

## **Alpha Beta Members Share in Discussion of *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker***

Carol Hughes

On January 7 the Alpha Beta Chapter of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International met at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Pontiac. Jari Lynn Oncken (Minonk) led the discussion of the book *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* by Jennifer Chiaverini. Mary Todd Lincoln's dressmaker was Elizabeth Keckley, who first started designing and sewing dresses for Mrs. Lincoln shortly after her husband became the 16<sup>th</sup> president. Born into slavery, Elizabeth managed to purchase the freedom of herself and her son before the Civil War began.

She maintained a friendship for many years after Lincoln's assassination with Mary who had faced many tragedies in her own life in Washington and afterward. Chiaverini's book further sheds light on Lincoln as a political leader, husband, father, and friend to Elizabeth. Keckley also wrote a book, *Behind the Scenes*, about her life as a slave, as Mrs. Lincoln's dressmaker, and as a woman who helped slaves after they were freed.

President Barb Baumann (Minonk) passed out directions on logging in to the DKG website so that members will be able to download a variety of forms and take part in networking.

Treasurer Janet Kilgus reported that the contributions for local, state and international projects have all been sent. Carol Hughes (Roanoke) noted that the chapter is very generous in its contributions in comparison with many of the chapters in Illinois.

Membership Chair Louann Harms (Fairbury) asked members to distribute the applications for \$100 grants to early career educators in schools in their areas. She passed out cards to fill in with the names of prospective members. Harms also suggested that members go to the Lambda State website and note the variety of literacy projects that other chapters are doing in Illinois.

Corresponding Secretary Kate Walter (Cullom) read a note from Pete Hughes thanking the chapter for its contribution to the Novgorod Russian Mission.

Lou Ann Jacobs (Normal), explained a section of SB 2912 which reduces substitute teaching license fees from \$100 to \$50 and allows educators licensed in other states to obtain an Illinois license through a more streamlined process.

The next meeting will be a breakfast at the Pontiac Family Kitchen at 9:00 am on Saturday, February 11. Jessica Lawson, member and teacher at Davenport School in Eureka, will present the program "Going One-to-One" in which she will explain how a third grade classroom uses chrome books for learning. PD's will be available. Area teachers who are interested in attending should contact Carol Hughes at 309-923-7370 by Saturday, February 4.

The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is an honor society that promotes the professional and personal growth of women educators and excellence in education. The Society has chapters in 17 countries and serves almost 75,000 members by providing scholarships, leadership training, mentoring, and global networking opportunities for women. For more information, visit the website at [www.dkq.org](http://www.dkq.org).



**Pictured in photo:** Janet Kilgus comments about author Jennifer Chiaverini, whom she visited with in Madison, Wisconsin where Chiaverini lives, and Lou Ann Jacobs discusses *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* with Jari Lynn Oncken who presented the program about Elizabeth Keckley.

