



Sigma Phi Omega

**National Academic Honor and
Professional Society in Gerontology**

April 2010

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From the President Rona J. Karasik, PhD



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This year we are celebrating Sigma Phi Omega's 30th anniversary and I feel very honored for the opportunity to serve as SPO's president. I want to thank all of the past presidents, board members, chapter advisors, and, of course, the membership at large for setting the bar so high and making SPO what it is today. I see even more great things happening as we move into our next 30 years!

It was wonderful to see many SPO members at the AGHE meeting this past March in Reno. Congratulations to our SPO Paper Award winners and Honorable Mentions -- your presentations at the conference were amazing! Congratulations also to the winners of the Service Project and Professional awards - I am proud to be a part of an organization with members who do such amazing work! I hope all of you will consider submitting your work for the AGHE conference in Cincinnati in March, 2011 (**abstracts are due June 15, 2010**). Consider applying for the SPO President's Paper Award and/or the Service Project Awards for Graduate and Undergraduate Education, and the Student and Professional Awards. See our website for details on all the award opportunities and more!

On our website you can also find important organizational information and updates. You will also be able to become a member and/or renew your membership on-line. Speaking of membership renewals, we need your help to keep all of our members current and active. Depending on when you joined, your membership will come due each year on either October 1st or April 1st. One recent item to note is that professional membership dues will be raised slightly starting July 1, 2010. Student membership fees will stay the same. Please pass a reminder on to your chapter to renew each year because your dues support both local and national SPO activities. Remember, **chapter annual reports are due April 30, 2010** in order to receive your chapter rebates! The new, streamlined annual report form is available on our website.

I would like to reiterate Past President Dr. Jan Wassel's announcement in the Winter newsletter that for the 2010 year, "inactive chapters may simply notify the Board of the chapter's intent" to reactivate. A chapter that has failed to initiate new members for three consecutive years is considered inactive. "No new members are required at the time of reactivation and the reactivation fee will also be forgiven". The chapter is only required to "induct at least two qualified members during an induction ceremony within twelve months of its notification to SPO Board". Now is a great time to reactive your chapter if it has become inactive!

I look forward to hearing from you!

Rona J. Karasik, PhD

SPOPresident@SigmaPhiOmega.org

ΣΦΩ Chapter News

Gamma Nu Chapter, Ithaca College



The Gamma Nu Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at Ithaca College inducted eleven students and one honorary community member at a ceremony held on Friday, March 26th. The ceremony was organized and conducted by the current SPO officers president Margaret Burgess, vice president Marissa Levenson, secretary/treasurer Stephanie Cicalese and volunteer coordinator Caitlin Pautz. The students inducted were: (Back L to R) **Victoria Centurelli, Emily Badmann, Alyssa Sotomayor, Erik Lyons, Erin King, Kelly Buechner, Deena Gerstenhaber** (Front L to R) **Chelsie Reed, Meaghen Amato, Corey Corsaro and Lauren Campasano**.

The honorary community member was **Lisa Holmes** (pictured far left), Director of the Tompkins County Office for the Aging. Ms.

Holmes gave a presentation outlining the career path she followed that led her to working with older adults. She also discussed the many current and future employment opportunities for students with a gerontology background. ~Submitted by Christine Pogorzala pogorzal@Ithaca.edu

Delta Gamma Chapter, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

In support of scholarship for future gerontologists, The Triad Retirement Living Association presented the UNCG Gerontology Program with funds toward a gerontology graduate student's educational expenses. The award is given to a continuing gerontology graduate student who is committed to the well-being of older adults and enhancing the lives, policies and environments of older adults and society in general. **Ms. Jessica Mroz**, pursuing the MS in Gerontology degree, was TRLA's first 2009-2010 award recipient. In other news, Associate Professor, **Dr. Bei Wu** and a team including researchers from West Virginia and Duke Universities recently received over \$59,000 of supplemental funding toward their ongoing study of the correlation between poor oral health and increased cognitive impairment and dementia from through the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act. The original study, *Oral Health Disparities among Elders with and without Cognitive Impairments* is funded by the National Institutes of Health. ~Submitted by Janice Wassel jiwassel@uncg.edu

