GAMMA CONTACT

CORNELLPHISIG.ORG SPRING 2013

THE CHAPTER NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT NOW MORE THAN EVER

Dear Phi Sig Brothers:

I would like to update you on recent events regarding what is being done to have chapter recognition re-instated by the university. To begin, I am one of the brothers Bill Miller '73 contacted when he needed to form an alumni advisory committee to guide the undergraduates as they attempt to focus on changing their culture while developing a strategy to sustain the chapter's existence. At the first meeting of our advisory committee, I was chosen to serve as our committee chairman. Let me state now that I would welcome your input, support, and involvement as we go through the next few months. Since we are seeking serious commitment from the undergraduates, it is important to show equal commitment by our alumni.

At this point, I would like to give you an update on where things stand. Our advisory committee was formed in early February with eight members. This has since grown to 10 alumni from various years and backgrounds, all actively engaged in helping the undergraduate brotherhood. The committee has weekly conference calls—to include discussions with the house officers—to assure that we are moving toward the common goal of re-recognition. On March 10, a number of us held a special on-site meeting with the undergraduates that was joined via conference call by additional alumni in a show of support. Separately, there will be an offsite retreat conducted by the Grand Chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa for all undergraduate brothers at which the value and values of a fraternity in the 21st century will be explained in detail. In addition, a number of recent, younger alumni have offered to engage separately with upperclassmen to build commitment among juniors and seniors to embrace the changes.

Next, using the success that the brothers had from 2003 to 2006, the committee strongly suggests that the following three-part plan be implemented to rebuild the chapter's core values. First, the chapter is to use the annual House President's Report required by Cornell University not simply as a scoring sheet, but as a guide for developing integral aspects of the chapter that will be in keeping with the expectations of the university. Second, the alumni have to ensure that they are more actively involved in the chapter so that the undergraduates realize they are part of a great tradition spanning the better part of Cornell's existence, and that no brother has the right to act in a manner that reflects unfavorably on this tradition or threatens the continuance of our fraternity at Cornell. Third, we need the undergraduate brothers to realize that the fraternity is a part of the greater Cornell community, which includes not only the university, but the city of Ithaca as well. As such, we need to reach out to the various administrative bodies, such as law enforcement and fire protection, to seek their advice on how best to administer our chapter, and at the same time show a willingness to support those charitable endeavors that they feel might best serve the community. In a community as small as Ithaca, the police and firemen serve as a beacon for directing charitable support.

To encapsulate all of this, we request the undergraduates to draft a one-page statement of intent that is basically a plan and commitment document that each brother will sign. In effect, we want them to formally agree to guidelines, a game plan, and a strategy to achieve goals and meet expectations.

Eric Bobby '88

BROTHERS WORK TO ADAPT TO CORNELL'S NEW GREEK SYSTEM

Brothers of Gamma Chapter:

For those of you I have not met, I took over as president in late November. It has been a rough semester. In the midst of brothers' arrival to campus and a burst of house improvements leading up to our Rush Week, we were told that our recognition had been revoked for one year. An appeal shortened that to a semester, but it was still quite a blow.

I reflect now upon the situation and the past semester as a whole. I must say that my feelings are mixed.

The largest of the consequences of the loss of recognition was the inability to recruit new members. This was disappointing to the house seniors in particular. This lack of continuity in our membership will be the most important challenge we face next semester, as we attempt to fill that gap. The inability to maintain a social schedule has taken a toll on house morale. Our campus presence will take a little work to restore. The capital campaign had to be put on hold. Why did this happen? We failed to change our behavior with the changing culture of Cornell's Greek system.

In that regard, the situation may be seen in a somewhat positive light. Although we've had to serve a semester-long punishment, the changes we're making will ensure Phi Sigma Kappa's strong presence on campus in the future. This semester, we have seen a spike in the number of other fraternities disciplined for their own infractions—and the administration's punishments are not getting any lighter. I mean to say that although we were punished for failing to adapt, starting next semester we will be ahead of

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BROTHERS WORK TO ADAPT TO CORNELL'S NEW GREEK SYSTEM

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the curve. And that's where we will stay.

