



## Chapter is growing, stays focused

By Brody Ehrlich '10  
Sage

It's a new year in the Pi house and a critical time for Mu Chapter. As we come to the end of our probationary period stemming from the events of Thanksgiving Dinner 2007, the undergraduates continue to work hard at rebuilding both our organization and our reputation, and I am pleased to report that we are on track.

Last spring, despite restrictions placed on us by the IFC, we were able to initiate 14 new members of high character, and we now have one sophomore transfer from William and Mary. This semester, we have been diligent in meeting prospective members and have accumulated a great rush list.

While recruitment has been going well, equally important is the strength of our internal brotherhood. With the obstacles that we have faced combined with our small numbers, we have come together, and over the last two years, I have seen great things from my brothers.

This year, we are planning philanthropy events

to combat breast cancer and to help pay for textbooks for underprivileged Ithaca High School students. We are also participating in various IFC events, such as Relay for Life and Colletown Cleanup. Socially, we are on great terms with many of the sororities, highlighted by a Homecoming mixer with Alpha Phi, a great date night, and a joint philanthropy fundraiser with Theta.

All in all, we are recovering at a fast pace, and our sacrifices have paid off. After seeing my brothers forego a normal college experience in order to rebuild our house, and after seeing our sophomores take a chance on a house with no junior class, one thing that I can say with great pride is, "I'm a Sigma Pi."

Now, the final step is reconnecting with the men who over the years have sustained our fraternity and helped make it what it is today—you, our alumni. By reading *The Muse*, it's a first step, but we invite you to visit Ithaca so that the undergraduates can get to know you. Young and old, we are all brothers, and we should honor and celebrate that bond.

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Log on to [sigmapicornell.org](http://sigmapicornell.org) today!



The Beach Project: The brotherhood poses on the metal stairwell that connects the first floor to the roof of the West Lounge.

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# An opportunity lay ahead

**By Evan A. LaNouette '10**  
Alumni Secretary

As is typical of most fall semesters, the undergraduate brotherhood of Mu Chapter now finds itself in a time of great self-realization. The class of 2010 is speeding toward graduation while the class of 2012 is partaking of the full benefits of brotherhood for the first time as newly initiated sophomore brothers. In the foreground of this landscape is a highly cohesive brotherhood of just under 35 members who, week-in and week-out, strive to coach its youngest members on proper fraternity governance and culture. The goal is to educate this sophomore class on two years' worth of experiences in one year before they take over as the chapter's most senior members in the fall of 2010 as juniors. The current senior class has identified with this challenge, and with the help

of our current resident adviser, Nick Scinta '09, we are mentoring the sophomore brothers toward self reliance.

However, it cannot be totally assured that every new brother will rise to the occasion and learn all that is needed so quickly. This is where a consistent alumni presence in the house can aid this developing chapter and provide a stepping-stone to help instruct the undergraduates and keep them on an honorable path toward manhood. As this is a new undergraduate chapter, complimenting this change needs to be a reformed alumni presence; one that vibrantly engages with the undergrads but also is willing to share the fraternity and Cornell experience. In the past, alumni interactions were infrequent, which regrettably weakened the connections between the active brothers and our chapter's biggest demographic—our alumni. It is my belief that the next two years will lay the founda-

tion for our chapter's governance and culture, as we finally move toward to a full house. This means alumni have a unique opportunity to share in the development of our house as we attempt to build a framework that is both sustainable and beneficial to all.

As your current alumni secretary, I call to the collective alumni: Help Mu Chapter define itself by visiting your home on the hill! Come learn who the active brothers are, share your experiences, and strike common ground! It is through interactions like these that the real benefits of being a Pi man are realized. The young members learn about the path ahead of them, while alumni enjoy the strength of their chapter as they reflect on their past experiences. It is this diffusion of culture between the young and the old, a mantra of our creed, which speaks most vividly to the lives of our chapter's current active members. See you around the Pi house.

