

Southern District Conference Thoughts
March 8-10, 2019

Opening Thought (Board)

And so we meet again. Amazingly, we have now reached the last district conference of the first year of our biennium together. Time flies! And speaking of flying, some of us actually flew to get to this beautiful venue, so the thought I chose has to do with airplanes. It was written by Mabel Meadows Staats, a Florida Mu sister, and is included in my ever-faithful collection of Alpha Delta Kappa Thoughts To Live By compiled by Florence Hendricksen. It is entitled "Trails".

Across the pale blue ocean of the sky,
The thin and cloudy trails of smoke are spread
As silver planes curve swiftly overhead
Intent on some new mission, far and high;
And those who skim the space in hurtling flight
Above the flaming sunrise cannot know
That to the eyes of earthbound ones below
Their arching paths are touched with golden light.

Within our little worlds we move through life
Toward distant goals that only we discern,
Forgetful of our trails that twist and turn
Through clouds of love and hate, through peace and strife.
Nor can we know the imprint we have made
On those who see the patterns we have laid.

As members of the Alpha Delta Kappa board, we cannot always know what imprint we have made on the sisters attending a conference. In their eyes, we may appear to fly paths that are touched with golden light, light that we cannot always perceive.

We know the reality, that each of us has had her share of difficulties, twist, and turns. But we have chosen to ride this wave of inspiration, bumpy though it may sometimes be.

Let's shine bright at this Southern District Conference, and whether we are aware of that light's effects or not, help inspire those attending to soar to new heights in their chapters.

Opening Thought (Southern District Conference)

Good morning, sisters of the Southern District of Alpha Delta Kappa. I am so excited to be here in San Diego.

For several years, I was a 4th grade teacher, so I know well the importance of your lovely city to California's history. In fact, I made sure that several years ago, the only other time I have visited San Diego, I spent hours touring your mission. I was so excited, because although I had already visited a lot of the other missions, I saw yours as the holy grail since it was the first one established in California by Father Junipero Serra himself.

The missions were an important part of my 4th grade curriculum. I had my students write reports, create projects, and study their impact on our state. I even had my class perform a mini-musical about the California Missions, and one of my favorite songs from that production was about the importance of the mission bells.

We teachers know bells. As with the missions, our daily lives are, or were, regulated by them in one form or another.

A lot of interesting things have been written about bells. I read that many countries have bells of special significance, including our own Liberty Bell, and that it takes a resonant substance to make a bell ring true. And, as with so many things, there is an art to moulding a bell that will produce rich and beautiful tones.

Charles F. Banning of Norwich, Connecticut even expressed a moral lesson to be learned from bells. He wrote, "All bells have one thing in common: someone must ring them." In other words, as beautiful as they may look, someone must do the "work" to make a bell operate properly.

In this way, an Alpha Delta Kappa chapter is similar to a bell. As we all know, someone must plan and lead the meetings, file the forms, collect and submit the dues, and perhaps most importantly, encourage new members to join. Someone must do the "work" to make the chapter operate properly.

You ladies are the bellringers of the Southern District. Your hard work is what allows your chapter and our organization to resonate.

Thank you for all you do, and enjoy this day as you are inspired and rejuvenated.

Closing Thought (Conference)

Thank you again for attending this conference. Our time has flown, and we have covered a lot. I hope you have been inspired to go back to your chapters with a new dedication to Alpha Delta Kappa. Take the enthusiasm you feel now and share it with your group. Be bold. Suggest new programs or projects. Ask a friend or two to visit a meeting and potentially become a member. Follow through with the resolution to makes

the changes that need to be made. And don't put it off. Do it today. As Charles G. Reigner wrote in his poem, "Today's The Time",

We cannot hope to see the distant way,
The future lies beyond our mortal sight.
The past is gone with all its disarray,
Today's the time to think and plan aright.

What's done today will make the next task clear.
We dare not sit and let the days go by
Or yield despairingly to fear,
But rather do what meets the eye.

To work with faith and courage in the heart,
To act today on what we've learned and know
To take the step which means we've made a start
Will give us all a satisfying glow.

Above the mists of doubt there's still a ray
Of light to break the clouds of fear and dread.
And although we cannot see the distant way,
We *can* take the step that's just ahead.

I challenge each of you to take that step that's just ahead, and do what must be done to help your chapter grow and thrive. It may not be easy, but the rewards it will reap will be worth the effort.

Reconvening Thought (Board)

In her book, Taking Care of Me: The Habits of Happiness, author Mary Kay Mueller states that how you *look* at your life can drastically affect how much you *enjoy* your life. As most of us know, if you have a positive attitude, you are considered an optimist. If you have a negative attitude, you are considered a pessimist.

Mueller observes that optimists expect the best out of life. They know bad things happen, but they feel that those bad things are temporary, small, and ultimately insignificant. Optimists believe that they have control over their environments.

Pessimists, she continues, believe that *good* things are temporary, small, and ultimately insignificant, and that people have *no* control over their environments.

As the old saying goes, the optimist sees the doughnut, the pessimist sees the hole. If people were cars, a pessimist would have no starter; an optimist would have no brakes. A pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.

Columnist Harvey MacKay states: "I'll take optimism over pessimism every day of the week. I've discovered that it's just as easy to look for the good things in life as the bad. If you look at the bright side of life, you'll never develop eye strain."

In his book, Learned Optimism, Martin Seligman reports that optimists are healthier; less likely to give up; more successful in school, on the job, and on the playing field; have more successful relationships; and are less often depressed and for shorter periods of time.

In other words, positive thinking has no downside. From all I've read, it can only help, plus it will make you much more pleasant to be around.

I feel optimistic about our board and all that we can accomplish. We are bright and hard-working optimists, and we enjoy being together. We don't care if the glass is half-full or half-empty because we know we can always refill it with the beverage of our choice.

More wine, anyone?

Closing Thought (Board)

It has been said that a friend is someone who comes in when the world has gone out; that a friend is one of life's greatest jewels. By associating with close friends, some of life's richest experiences develop, for friendship is a priceless thing with lasting values throughout one's existence.

Friendship has been called the delight in each other's being without ulterior purposes. It is devotion: compassionate and understanding, sincere and safe, reliable and constant.

In 1965, Norah Walls wrote in the Kappan, "Through Alpha Delta Kappa, we find friendship, love, and understanding: friends upon whom we can depend and trust."

Alpha Delta Kappa was founded on friendship, and I know that the friendship I have gained from my ADK sisters is one of the main reasons I became and remained a member.

I am so happy that my circle of ADK friends has grown to include you wonderful ladies. I look forward to our weekends together and enjoy the time we spend both working and just hanging out. Thank you for all your love and support, and lookout Minneapolis, here we come!