

The Lamplighter

Virginia State Council

Epsilon Sigma Alpha International

Winter Issue 2026

President Katrina Saunders



Happy New Year to All of You!

I am writing this article on a rainy Saturday morning in January which I designated as “ESA Day.” I’m using the cold, rainy weather as a reasonI have to stay at my desk and get caught up on my ESA tasks that went by the wayside during the holiday season. Looking ahead, we have a busy ESA season coming up.

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Here are some items you might want to put on your “ESA To-Do List

Our Spring meeting will be held on Saturday, March 14th at the Riverton United Methodist Church in Front Royal. Registration will be open at 8:30 am and the meeting will start at 9:30 am. We have a lot to do at this meeting including stuffing the goodie bags which will be distributed at the IC Convention.

The Delta Rho and Delta Sigma chapters are hosting a St. Patrick’s Day Dinner Party Fundraiser on

Friday the 13th of March. If you are planning to arrive in Front Royal on Friday - please join us for dinner at my house. I will send out more details in the next Helping Hands Gazette. We have reserved a block of rooms at the Doubletree by Hylton (Front Royal). The room rate is \$150.00.

After the Saturday meeting is concluded, we have tentative reservations at Double Tree Restaurant for lunch. Hopefully we can continue the fellowship of the weekend for a bit longer.

Our VSC Convention is May 15-17th in Front Royal. The convention registration form is included in this edition of the Lamplighter. It would be wonderful if we could have 40 members in attendance. Please come and encourage your chapter members to come as well.

ESA IC Convention is July 15th - 19th in Norfolk, VA. Beverley and Marie have led the charge in planning an exciting convention. This is definitely a time when “Many Hands Make Light Work” will apply! The registration forms are available online along with the hotel link. Please plan on coming.

The last “to-do” I’m asking of each of you is to consider how you can support the work of the Virginia State Council for the 26-27 year. Perhaps the best way to do this is to attend VSC meetings whenever it is possible. We gather our strength from each other. Another way to support the VSC is to accept the call for a leadership position. I know Stephanie has been busy emailing and calling members so that she can fill the Executive and Appointed Board positions. We are all busy and perhaps don’t enjoy getting out of our comfort zones; but in order for the VSC to continue we need to have our members willing to accept these positions. I’m asking you to say yes to Stephanie so that our VSC can continue to be a strong state council as part of ESA International.

I’m wishing each of you an incredible 2026! I’m sure it will be filled with opportunities for connecting with friends and family.

Vice President -Stephanie Hess

Happy New Year! Wishing you good health, happiness, and adventure this year.

Recent reports show that Virginia has thirteen chapters and a total of 65 members. Some memberships have expired and I will be reaching out in hopes of getting those renewed. With warmer weather, I hope chapters invite newcomers to their meetings.

I am currently seeking individuals interested in joining the Appointed Board and a Treasurer for the Executive Board for the year 2026-2027 via email. If you know of a position that you would like, please let me know.

Looking forward to seeing you in March.

Help Wanted ✨

26-27 Treasurer for the Virginia State Council of ESA (26-27 Year)

The **Executive Board of the Virginia State Council of ESA** is seeking a dedicated **Treasurer** for the upcoming **2026-2027 year**.

Why You Should Volunteer:

- **Strengthen Our Future:** Help keep our council strong and vibrant through the Executive Board leadership positions.
- **Service Contribution:** Help strengthen our council by overseeing financial matters that allow us to focus on the causes that matter most.
- **Make an Impact:** Your work will directly support the mission and initiatives of ESA.

As Treasurer, you'll play a key role in shaping our financial strategies, maintaining transparency, and ensuring the health of our council's finances. This is an incredible opportunity to grow your leadership skills while contributing to a community that makes a real difference!

Interested? Here's What to Do:

Email **Stephanie Hess**, our incoming President for 26-27, to express your interest and ask any questions you may have.

Email Stephanie Hess: Stephanie.s.hess@gmail.com

Marie LaDuke - 2026 VSC Disaster Chairman

Isn't it comforting to know that if you as a member in good standing of ESA could have access to needed monies from the ESA Disaster Fund? Isn't it nice to know that if another ESA member in good standing needs monetary assistance, there is a source available to them?