## Brotherhood works to protect its investments and the environment

**By Aaron Klein '12**  
Treasurer

As the lone sophomore on the executive board, but far from the lone sophomore leader in the house, I want to make sure that the fraternity continues to excel and improve. I personally don't know where I would be today without Sigma Pi. I certainly would not be at Cornell. Last February, in the middle of the pledging process, my father passed away. I left Cornell to attend the funeral and take care of family matters and wasn't sure if I would ever go back. It was the small but powerful messages that I received from the brothers and my fellow pledges that gave me the strength and courage to return to Cornell.

I am not the only one looking to make Sigma Pi a stronger fraternity; our entire pledge

class wants to make sure that we give back to Sigma Pi as much as it has given us; a home, a family, and brothers for life.

This year, the residents of Sigma Pi are taking progressive efforts to not only help our budget, but also the environment. Robert Dicker, the philanthropy chair, set up a recycling bin in the dining room and has encouraged everyone to make sure that they recycle plastic and paper products. In the past, aluminum cans and glass bottles filled up the garbage cans at 730 University Avenue, but this year, they are being collected and recycled. By throwing away recyclable products, not only are we hurting the environment, but also throwing away money.

Sigma Pi recently hosted an exceptionally well-run party, and part of that was the collection of cans from that event and previous

nights. These cans were returned for over \$50, and that money can now be reinvested into fraternity events, such as our Homecoming alumni dinner on October 17.

Another part of our sustainability efforts is to protect and safely store the purchases of Sigma Pi. We invested a considerable amount of money in high-quality party lights for our "Lights Party" this semester, and after the event, we placed all lights, power cords, and other decorations in a secure spot. It might seem simple and obvious, but by protecting our investments, we save money and the time and effort of repurchasing items.

By doing the little things right, and by remembering our solemn obligations every day, our class hopes to make our mark on Sigma Pi and Cornell University.

## House expands its philanthropy outreach at Cornell and in community



From left: Ben Diaz-Ordaz '12, Rohan Sidhanti '12, Sean Fuoco '12, Jason Nordlicht '12, and Andrew Chatham '12 at the "Pink Carnival" philanthropy event.

**By Dan Kendra '10, Robert Dicker '10**  
Philanthropy Chairmen

This semester, Mu Chapter is making an effort to branch out its philanthropy program. In recent years, we have organized "Ballin for Books" and "Bowling for Books," which raise money for the Cornell chapter of First Book. Stemming from these past events, we held an event on November 7, 2009, called "Badminton for Books."

In support of Breast Cancer Awareness month, Mu Chapter hosted a "Pink Carnival" with Kappa Alpha Theta on October 24, where students were provided with information about breast cancer and brothers sold food and other items, with the proceeds going to charity. In the week prior to the event, brothers

"tabled" throughout campus, selling T-shirts and wristbands to raise money and awareness of the fight against breast cancer.

We are also planning to volunteer our time around the community. We are going to be volunteering at Loaves & Fishes, a soup kitchen in the town of Ithaca. In addition, we are planning a day to volunteer at Habitat for Humanity around Ithaca. Furthermore, we are determined to start participating in the ACE project.

We have many plans for this semester and are excited about our schedule. As the philanthropy chairs, we really want to make philanthropy a cornerstone of Sigma Pi's presence on campus, as we believe that it is very important to give back to the community.



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## Alumni president reflects on state of chapter

*The Muse* editor asked if I would like to include an article in this issue. I said yes; then I wondered just what I would write that would be meaningful to our alumni. For many years, I have written about the state of the fraternity—considering the public nature of *The Muse*, the things I have written have been news of a positive nature, reserving the issues of which we were not so proud for the individual letters that are sent from time to time. For this message, I chose to mix the two.

We are nearing the end of a year of probationary recognition by Cornell and restoration of full membership in the IFC. We fully expect that full recognition and membership will be granted and the long dark night will be over. The current undergraduate members have taken the loss of recognition seriously and have done a superb job of putting us in line to rejoin the ranks.