Despite these setbacks, I was inspired by the ability of our brotherhood to unite and keep the spirit of Phi Sigma Kappa strong. We eat dinner together every night; we hold chapter every Sunday; and although we may not have parties or mixers to show it off, we keep the house looking as impressive as ever. We hold brotherhood events—camping, football games and basketball tournaments, and casino trips. We could not participate in the Greek intramurals, but we're dominating in the regular intramural sports competitions—Henry Medina '13 won the tennis championship. Walter Schaefer '15 (vice president) and Dan Bracho '15 (philanthropy chair) worked to make sure we still volunteered at the Special Olympics in Rochester. The administration's decision may have put a pause on official fraternity operations, but they'll never keep us from being a fraternity.

This break in campus operations has, however, allowed us to reform and strengthen our operational setup for the future. Over the course of this semester, we've met regularly with an outstanding group of local alumni dedicated to helping the chapter change and move forward. Within weekly chapter meetings, we analyze various aspects of our fraternity, determine if they need to be restructured, and map out those changes. Our regional leadership coordinator, Matt Valleau, visited last weekend to facilitate a brotherhood retreat, during which we produced the standards of conduct we expect of our members. We've developed a new member process that adheres to the university's standards, developed a smarter and safer setup for running social events, and established a number of rushing strategies to get the right guys in the house without breaking any rules.

We have had a full semester to reflect upon the past, and we are ready now to embrace the future. The task of leading our brotherhood out of trouble is a challenging one, but its one I look forward to seeing through to the end. I am damn proud to be a Phi Sig, as are my brothers, and I'm confident we will make a strong return as leaders on campus.

Fraternally,
David Makee '15
Undergraduate President

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: HERB FULLER '68

My wife and I found Prudence Island, off Rhode Island, in 1979, and bought some land in 1980. Long before we had a house, we felt that we had found a home. It was clearly our reward for choosing New England.

I was an inactive member of the Prudence Island Volunteer Fire Department for decades, pitching in here and there—rolling up hoses at a fire scene or chopping peppers for a barbecue. I was working as a cameraman at the time and helped out the NFPA (National Fire Prevention Association) on a few fire-prevention films about disasters. In a subsequent career in administration at Harvard, I started the first high-rise fire evacuation warden program, tailored to an academic building with no fixed population.

After I retired from Harvard, I started going to the volunteer department's training drills and was soon recruited for the department's Board of Control. We have no usual fire hydrants, so moving water, by 2,000-plus gallon loads, is what we do. Some of those trainings are like day-long, late-summer football practices. Shooting a hose with 180-psi water coming out of it is like having a blocking sled coming after you—for minutes on end.



In addition to helping EMTs respond to medical emergencies at all hours and manning the fire station during hurricanes and winter storms, I have jumped out of bed to spend a long day working a house fire as a driver and pump operator. That's 10 hours or so of tending a constantly racing two-cycle diesel.

Although I'm sometimes doing work that most folks retire from when they're 10- to 15-years younger than I am, I find it challenging and rewarding. Our island is where the movie *Moonrise Kingdom* was set, and it's worth the extra effort to be a part of island life.

Herb Fuller '68

PHI SIG ALUMNI REPORT THEIR NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

"My Cornell campus time was broken up by two years of military service, mostly with the 103rd Infantry Division in Europe," writes **Harold E. "Bud" Saunders Jr. '45**. "As a senior, I was vice president of Phi Sigma Kappa at Cornell, president of the Cornell Hotel Association, and president of the Cornell Student Council. My fraternity roommate, **Dick Demmler '45**, remained my best friend until his death. I remember my college days clearly until this day." Connect with Bud by writing to 3455 S. Corona St., Apt. 736, Englewood, CO 80113; or budrita@aol.com.