Gamma Upsilon Chapter, University of Massachusetts, Boston

The University of Massachusetts Boston gathered a team to participate in the 2009 Metro Boston Alzheimer's Memory Walk. The team enthusiastically walked 3.5 miles around the Charles River (Cambridge, MA) on a rainy fall day to raise awareness of Alzheimer's and dementia. Thanks to many generous donations received from friends, family, and faculty they raised \$1,375. The chapter hopes to gather a team for next year's Memory Walk since this year's walk was such a success. Pictured from left to right: **Jennifer Recht, Jane Tavares, Sharon Brown, Lorraine Weaver, Chae Man Lee, Anjali Chhabra, and Vaibhav Rathi**.

~Submitted by Jane Tavares jltavares@gmail.com



Delta Lambda Chapter, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

The Delta Lambda Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at UMBC held a Winter Service Event on February 5, 2010. Braving a weather forecast for severe snow storms, four members and one prospective member attended. We traveled to a local low-income senior apartment building to clean and sanitize apartment front doors, doorknobs, and hallway banisters for cold and flu season. Many residents opened their doors to thank us personally for the successful service we provided! ~ Submitted by Amanda Peoples, ampeep1@umbc.edu

Gamma Kappa Chapter California, State University-Fullerton



The Gamma Kappa chapter of Sigma Phi Omega at Cal State Fullerton had its first holiday event on December 5, 2009. The event took place at Sunrise Senior Living in Yorba Linda and consisted of faculty, gerontology students, friends, and alumni. Ruth Ledesma, Ran Li, Karen Jeminson, Debbie Kegel, Veronica Fox, Diana Villanueva, Dr. Joe Weber and several guests joined with residents from the Reminiscence wing to make a wonderful and creative gingerbread house. Our volunteers and the residents had a great time working together! It was the aim of the Gamma

Kappa chapter to spread holiday joy and love at a senior living facility. We look forward to making it an annual event. The Sigma Phi Omega board of officers met during the winter break to plan the upcoming Spring 2010 semester calendar of events. Pictured is **Veronica Fox**, with residents from Sunrise Senior Living who participated in the Gingerbread holiday event.

~ Submitted by Viridiana Villanueva dvillanueva0428@csu.fullerton.edu & Joe Weber, jweber@fullerton.edu.

Beta Zeta Chapter, St. Cloud State University

This winter and early spring, the Beta Zeta Chapter of St. Cloud has been busy. During Valentine's Week our chapter and The Gerontology Club teamed up to volunteer at a local senior community. We had a great time decorating cookies with our new friends. On April 7th and 16th, Beta Zeta Chapter, The Gerontology Club, and the Nursing Club are working together to get the word out about Advanced Directives. We will be working at a booth in the student center to answer questions and hopefully educate students and faculty about the importance of these documents. After the huge success of the Alzheimer's Walk we participated in last fall, we decided to walk on April 30th for The American Heart Association. We are working to raise as much money and awareness as possible! April 14th the SCSU Gerontology Program will be holding their Annual Open House. The Beta Zeta Chapter, The Gerontology Club, The Department of Community Studies will also take part in hosting the event. It is also sponsored in part by a grant from the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education in Conjunction with Careers in Aging Week.

We also have an on-going fundraiser selling our student-designed "Aging: Every Body's Doing It!" t-shirts.

You can order one at <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/gerontology/sigmaphiomega.asp>

~ Submitted by Rona Karasik, rjkarasik@stcloudstate.edu

Delta Mu Chapter, University of Indianapolis

The Sigma Phi Omega Delta Mu Chapter held their annual induction ceremony on Friday, November 13, 2009 on campus at the Schwitzer Student Center. After enjoying a formal meal, sharing success stories among students, alumni, faculty and community leaders, Ellen Miller, Executive Director for the Center for Aging & Community opened the ceremonies. The Delta Mu Chapter Representative, Tamara Wolske, and SPO Student President, Colleen Ceh, inducted the new student, faculty and community members into the chapter.