As an alumni leader, I have reflected on just how the events that led to the loss of recognition might have been avoided. It seems reasonable that they could have. We generally have taken the position that advice given to and mentoring of the undergraduates should be sufficient to guide the undergraduate brothers down the correct path. In many cases, our advice is heeded, and in some, it is not. There are cases when the undergraduates are engaging in activities of which they know the “alumni” would not approve, so efforts (generally effective) are made to see that the alumni are not aware of what is going on. I am not so sure that it has not always been that way, but I also am convinced that the consequences of improper actions are greater today than they might have been in days gone by. I can remember instances of drunkenness but not of life-threatening alcohol poisoning. I can remember no instances of forced consumption of alcohol or drinking games, for that matter. In days gone by, there was no such term as “binge drinking.”

Mu Chapter has existed for almost a century, relying on undergraduate judgment to ensure the financial and reputation future of the house. In the late 1980s, that reliance came to an end when the house was allowed to deteriorate to the point that it was not habitable. Bills were ignored and the “house” became a sort of “live-in” beer hall. It was closed and the successful effort launched to construct a new house. When the new house opened, the alumni leadership injected themselves into the management of the house by defining the division of responsibilities between the alumni board and the undergraduates. Those things that had to happen—payment of taxes, insurance, utility bills, and major maintenance—are now supervised by the alumni officers. The undergraduates are responsible for the social and food program without any involvement from the alumni.

In the 1990s, a drug culture emerged, and it

was clear that the main focus of Mu Chapter was narcotics. Significant action by the alumni again was indicated, and actions were taken that resulted in either the expulsion or resignation of most of the members. We started afresh with two brothers and seven pledges.

Several years ago, the care and cleanliness of the house reached an unsatisfactory level, and despite some paid cleaning people, there was unacceptable emphasis on keeping the building so that it could be enjoyed by all. After several years of advising and complaining, it was decided to use an outside contractor to see that the house was clean and maintained. This system is working. That was not as much of a departure as it might seem when one reflects on the days when we employed a full-time live-in house man who kept the house clean. The concept of a live-in house man would be a very odd one to the undergraduates of today.

In other times, the sit-down served meals at the house were one of the more important facets of fraternity life. We ate good meals together twice a day, dressed up for dinner even when we didn't have guests, exercised a dining room decorum that was well proscribed and enjoyed it immensely. Today, “organized” meals occur on occasion but not often. Brothers serve themselves meals from a steam table in the kitchen and eat at whatever time they choose unless it is one of the times when an organized meal is scheduled. In the Cornell gone by, there was a time set aside for meals, particularly lunch. Today, that is not the case, with classes scheduled through the lunch hour and in the evenings.

In the very recent past, events geared around rushing got out of hand, and several freshmen were subjected to alcohol poisoning and required hospitalization. The chapter now has a graduate live-in adviser who can counsel the brothers and their leadership if and when such things should ever turn up again. These events forced the alumni leadership to take action again to reduce the membership of the house. We had a number of members whose reasons for being Greek were the wrong ones, and they had to go.

We are dealing with a culture at Cornell that emphasizes the idea of living in Collegetown near the bars. Today, there are Collegetown houses filled with Sigma Pi upperclassmen, while there are boarders and empty rooms in the house on University Avenue. There is a significant financial impact of this situation. Part of it is a result of missing a class during the year the fraternity was not allowed to rush.

Now you may ask, “How is it that we are still here?” How is it that the house was decimated in membership twice in the last 15 years, but we emerged as the best Greek house on campus? Is that a contradiction? No! In both cases there were a number of responsible men who dug in and carried on with great success. They

had help along the way from the alumni. We seem to attract a core of responsible men who can and do shoulder responsibility. Perhaps it is luck, and perhaps it is something about Mu Chapter, now almost 100 years on campus as a part of a system that has lost many of its more prominent and well-known houses.

There are many good things happening at Mu Chapter today. The officers are upperclassmen (albeit not living in the house); only one member of the undergraduate executive board is a sophomore. This is as it should be, in my view. The sophomores say they are committed to continuing to live in the house and to creating the atmosphere that brings the members together. There is an emphasis on upperclassmen serving in the senior officer positions. With the advice and counsel of the alumni, both older and more recent, it is hoped that some of the traditions of yesteryear can be reinstated to the benefit of the organization and its undergraduate members. We are positioned to emerge again as a top house, albeit smaller.