As the VSC Disaster Fund Chair, I am requesting that individual ESA members and State chapters donate to this special cause. One never knows when something unforeseen can happen and our lives are suddenly changed. I will happily accept everyone's donations made out to the IC Disaster Fund by mail or at the Spring Meeting. I will then forward them onto Lynda Edwards our IC Disaster Fund Chair on Virginia's behalf.

Thank you for helping our members.

Beverley Wright & Marie LaDuke

ESA IC 2026 Convention Co-chairs

We will be assembling the Survival Kits for the goody bags that will be distributed to attendees as they check in at Registration in Norfolk.

Below is the list of items requested and who has offered to donate them as a reminder to bring to the Spring Meeting in Front Royal.

Starburst – Stephanie

Buttons – Beverley & Marie

Pennies – Stephanie Hess

Balloons – Mindy Boyd

Tea Bags – Katrina

Pens – Pam Cook Smith

Peppermint Lifesavers – Priscilla Browning

Chocolate Kisses – Kathryn Gerow

Rubber Bands – Sheen Childress

Paper Clips- Sheen Childress

Highlighters- Priscilla Browning

Paper Fans – Mindy Boyd & Marie LaDuke

Hand Sanitizer – Brenda Orebaugh

Little Debbie's – Beverley Wright

Happy Face Stickers – Beverley Wright

Tootsie Rolls – Bev Scott

Thanks to those of you listed above for offering to donate these items!

Still needed: Quantity 300

Smarties - small rolls individually wrapped. Walmart has 3 lb. bags of 120 pieces for \$23.99. Need 2 bags. Need 1-60 piece bag for \$4.49.

Erasers – Walmart has Mr. Pen Erasers of 64 pieces for \$5.99.

White paper fans – they are available on Amazon. Item is sepweddd for 50 for \$35.99. Promised already 200 by Mindy Boyd and Marie LaDuke. Need 100 more.

Reese's Pieces – unless you can find individual small bags, we will be dividing up loose pieces and placing into a small plastic bag. Need enough for 300.

Gum – Walmart has a tub of 300 pieces of bubble gum for \$13.54. Need 1.

Balloons – Walmart has 100 for \$4.90. Need 3 bags.

Peppermint Lifesavers –Priscilla Browning found them at Walmart. Promised 120. Need 2 more bags of 120.

Please let me know ASAP or by February 10th which item you can provide so arrangements can be made to make sure we have what we need before we go to Front Royal. My email address is marieladuke@comcast.net.

Please plan to bring your items or send them with someone to the meeting and stay to help assemble the kits. We appreciate your help. Thank you!

Doris Hood – Educational Chairman

Greetings and New Year Blessings to my VSC friends.

My Christmas was wonderful. My Son, Michael, from Missouri, spent Christmas with us for the first time in over 20 years. I received everything on my wish list and several items I didn't know I wanted until I opened them.

Sadly, as of today, I haven't received any Educational Reports. But, it's not too late. Reporting period for all awards and recognitions is April 1 – March 31. Final reports are due April 15. Reports can be sent when events occur or all at one time by April 15th.

My email is Hooddoris@Gmail.com. Forms are posted on the VSC Website. You can also give me your reports at the VSC Spring Meeting.

Ginny Hatchell – HOPE for Heroes Chairman

Virginia is home to over 700,000 veterans

Yes - 700,000 veterans call Virginia home

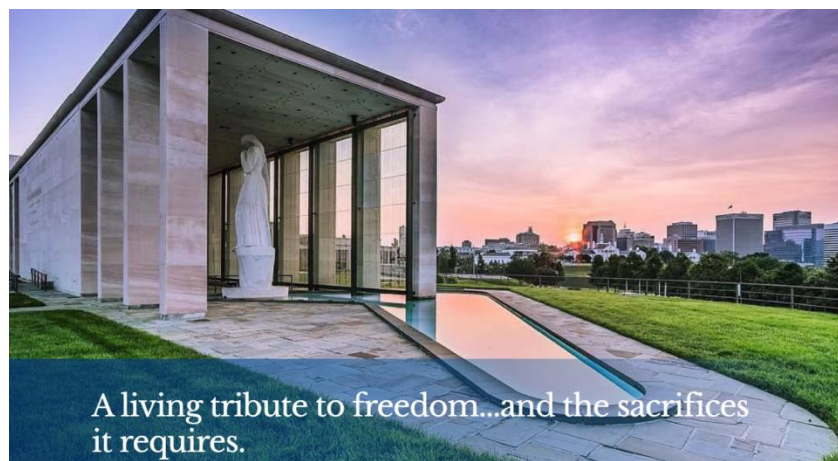
That number tells us how much of a **need** exists locally. Virginia is home to 120,000 active duty personnel, yet we have over 700,000 veterans in our state.