Recognition was given to the gerontology students who received 2009-2010 CAC graduate assistant awards and scholarships for outstanding service, leadership and academics in gerontology. Each recipient's biography was read and one video-bio viewed from Paul Arthur, a student serving in the military in Iraq. Six honorary members from the community were recognized for their exemplary contributions to enhancing the quality of life for older adults.

Emily Austin assumed the role as President-elect and Paul A. Arthur assumed the role of Vice-President elect for the 2010 year. Congratulations to all of our community leaders and student achievers for their outstanding contributions to the field of aging and commitment to excellence!

~Submitted by Colleen E. Ceh colleenceh88@yahoo.com

Presidential Symposium

President's Award

The Sigma Phi Omega's President's Award was initiated in 2005 by then president, Dr. James Peacock. The purpose of the President's Award is to recognize outstanding SPO student presentation submissions at the annual AGHE meeting. The 2010 AGHE meeting marked the fifth presentation of the SPO President's Award. This year's President's Award recipients were **Amanda Sokan** and Tina Kruger of the University of Kentucky for their paper, "Recruiting and Retaining Baby Boomers as Volunteers: Education Volunteer Services Managers to Optimize the Workforce through Aging Volunteers"; Deborah Gray of the University of Massachusetts-Boston, for her paper, "Weight and Wealth: The Relationship between Obesity and Net Worth for Pre-Retirement Aged Men and Women". Colleen E. Ceh of the University of Indianapolis received Honorable Mention for her paper entitled, "A Prescription for Change: Infusing Gerontological and Geriatric Perspectives into Existing Pharmaceutical Curriculum".



Amanda Sokan (l) with Janice Wassel

SPO National Awards

The SPO National Awards were initiated in 2009 by our Past President, Dr. Janice Wassel. The SPO National Awards recognize outstanding projects, service learning experience and community contributions made by undergraduate, graduate and professional SPO members. Due to the large number of recipients this year (150!) we are recognizing the leaders of projects and their affiliations. We'd like to congratulate all faculty, students and professionals nominated and awarded this year!



University of North Carolina- Wilmington (Eleanor Krassen-Covan)

Dr. Eleanor Krassen-Covan (*pictured with Janice Wassel*) and her students were awarded the SPO *Service Project for Graduate Education Award* for their "Careers in Aging" project developed for the SOC336: Sociology of Aging course and the GRN 501: Aging and Society course. This Careers in Aging event required students to work independently as an interdisciplinary team. They gained support from professionals in the community by their participation or attendance for the Careers in Aging event. In addition to completing interviews with professionals and clients, the students designed and implemented the Careers in Aging event. To ensure success of the project, students participated in class discussions and were required to write a report that included the design, implementation plan, and evaluation of the event. The manuscript has been submitted to a journal for review and awaiting acceptance.

Nazareth College, Rochester, NY (David Steitz)

Dr. David Steitz and his class were awarded a SPO *Service Project Award for Undergraduate Education* for their collaborative project developed from an "Issues in Aging" course. The collaboration was between Nazareth College, St. John's Meadows Senior Living Community, and the greater Rochester, NY community.

The class met at St. John's Meadows and some of the residents at the CCRC joined the students in their class. Students worked with the elders from St. John's Meadows to develop projects that would enhance the elders' personal and academic growth. Projects developed consisted of continuing education, volunteering, vocational, and mentoring options to involve elders in their respective communities. The development of this course and project has been beneficial for the community, as well as, the students. This project is the first that Dr. Steitz has coordinated with St. John's Meadows to provide students applied experiences.

California State University- Long Beach (Maria Claver)

Dr. Maria Claver and her students received a *SPO Service Project Award for Undergraduate Education Honorable Mention Award* in relation to her Gerontology 400I course titled "Perspectives on Gerontology". The structure of the course required her students to take learned material from class and apply them to real life situations with older adults and their families. Through the development of this course, over 12 community agencies have entered into a learning partnership with California State University, Long Beach. The expansion of this community collaboration has led to new research projects and several student internships.