Robert George '57 had dim sum in Kent, Washington, with Paul Snare '56 and Everett McCooey '58.

"See you at Reunion in June 2013," writes **Donald C. Sutherland '49**. Reconnect at 4206 Cutlaw Ln., Harles, FL 34102; don@donsutherland.com.

Henry C. Ver Valen III '52 is looking forward to the 2013 Reunion! He hopes to catch up with Phi Sig alumni there. (17424 Wesley Chapel Rd., Monkton, MD 21111; henryw@gmail.com)

Robert "BG" George '57 has been spending a lot of time catching up with Phi Sig alumni. In December 2012, Bob had dim sum in Kent, Washington, with **Paul Snare '56** and **Everett McCooey '58**. After that, Bob had planned to spend several months in Palm Desert, California, and hoped to spend time visiting with **Dick Kurtz '55** and **Roger Wiley '58**. Catch up with him at 22 Marigold Dr., Unit 25,

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BROTHERS FIND WAYS TO REMAIN INVOLVED IN PHILANTHROPY

On an early Saturday morning in February, a group of Phi Sigs and friends traveled to beautiful Bristol Mountain in Canandaigua, New York, to help organize and coordinate the Alpine skiing events of the Special Olympics Winter Games. Although we aren't allowed to organize philanthropy events as a fraternity due to university policies, several brothers and various friends made the trip to continue this house tradition to help run the games.

After arriving at the mountain, the group met the many people who run the winter games, and quickly got involved when the athletes, coaches, and fans began to arrive. Throughout the day, nearly 40 athletes suited up with hats, gloves, and skis to compete in long- and short-distance Alpine skiing races. About half of the group served as timers for the numerous heats of the 50- and 100-meter races. Others timed for the long-distance races, while I helped coordinate lunch and athlete staging, making sure each competitor was in the right place at the right time.

Whether they were stationed inside or out, the day was made a little warmer for everyone by the unbridled excitement, raucous cheers, and infectious laughter of the athletes, who were there not only to compete, but also to hang out with and cheer on their friends. Even better than seeing their joy while competing was seeing it during the medal ceremony, which Phi Sig helped coordinate by distributing medals and ribbons. It was truly heartwarming for the volunteers to shake each competitor's hand and congratulate them on their achievement.

All in all, the Special Olympics was a great experience for everyone. The brotherhood is excited to return next year and share the experience with the next new member class and revitalize our partnership with the sisters of Pi Beta Phi.

Walter Schaefer '15



Gus Cespedes '15 stands ready to time the 50-meter race.



Dylan Keefe '15 and Hanna Mielk-Maday (Pi Beta Phi '15) break for a photo by the long-distance track.



Gus Cespedes '15, David Makee '15, and Alec Kane '15 time the 50-meter race.



Walter Schaefer '15 presents medals to athletes on the podium during the medal ceremony.



PHI SIG ALUMNI REPORT THEIR NEWS FROM FAR AND NEAR

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Bellingham, WA 98229; b-george@comcast.net.

"Marcia and I are enjoying retirement with travel, art work, and community activities," writes **Arthur Kirk Field '60**. "Our daughter is in Seattle, and our son, **Rich '91**, is in Irvine, California. We pile up the air miles with Southwest. I look forward to working on part of the team to raise money for Phi Sigma Kappa rejuvination!" (376 Meadowbrook Rd., North Wales, PA 19454; akfield@verizon.net)

"Looking forward to seeing the class of 1963 at our 50th Reunion in June!" writes **Richard K. "Max" Bardo '63**. Make plans with him by writing to 8352 E. Adobe Ridge Rd., Yuma, AZ 85365; or maxvicki63@msn.com.

Tom Kube '65 remembered his great college friend and roommate at Phi Sigma Kappa, **Robert H. Foreman '65**, with his 2012-'13 contribution. Get in touch with him at 4527 McNeil Rd., Doylestown, PA 18902.