It is generally acknowledged in today's Cornell circles that the fraternities that have strong alumni involvement and support will flourish, and those that do not have these things will not. We will flourish! College is a time of learning and experience gathering. The college fraternity is a wonderful crucible for this process. If we work together as undergraduates and alumni, we can ensure another 100 successful years at Cornell. By working together, I do not mean turning back the clock to any previous date, but by working to apply the concepts of responsible fun Greek life built around the young men of today.

The current undergraduate members of Mu Chapter are fine young men. They live in a different world from that of the past—it is their world, and they are proud of it. Our job as alumni is to support them, to advise them, to interface with them, to know them, and expect that they will build on the foundation that exists—a foundation that others built for us and that we left for them.

A few weeks back, I was elected to serve another year as your alumni president. It is a privilege to do so. I very much enjoy the times that I spend with brothers of Mu Chapter that I would never have known had it not been for being active in our alumni organization. Many of these cherished friendships are with men who are in their late twenties and thirties who I met when they were freshmen. They are men that I worked with as undergraduate leaders. We try to communicate to the new members that fraternity membership is a lifelong thing and that brotherhood can span generations.

I encourage all of you to find ways to celebrate the fact that you are a brother of Sigma Pi. It is something to cherish and be proud of.

Jim Keene '57  
President, Mu Chapter Alumni

# mu alumni send their news & notes

**David K. Felback '48**, who was sage in 1947-'48, writes, "Congratulations to Mu Chapter on your reinstatement. I know it took a lot of work and dedication to achieve this. Congratulations to Sage Slowik on his excellent column reporting on the status of the chapter. I retired a few years ago after teaching at MIT and the University of Michigan for 47 years. It's been a good life. My principal avocation is in the ongoing fight for firearms rights in Michigan. In 2000, we pushed through the legislature a 'shall issue' concealed carry law. Since then, I have served as (unpaid) legislative analyst for the Michigan Coalition for Responsible Gun Owners. We have passed 30 or so additional good firearms laws in the last nine years. I'll keep it up until I drop. Regards to all." Catch up with Dave at 2060 Scottwood, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; felbeck@umich.edu.

**Joseph W. Calby '51** reports that his address has been changed to 4872 Cameron Valley Parkway, Charlotte, NC 28210. "Just the number has changed," he points out.

"I recently retired from practice (DVM), though I'm still farming a 300-acre hay farm," reports **Thomas T. Sanford '56**. "I board some horses. I have five tenants in farm housing. I'm active in the farm bureaus and farm-land protection board. I sold the animal hospital and shopping center. I have three children, all working in agriculture. One son is a teacher at the University of Wisconsin, one son runs an ag company in Georgia, and my daughter runs the business office at Millbrook Winery in New York State. Eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. I would love to hear from some old friends from the '50s Mu Chapter." Address postal mail to Tom at P.O. Box 160, Poughquag, NY 12580.

**Fredrick Walter '58** has a new e-mail address: fredrickwalter@gmail.com. He still lives in Thai-

land at Padtanakan 28 Rd., 4925 Pattaya Paradise Village 2, Banglamung Chonburi, THAILAND.

"The paradise weather just returned to Florida for the 2009-'10 season," announces **John L. Hitzel '59**. "I have been elected to the Charlotte County Charter Review Commission because I have been in a position to hassle local politicians. I am a member of the Charlotte County Curmudgeons. That is what we do to local pols: We practice curmudgeonism (is there such a word?). I have the annual meeting notice on my desk. I hope to participate. I do want to better understand why alumni who supported the Heritage Campaign—at a time when the house was in serious decay and drug-addicted, cleaned house and started anew, only to have lost university recognition, bringing more bad publicity to Sigma Pi—should now be asked to pay again for an organization that put itself in financial peril. How could the house afford to add the 'beach' improvements without recognition or funds? Can the alumni board protect our investment? I can't make it to Homecoming. Too far away and too busy. Come on down to Charlotte Harbor and enjoy paradise at its best." Take John up on his offer at 204 Greenwood Dr., Panama City Beach, FL 32407; or reach him by e-mail at johnjack@comcast.net.