University of North Carolina- Wilmington (Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock and Michelle D'Abundo)

Elizabeth Fugate-Whitlock, MA, Dr. D'Abundo and their classes were awarded an *SPO Service Project for Undergraduate Education Honorable Mention Award* for their work with the "Recycling Mentors" project. The project was an intergenerational service-learning project between Gerontology 440 and Health 301 students at the University of North Carolina- Wilmington and older adults in the New Hanover area. This project investigated promoting the environment and recycling at the community level, and intergenerational relationships. This project positively influenced the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of the community and students.

St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN (Rona Karasik)

Several students in Dr. Rona Karasik's "Aging and Community" class were awarded *the SPO Service Project for Graduate Education Award* for their work assisting an independent living community develop a more accessible fitness area. Through the development of a better, more accessible fitness area, community residents were able to teach other residents proper use of the equipment. On a limited budget of \$200.00, the students added equipment, information on equipment use and safety; and made the room more inviting. As a result, there has been an increase of use of the fitness area and increased activity among independent living residents.

California State University, Long Beach; Delta Eta Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega (Lisa Tran, Donnetha Wallace, Gretchen Dinger, Carry Jacoby, and Janette Greenawald)

The students of the California State University, Long Beach; Delta Eta Chapter of Sigma Phi Omega, received the SPO Project Award in Student Education. These students often engage in meaningful experiences in collaboration with older adults. The students organized a May Day Tea in May 2009 and invited older adult members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) for an opportunity of intergenerational socialization. The May Day Tea event featured traditional fare, live jazz music, fancy hats, and lively conversation.

Seasons of Life, LLC (Candace Brown)

Candace Brown, MAG, M.Ed. received the SPO Professional Award for her business, Seasons of Life, LLC. Her business conducted free exercise classes to aging adults in low income housing. She also leads self-management of chronic conditions sessions for residents in her county. Candace is receiving national recognition as the "Colorful Aging" writer for her volunteer writings with the Internet Company Silver Planet, Inc. She also enjoys volunteering time as the newsletter editor for Sigma Phi Omega.

Featured SPO National Award Winner

*Dianne McNinch
Admiral Hospice Care
Lakewood, CA*

Dianne McNinch, MA (Religious Philosophy), BA (Elementary Education) and Certified Laughter Yoga Instructor received the SPO Professional Award for her work with the Sigma Phi Omega members and Gerontology students at California State University, Long Beach. In her first year as a hospice coordinator, Dianne has provided meaningful and unique learning opportunities through her work at Admiral Hospice Care by introducing students to hospice. As a teacher, education is especially important to her so, “when the opportunity to provide experiences, that cannot be obtained in a classroom, to gerontology students was golden.” Dianne believes that exposing gerontology students and allowing them to participate in hospice creates a greater consciousness of how we, as a society, can provide warm compassionate care for those who are dying.

Dianne began her gerontology career through community volunteering. When her mother was ill, Dianne knew to call hospice. After the experience, she promised she would give back to her community by volunteering for hospice. She was hired at Admiral Hospice Care after volunteer time and their knowledge of her background in coordinating. Since it is not easy to find those willing to volunteer with hospice, she created a partnership with CSU-Long Beach. The CSU-Long Beach service learning program is 21 hours. Students completed their hours in three hour increments and also performed office work duties (e.g. helping with medical records). Students completed orientation of hospice regulated by The National Hospice and Palliative Care organization. Students were then qualified to volunteer nursing facilities, ward care facilities, Alzheimer’s facilities and made home visits. Initially, students shadowed Dianne by watching her interact with patients and family members. Eventually, students learned how to make positive interactions to the family members themselves. After making a visit to patient and family, Dianne reviews the students’ experience (in privacy of a car) to signify the students’ details in the reactions of family members. Dianne believes the ability to read people is important whether they choose a career in gerontology or not.

“Students are wonderful and I get great satisfaction with working with them,” she says. The students have been able to experience the meaning behind “dying a good death” and have been educated on the vital importance of preserving the rights of older adults to participate in their own dying process. Dianne’s passion and warm approach has opened the hearts of many of the students and is to be congratulated.

Congratulations to all of our winners!

Watch for President’s Awards and SPO National Awards call for papers and nominations in the upcoming newsletters later this year!

