONTINUES TO DOMINATE HIGHER EDUCATION MARKET**

Since July 1, 2008, 980 newly hired faculty at Ohio public colleges and universities have had the option to select a privately run alternative retirement plan (ARP) in place of participating in STRS Ohio. During this time, only 271 (28%) chose to opt out to an ARP; the remaining 709 (72%) chose membership in STRS Ohio.

### **Governor Strickland's Plan Highlights**

Provide increased opportunities for students to learn by engaging the community and encouraging life-long learning.

Establish universal all-day kindergarten. The Superintendent of Public Instruction, Deborah Delisle, has pledged to work with those school districts that do not have classrooms for all day Kindergarten, to find alternative ways to provide this opportunity, and if necessary, waive the requirement in some cases.

Phase-in 20 additional learning days over a 10-year period, bringing Ohio's learning year up to the international average of 200 days.

Expand the learning day with additional activities, such as after school opportunities, community service, tutoring, and health and wellness programs.

Replace the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) with "ACT Plus," a four-part assessment consisting of the ACT college entrance exam, end of course exams (locally developed), completion of a service learning project, and submission of a senior project. These recommendations will be phased-in. A composite score will be developed to assess student success for graduation. The ODE will develop rubrics for an evaluation framework. The ACT exam will be available to all students at no cost, encouraging additional students to consider higher education opportunities.

Revise the assessments for grades 3-8 to align with the information and skills taught in the core subjects and the updated 21st Century curriculum. The following students to teacher ratios are then applied to determine the number of teachers per school type: Grades K-3=15:1; Grades 4-5=25:1; Grades 6-12 = 25:1.

The new funding system accounts for local resources by lowering the state charge-off to 20 mills and allowing, with voter approval, districts to have local revenue growth by providing districts a tool - conversion levies to reach the 20 mill floor. School districts will have four years to adopt conversion levies.

Establish a teacher residency program, which will provide mentored clinical experiences for new teachers modeled from the comprehensive training doctors receive early in their career. Upon successful completion of the four-year residency program, candidates will be eligible for their professional teaching license. Teachers will be eligible for tenure after nine years, following the completion of the residency program, and after serving as a professional educator for an additional five years. Currently, teachers are eligible for tenure after at least three years of teaching.

**United States Senate Bill 1**, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Tax Act of 2009, includes a provision to provide a one-time \$300 stimulus payment to seniors. The four senior categories are defined as follows: SS, SSI, Veteran's and Railroad Retirement. Please contact Senators Voinovich and Brown to include Public Pensions in this bill. Please ask them to expand the definition of "senior" to include those receiving public pensions. Contact information:

Senator George Voinovich <http://voinovich.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Contact.ContactForm>

Senator Sherrod Brown <http://brown.senate.gov/cont>

The proposed Senate stimulus plan provides \$827 billion, only slightly more than the \$820 billion House plan. Both plans include tax cuts and government spending on public works/infrastructure and other programs to stimulate the economy. However, the House plan invests more in state/local services and initiatives, while the Senate plan focuses on tax cuts and incentives for Americans to purchase cars and homes, and addresses the alternative minimum tax issue.

The Senate version also cuts support for states to stabilize their budgets by \$40 billion, cuts construction aid for schools and colleges by approximately \$19.5 billion, and aid for Head Start by \$1 billion. To read more about the economic stimulus plan please visit <http://www.cbpp.org/>.

**HR 2 - SCHIP** Becomes Law: President Barack Obama signed into law on February 4, 2009 the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009. The law continues health care coverage for approximately seven million children from families whose income levels are too high to qualify for Medicaid and too low to afford private health insurance. The reauthorized law expands coverage for another 4.1 million uninsured children, and extends coverage to 2.4 million children who could be covered by private insurance. For more information about the law please visit Families USA at <http://www.familiesusa.org>.

Jan Riddlebaugh, Liaison to the US Forum