In 2025, more than 110,000 of the veterans in Virginia are women.

In 2022 (sorry, most current number I could find), 184 veterans committed suicide in Virginia. 173 were male. 11 were female.

If you know an active duty or retired military person who could use our help, please let me know. Their sacrifices for our country has earned them our lasting gratitude.

Virginia War Memorial, 621 S Belvidere Street, Richmond, Virginia 23220



Beta Kappa submitted by Lou Ann Wyer

Beta Kappa geared up for the holidays starting in November with our annual Wawa Turkey Bowl social at our monthly meeting. We were fortunate to have Beth Sherron join us too! Anne-Renee gave a glass ornament blowing demonstration and several of us got to blow an ornament. Several of us also attended an ornament blowing class on the weekend where we blew beautiful holiday presents for friends and family. The proceeds were donated to our Christmas families' projects.



Lou Ann volunteered at the Easterseals Culinary Kitchen in Virginia Beach helping the clients prepare a Thanksgiving dinner for the Seaton Youth Shelters.

Beta Kappa decorated the Christmas tree in the Activities Room at Lake Taylor Transitional Care Hospital. We have done this for more than 50 years!



Beta Kappa participates in numerous Fundraisers during the holidays. Ginny coordinated the sales of Pasta with the proceeds going to Easterseals.

Deana led the activities for our Christmas families' projects. Beta Kappa adopted a special needs adult who has no family in the US. We bought toys for foster children, and we participated in the Angel Tree giving again this year. Deana invited the family who we have helped the past several years to participate in these activities. They were so excited to pay it forward this year!



Ginny organized collecting Coats for Families again this year. We collected 45 coats!

Beta Kappa made donations to Lucky Fin again this year on Giving Tuesday to honor Zaria, born with a limb difference. She recently was fitted with a new prothesis. \$410 was raised.



Beta Kappa's largest fundraiser this season was for a local food pantry. Lou Ann organizes this with her grandchildren. Their friends are also getting involved now! It is great to see young people helping those in need. Wegmans has been very supportive of this effort every year as well. They offer dedicated check-out and baggers for us!



Beta Kappa held their Christmas celebration at Louisa's house again this year. We also participated in the Wreaths Across America that day and placed wreaths at the All Saints Catholic Cemetery.



Beta Kappa held their first meeting in 2026. Great times as we make plans for a very busy and exciting year! We also celebrated Lou Ann's birthday.



Beta Sigma submitted by Lynne Rightmyer

Holiday moments are over and done
Let's see how Beta Sigma had their fun.
October brought us ghoulish delights--
A trip to the haunted vineyard seemed right,
Flights and snacks were properly served,
With spooky stories to make us unnerved.
Manning the Food Bank always gives us pause
To know the importance of this local cause.
One forty five were the cars that were filled
With goodies for all—stuffed to the gills.
The following week, the ladies and gents
Delivered the items to “Little Hands”.
Soap sack with soap, blankets and cloths,
Hand crocheted hats and also some scarves.
All were donated to keep babies warm
While cold winter winds tend to swarm.
November arrived and we were ready to share
With less fortunate souls about whom we care.
Helping the Food Bank is our way to say,
“We are your friends each and every day.
Thanksgiving approached, bringing us all
To Nicole and Lynne's, and we had a ball!
Sharing our food, and giving such grace
For all that we have in this time and place.
Along came December with bustle and hurry,
Not to mention the addition of flurries!

The members in Richmond all gathered together
Hoping to avoid all the bad weather.
With dinner at Angelo's and fellowship to spare,
We filled the Ronald McDonald House with items of care.
On December 13, we fed our neighbor's once more
With 150 carloads of gifts from the stores.
We met up for Christmas with warmth and affection
At Burton's in Carytown for love and reflection.
Our ESA lives are full and complete—
To give much to others, and of course, to EAT!
To all of our members in our Virginia home,
We wish you the happiest New Year to come.
May all remain healthy, happy, and loyal,
We will see you all soon up in Front Royal!