Sigma Phi Omega Business Meeting March 5, 2010 3:30-5:30 pm Peppermill, Reno, NV

Meeting called to order at 4:30 pm by SPO President Wassel.

Introduction of the current executive board: The 2009-2010 Executive Board members are: Jan Wassel, Rona Karasik, Dawn Carr, Burgin Ross, Pamela Pitman Brown, Candace Brown, Mary Ligon, Kelly Fitzgerald, Scott D. Wright.

Treasurer's Report: Wassel presented the Income/Expense Statement for 2009 (outlined below). It was unanimously voted for professional dues to be raised from \$30 to \$40 at the start of the next fiscal year. The vote was unanimous with no abstentions. A Paypal account will soon be available to members for membership dues, payments for medals and honor cords and donations to the organization. Revenue increased by \$1300 in 2009 through the sales of honor cords and medallions.

Membership Update: A reminder of 2009 changes in the membership By-laws whereby individuals who are inducted into SPO in the Spring have a one-year membership cycle that begins on April 1 and those inducted in the Fall have a cycle that begins on October 1 was reiterated. Currently, there are 773 active members, 259 lifetime members, and 134 active chapters. There were 239 renewal memberships in 2009 and 52 new memberships in 2010 from Jan 1- Feb 28. SPO established five new chapters. A decline in new membership dues and renewals from 2008 led to discussion of how to increase numbers through new membership and renewals. The board voted in 2009 that chapters with an inactive status can reactivate during 2010 without paying reactivation fees. It was suggested that chapters survey alums to know if they were inducted into SPO and follow with renewal forms. The incentive of a \$10 rebate for each member renewed was also suggested. A discussion of life memberships followed. Concerns of life members not actively involved in SPO and not required to pay dues, warranted further investigation.

Board Vacancies: The board has two positions available, Student Representative and Member-at-Large. Nominations for the Student Representative position were Amanda Sokan and Urrikka Woods. Member at Large nominations including Pamela Pittman Brown and Harvey Stearns were made. It was determined a voting card would be sent to all SPO chapters through Survey Monkey.

National Registry: Last year, SPO's status as members of a as an honor society was discussed and determined unclear. R. Karasik looked into the matter further. The Association of College Honor Societies (ACHS) does not offer expanded membership (e.g. professional, lifetime) as SPO does. Therefore, membership with ACHS would not be necessary.

The 30th anniversary of SPO was celebrated in evening following the Presidential Symposium. All members of SPO were welcome to cap off the night with desserts at a reception. SPO also had a page in the program book to commemorate the date.

Annual Reports: Annual Reports are due on April 30, 2010. The report form may be downloaded at the SPO website www.sigmaphiomega.org. Please return the completed form to SPOPresident@sigmaphiomega.org to receive your chapter's annual rebate. The rebate of \$5 per active member for the past calendar year is issued in January of each year. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

~Respectfully Submitted by Candace Brown, Newsletter Editor

Sigma Phi Omega Financial News 2009 EOY Income/Expense Statement

Income 2009

New Member Dues	\$ 7,775.00
Membership Renewals	\$ 8,735.00
New Chapter Fees	\$ 315.00
Contributions	\$ 679.00
President's Award	\$ 95.00
Honor Cords	\$ 1,301.00
Graduation Medals	\$ 1,049.00
Bank Interest	\$ 9.43
Collected Bank OD	\$ 75.00
Mailing Costs	\$ 455.00

Total Income	\$20,488.43
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Expenses 2009	\$
AGHE 2009 MOU	\$ 3,000.00
Salaries/MOU	\$ 6,485.50
Total Office Expenses	\$ 1,770.60 ^a
Total Bank Charges	\$ 189.00
Total Membership Benefits	\$ 2,263.00 ^b
AGHE Meeting Expense	\$ 1,047.13
Web Expenses	\$ 3,120.00
Board Expenses	\$ 300.00
Total Expenses 2009	\$ 18,175.23

Profit/Loss	\$ 2,313.20
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EOY Bank Balance	\$ 28,011.00
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a. Office Expenses

Consumable Supplies	\$ 590.00
Postage and Delivery	\$ 810.00
Printing	\$ 370.00

b. Membership Benefits

Honor Cords	\$ 1,273.00
Chapter Rebates 2007-2008	\$ 990.00

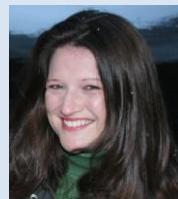
Board of Directors 2010-2011



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Rona Karasik, Ph.D.