"Oh, for the good ol' days!" **Otis F. Curtis IV '66** writes: "Doing fine here in South Dakota; will move back east when my wife retires." (1830 Victory St., Brookings, SD 57006; okcp@itctel.com)

James A. Carr '68 has two kids, Jake (29) in San Francisco and Tory (28) in Boulder, Colorado. He's driven across the country five times in two years, and he is currently working remotely from Connecticut on architecture in California with Jake. James stopped at the chapter house two years ago, and remarked, "Brought back memories from the late '60s!" Catch up by email at jamesacarr23@gmail.com; or write to 310 Watrous Point Rd., Old Saybrook, CT 06475.

"After 34 years in our house just outside Portland, Oregon, we finally moved to the new house ... which Joanne designed," writes **Zoran Sekulic '71**. "That summer was full of great sunsets and visits by friends. Our energies are still focused on the house. We see our two boys often and love their company, stories, and cooking!" Write to 13860 SW Uplands Dr., Portland, OR 97223; packrat@coho.net.

"I recently relocated full-time to California, after 27 years in Arizona," writes **Francis "Frank" Burke '72**. "My son is a senior at the Cornell hotel administration school. I enjoyed attending Reunion last spring!" Update your address books for Frank, who now lives at 101 First St., Los Altos, CA 94022.

"I married Karin last June, and we had a wonderful honeymoon in Italy," writes **Paul T. Dionisio '75**. "Brothers **Bill Longhi '75**, **Neil Cheperak '75**, **Dave Roth '75**, and **Fred Fontana '75** get together with us for fun events." Send felicitations to 29 Apache Way, Branchburg, NJ 08876; paul_dionisio@msn.com.



Hans Strauch '79 , Carla and Steve Fontana '79, and Byron Widger '79 at Carla and Steve's wedding.

Congratulations to **Steve Fontana '79**, who married Carla in July 2012. **Byron Widger '79** officiated, and **Hans Strauch '79** attended. Send congratulations to 327 Eddy St., Ithaca, NY 14850; saf25@cornell.edu.

When **Jeff Margolis '79** wrote in December, he said he was planning to move his primary residence and business to Florida, but would still spend summers in New York. He keeps in touch with **Rick Fried '80**, **Steve Fontana '79**, **Howie Spinner '80**, **Howie Seibel '80**, **Walt Milani '78**, and **Walter Peek II '80**. Write to 10853 Broadview Bay Pt., Boynton Beach, FL 33473; or jeffmar1957@gmail.com.

Nathaniel "Chip" C. Myers III '82, a veterinarian at Pittsburgh Veterinary Internal Medicine, sends his greetings. Write to him at 1299 Fox Chapel Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15238; ncmyers3@gmail.com.

"After 25 years in the consumer sector of J&J, I finally switched to a corporate supply chain role," writes **Michael Whiting '84**, who now deploys SAP systems across the enterprise. "My daughter, Amelia, is following my footsteps as a freshman at Penn State, where she is rowing with the varsity crew. She competed at Head of the Charles and won gold at the Head of the Occoquan." (66 Musiker Ave., Randolph, NJ 07869; wawmdw@optonline.net)

An orthopedic surgeon for 15 years, **Bruce Knolmayer '87** is now employed by Georgetown Orthopedics. He was recognized as one of the area's "Top Docs" by *Washingtonian Magazine* in 2012. Send congratulations to 4900 Ripplemead Ct., Laytonsville, MD 20882; or email knolmayer@comcast.net.

DECEASED

We regret to announce the deaths of the following alumni:

William D. Eaton '45
August 28, 2011

William R. McCurdy '48
September 17, 2012

GAMMA CONTACT

This newsletter depends, in part, on alumni participation. Please complete your newsform today and submit it to the address below. The *Gamma Contact* is published by the Gamma Chapter of Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity at Cornell University for alumni and friends. News and pictures are welcome and should be sent to Alumni Records Office, Phi Sigma Kappa Fraternity, P.O. Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14851-0876.