Beta Tau submitted by Sandy Reed

Even though Beta Tau no longer has monthly meetings, Doris and I still keep in touch.

Doris invited me to her home for Thanksgiving dinner. Her oldest great granddaughter did a terrific job of cooking and served a delicious dinner.

December found us on a bus trip to Ashville, NC to see the Biltmore estate decorated for Christmas. It was snowing on the way down so we predicted it would be cold. The Biltmore grounds were so cold we had trouble keeping warm. There was an interesting museum to tour and a tavern for a warm lunch. We also found a warm gift shop, but were kicked out because we weren't buying anything. The candle light tour of the house was at night and then we had a nice dinner at the Stables. I would recommend going to see it in the summer when you can appreciate the extensive gardens and conservatory.

The next day we had a bus tour of Ashville with a tour guide. That was interesting and we also went down to the art colony on the river which was decimated in the flood. There was still a building with artists and many of the bus riders bought paintings.

Next week we are meeting for lunch. We are looking forward to March and the VSC Spring meeting.

Delta Sigma submitted by Sheen Childress

Happy New Year from Delta Sigma! We're excited about 2026 and co-hosting both VSC and IC conventions. It's going to be a busy year!

In November, we rocked our pink and green and joined Katrina's school, Bennett Elementary, to watch *Wicked: For Good*. We enjoyed the movie and especially enjoyed dinner at Uncle Julio's afterward. There may or may not have been some tears during the movie. ;-) Also in November, Katrina got to spend the day with Sue Foy at her lovely West Virginia home. Lunch and many ESA stories were shared.

In December, we adopted an ASK family for Christmas. Our Facebook fundraiser to support the family was very successful. Everyone was so generous! We gathered at Kathryn's house to wrap gifts and enjoy a light lunch. We finished off the day with a ride on the DC Metro and a trip to Ford's Theatre to see *A Christmas Carole*. What a beautiful, historic place! They have preserved the booth where President Lincoln sat the evening he was killed. It was amazing to see as well as a bit eerie. Katrina and Kathryn met Beth Sherron to deliver the gifts the following day. It was certainly a busy but fun weekend.

We look forward to seeing everyone in March!



ADS FOR THE VSC 2026 CONVENTION BROCHURE



If you would like to purchase a page to support your candidate, or tell your chapter President what a great job she did this year, or just to make someone's day, we have a place for you to do that!

_____	\$75 full color page	(\$67.50 by 3/31/26)
_____	\$40 half page	(\$36 by 3/31/26)
_____	\$25 quarter page	(\$22.50 by 3/31/26)

10% off for ADs received no later than March 31, 2026.

Name _____

Chapter _____

Please send your artwork ready to print to Katrina Saunders at
cookekc1964@gmail.com no later than April 15, 2026.

Send the check made out to 2026 VSC Convention to

Sheen Childress
10812 Haggie Court
Manassas, VA 20112

Thank you for your support of this project.

If you have a business that would like to advertise in our convention booklet – please share this form with the business.

Please join Delta Rho and Delta Sigma for...

Seasons in the valley



2026 Virginia State Council of ESA International Convention

May 15-17, 2026

Double Tree by Hilton Blue Ridge Shadows
111 Hospitality Drive, Front Royal, VA 22630
540-631-3050

Make reservations directly with the hotel under **ESA Virginia State Council Convention**
or online at [Double Tree by Hilton Blue Ridge Shadows Front Royal](#).

Room Rate: \$144 + tax

Room Block Expires 4/13/26

Name _____ Chapter _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Non-member/Guest _____

____ Current VSC Elected Officer
____ Chapter President
____ First Convention

____ Appointed Officers
____ Voting Delegate
____ Member-At-Large

Convention Registration

Member	\$150.00	\$ _____
Non-member/Guest	\$ 90.00	\$ _____
Postmarked after May 1st	\$ 30.00	\$ _____

*Any form postmarked after May 1st or on-site registrations will not be accepted unless the attendee has given the convention chair 7 days prior notice (May 8th).

The registration fee includes the Friday Night mixer (heavy hors d'oeuvres), Saturday Lunch, Saturday Banquet, and Sunday Brunch).

Food Allergies? _____

Mail registration form and check, payable to **2026 VSC Convention** to:

Sheen Childress
10812 Haggie Court
Manassas, VA 20112