Past President
Janice Wassel, Ph.D., R.F.G



Secretary
Dawn Carr, Ph.D.



Treasurer
Brenda Burgin Ross, MSG, RD



Newsletter Editor
Candace Brown, MAG, M.Ed.

Student Representative
Vote in progress

Members At Large



Kelly Fitzgerald, Ph.D.



Mary Ligon, Ph.D.

Vote in progress

[Special Thanks to Pamela Pitman-Brown and Dr. Scott Wright for their commitment to serving on the board!](#)

[Director bios are available on the SPO website.](#)

CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORTS

All active chapters are requested to submit an annual report of their activities for the past year. The reports provide important information to the Board of Directors and National Office regarding chapter activities, and assist with efforts to improve the organization as a whole. A rebate of \$5.00 per dues-paying member (paid by December 31) is given to each chapter that submits an annual report.

Complete the annual report form located on the SPO webpage and email to Rona Karasik at SPOPresident@SigmaPhiOmega.org by **April 30th** for your chapter to be eligible for the rebate. Rebates are sent to active chapters in January the following year.

INACTIVE CHAPTERS

Are you at an institution of an inactive chapter and want your chapter to become active again? Chapters can reactivate free of charge for 2010! Contact Rona Karasik at SPOPresident@sigmaphiomega.org for details!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The National Investment Center for the Seniors Housing & Care Industry and Mather LifeWays are pleased to announce the New Investigator Scholarship Award to be presented to a graduate student or new investigator for an original, evidence-based paper that addresses critical issues faced by professionals, providers, or investors in the field of senior living. The original paper should demonstrate scientific rigor and make a contribution to the senior living industry. The winning paper will be published in the 2010 issue of *Seniors Housing & Care Journal*. The deadline for scientific paper submittal is **Monday, May 3, 2010**. The scientific paper must follow the 2010 manuscript guidelines of *Senior Housing & Care Journal*. Please contact Scott King, Associate Managing Editor at sking@matherlifeways.com for a copy of the guidelines, requirements and eligibility information.

Join Us at SPO Gerontology Honor Society on Facebook!

Sigma Phi Omega has now been on Facebook for one year! If you have not joined our group, do so! Updates, additional news, and information from SPO members are posted on this site! Be a part of this growing group in cyberspace! Facebook is a great way to stay in contact! Remember, you can remain in control of your personal information by changing your personal settings for your page. Here are the steps:

- >Sign onto Facebook
- >Click on "Account" (in upper right hand corner)
- >Scroll down to "Privacy Settings" and Click on the icon
- >Click on "Profile Information"
- > Change the individualized settings of who can see your information

Society Medals & Honor Cords!



Hurry and purchase cords and medals before graduation! You'll want to wear them with your cap and gown! Medals are embossed in blue and gold with the SPO emblem. Honor cords are two-cord sets in the Society's colors of blue and gold. Buy yours now for only \$15.00 each plus shipping. If you or your chapter purchase 10 or more, you'll get a 10% discount. You can mix your order to include both medals and cords. Shipping is \$3.00 for the first item with additional shipping \$1.00 per item. No credit cards accepted.

Important Reminders!

Members: Please send us your updated contact information when it changes. We enjoy staying in contact with you!

Chapters: Please be sure we have the most recent contact information for your chapter advisor!

Send Us Your News!

We love to share your chapter news, pictures, ideas, and events. Please send your submissions to the newsletter editor, Candace Brown, at SPONewsletter@sigmaphiomega.org. Please include your chapter name, college or university, submitter's name, email, and phone. Looking forward to hearing your chapter news!

Advertise With Us!

SPO welcomes paid advertisements. Visit www.aghe.org > SPO > Marketing and Advertising to purchase the SPO mailing list or to submit ads for upcoming SPO

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