**R. Bruce Oswald '72** recently moved to Dutch Village Apts., #18-2R, Menands, NY 12204.

"I don't know if anyone else has passed this on, so here is some news on Doll," reports **Gregory W. Fisher '72**. "Dolly has moved from his house on Ridgecrest to an assisted living residence in Ithaca. It is out near the hospital. Those of you who tried to get Doll to try something new in the kitchen know that change is not easy for him. He would love to see anyone when they are in Ithaca. His phone number

has been moved with him: 607-277-3298. He is living at Claire Bridge House, 101 Bundy Rd., Ithaca, NY 14850. He loves to eat at the Ling Ling Chinese Restaurant. It is located in the East Hill Plaza near where Ide's Bowling used to be. And Ide's is no more, if you did not know that. Just be prepared to help him; he is moving a bit slower these days—although he does still enjoy the girls." Greg can be reached at 1009 Highland Way, Rock Springs, WY 82901; gwfinwyo@hotmail.com.

**John A. Christoforo '77** sends his greetings to the chapter, along with some copies of composites from 1975-1977. Look for these on the website. In the meantime, say hello to "Foro" at 59 Townsend St., Boston, MA 02119; or send him e-mail at christoforo@comcast.net.

**Richard A. Bosshardt '80** is vice president of worldwide distribution and geography sales at Mentor Graphics. Find out how he likes the new position at 3630 S. Vista Loop, Gold Canyon, AZ 85218; rickbosshardt@gmail.com.

"After 27 years at Lehman Brothers, I joined Fortress Investment Group as head of capital formation," announces **Jarett F. Wait '80** (40 E. 73rd St., New York, NY 10021). "I went to the NCAA Lacrosse championships and met **Joe Dervay '80**, **Dennis McNamara '83**, **Brian Finneran '81**, and **Mike Cooney '82**." Drop Jarett an e-mail at jfwait@gmail.com.

"I'm living in Menlo Park, California, with **John Zimmer '06**," reports **Quin Garcia '05**. "I'm working for Better Place, a Silicon Valley startup focusing on electric vehicle infrastructure. Work has been taking me around the world, with a recent trip to Tokyo where I spent time with **Ty Whilden '04**. I'll soon be going to Beijing and Australia, in case there are any brothers in those places. It seems **Carl Majette '05** may be coming to live with Zimmer and me, so we're developing quite a posse of Mu Chapter bros out here in the Bay area." Quin's mailing address is 698 Menlo Paks, Menlo Park, CA 94025; his e-mail address is garcia.quin@gmail.com.

## Log on to sigmapicornell.org today!

**By Jason Nordlicht '12**  
Website Chairman

At this time, we have decided to make some changes to our fraternity website. Among several changes and additions, the address of our newly elected sage, Brody Ehrlich, has been posted; a picture of the newly-constructed Beach Project has been uploaded; and there are more pictures to come of social, philanthropic, and intramural events.

We would really like to improve our alumni relations and have created an "ask a brother" forum online to accomplish this task. Alumni

are encouraged to post questions about anything from classes to current fraternity-related issues, with replies given by the brothers. This feature is available now in the member-only discussion forum of the website. If you have not registered as a member of the site, please do so today at [www.sigmapicornell.org](http://www.sigmapicornell.org).

We are also planning to redesign the site this winter to give it a fresh look, make it easier to navigate, and post archival materials for the chapter, such as composites from the early '70s and before. Let us know if you have any ideas or suggestions for what you'd like to see on the site or features you'd like to use.

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## deceased

We regret to announce the deaths of:

**John R. Martz '46**  
September 22, 2008

**James S. McEntegart '49**  
May 20, 2009

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