

Parents Weekend

Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Fraternity



www.sigmapi Cornell.org

Sage Report

By Robert De Jesus '24



As the year winds down, let us look back at all the positives and negatives we have experienced this year. The positives are apparent as you wander within the walls of 730 University Avenue. The atmosphere is lively; on any given night, you can find brothers socializing in the common spaces or basking in the sun on the beach despite the crisp 60-degree weather. This is all thanks to our commitment to recruitment this past year. When you win in recruitment, you establish a winning culture, which, in turn, drives positive morale. This past recruitment cycle, we brought in 19 new Pi men, 18 first-year students and one sophomore. They come from a wide range of different backgrounds, which was all possible due to the continuous effort of our Rush Chairs **Manoc Joa-Griffith '26**, **Adam Dickstein '26**, and **Lakshman Sibal '26**. With that being said, there were many hiccups along the way, and at some points, it was unclear whether we were ever going to be able to take a spring class.

At the end of the fall semester, we fell into trouble with the Ithaca Fire Department (IFD) following a foam party in our basement. We were cited for improper evacuation protocol and failure to maintain clear walkways for means of egress. In response, the IFD revoked our assembly permit effective immediately and through June 1. The revocation jeopardized our spring recruitment as we were only allowed to have 50 people in our facility at once. With the support of **Jarett Wait '80**, **Jim Franz '77**, **Liviu Rusu '98**, our resident advisor **Zion Sherin**, and our legal counsel, **Liam Murphy**, we appealed the revocation to the Ithaca City Building Code Board and had it reversed. It took many hours of manpower to resolve this, but it would not have been possible without continuous alumni support. When our new members signed their bids shortly after this, chaos ensued on campus. On February 9, four fraternities, including Sigma Pi, were suspended indefinitely due to

reports of severe hazing allegations. Again, with the help of our alumni board and by leveraging our relationships with Cornell administrators, we were able to get this resolved over four weeks and continue our new member education process. An additional six chapters were cited and suspended for similar accusations in February. Seemingly, the Cornell interfraternal community is under major scrutiny, and Cornell is essentially covering its tracks to avoid liability. While mitigating risk is understandable, we live on a campus where the interfraternal community is guilty until proven innocent. This is the case across the country on various college campuses. Nevertheless, Sigma Pi remains on the hill as a leader among fraternities. To continue to do so, we must leverage our strong history and reputation while maintaining transparency and strong relations with the Cornell administration.

While the negative experiences of this year are alarming and cause for concern, what concerns me most is how our fraternity chooses to adapt to the ever-changing Cornell climate. The house has grown substantially during my time. Currently, our chapter has around 80 members, the largest I have seen in my four years. With any organization or corporation, there are many questions we must ponder. How do we maintain culture while growing our organization? Do we value stability

over culture? Do we value size over exclusivity? How do we balance stability, culture, and reputation? How do these go hand in hand?

Unfortunately, after four years, I still do not have a clear answer to provide to you. I have learned a lot in my capacity as Sage; one lesson is how to lead a cohort of different individuals toward a common goal. But what happens when our goals may no longer align? What happens when we grow into something so big that it loses sight of its own identity? I am sure many of us have asked ourselves these questions in our personal careers. We all understand that a strong culture can drive stability, but to what extent? The beauty of Sigma Pi is that it is an avenue for us to grow and learn how to be a leader alongside lifelong friends. However, every year, there are new lessons to be learned and unprecedented challenges to tackle. As we navigate the future of Cornell, I have no doubt that Sigma Pi can survive, but I do wonder what we will eventually evolve into in order to do so.

Thank you all for an incredible four years. I am beyond grateful for my experience and excited to see how the next generation of Sigma Pi brothers steers this ship. Do not hesitate to contact me if you want to connect @ rd444@cornell.edu



Brother of the Year Rob De Jesus '24

Manoc Joa-Griffith '26



April 21, 2024, marked a special day for our chapter: the annual selection of one of our most prestigious individual awards, the Brother of the Year Award. Without further ado, Sigma Pi Mu Chapter selected **Robert De Jesus '24** as its brother of the year (BOY) due to his remarkable achievements within the chapter.

It is important for me to emphasize on behalf of our chapter how significant this award is to our fraternity. This award extends beyond its title of "Brother of the Year"; it recognizes a member for their constant dedication, leadership, and love for our house and its brotherhood. I believe there is no one who better embodies these traits than Robert De Jesus.

Rob began leaving his mark on this fraternity as a freshman when he was chosen to be the social chairman during the 2021–2022 school year. In his first leadership role, he used his campus-wide respect, coupled with his natural creativity and incredible work ethic, to provide us with an amazing social year and to lay foundations for the years to come.

Continuing his momentum into the next year, Rob ran for and attained the position of vice president. Alongside Ricky, who was serving as president at the time, they cultivated a culture in the house that will leave a lasting legacy. They took on these positions with the goal of leaving the house in a better place than when they joined, and they greatly exceeded expectations set out for them. These achievements alone set Robert apart from the rest of the brotherhood. However, Rob wouldn't be himself if he didn't constantly overachieve.

Robert decided to run for president of the fraternity for the 2023–2024 school year as a senior. Unwavering, the brotherhood knew whom they could trust and unanimously put their support behind Rob to lead us throughout the year. Despite some struggles and hardships, most of which he could not control, Robert managed the house admirably. Our fraternity welcomed the largest rush class in years, a reflection of one of the lasting impacts of Rob's tenure.

Rob's impact extends beyond the obvious. He has successfully cultivated a culture of brotherhood and togetherness, a domino piece that sets other dominos in motion. He has emphasized the importance of institutional memory and laid foundations for our house that we might not even realize yet. In my personal experience, Rob is the reason I joined this fraternity. If he hadn't reached out and taken me under his wing, I would still be clueless about what it means to be his brother. Robert has had similar and even larger impacts on numerous individuals in this fraternity and in the school. It is impossible to overstate the rarity of a person, a friend, and a brother like Rob.



Robert De Jesus '24.

We rejoice in the fact that Robert will receive recognition for the tireless work he has injected into this house. We are excited and pleased to choose **Robert De Jesus '24** for the Brother of The Year Award.

Best regards,
Manoc Joa-Griffith, Sage of Sigma Pi Mu Chapter

The 2024 Adolphus C. Hailstork Prize Recipient: Robert De Jesus '24 and Special Award Recipient Benji Swilka '25



Robert De Jesus '24.



Benji Swilka '25

Every year, Sigma Pi awards the Adolphus Dolly C. Hailstork Jr. Brother of the Year award to a senior class member of the chapter. The Brother of the Year (or BOY) is awarded to honor a brother who has demonstrated his unwavering commitment and unparalleled leadership throughout his time as an active member of the fraternity. This year, the chapter chose graduating senior and former sage, Rob De Jesus, as the recipient.

Rob De Jesus '24' is a senior at Cornell's ILR school and served as Sigma Pi sage for the 2023–2024 academic year. Rob has always valued his academic endeavors but is also a very committed member of the Cornell community. He served as the vice president of membership and alumni development on the Interfraternity Council and is a committed member of his professional fraternity, Pi Sigma Epsilon. During summer 2023, Rob interned at Neuberger Berman, where he focused on wealth-management operations.

Benji Swilka '25 is an environment and sustainability major from Berlin, Germany. As undergraduate treasurer, Benji did a fantastic job building important processes, procedure, and results in improving the overall financial health of Mu Chapter.

Congratulations to both Rob and Benji.

Sigma Pi Welcomes 19 new members

Sigma Pi successfully recruited 19 new members this spring. Next fall, we will have a record number of 41 brothers living in the house.



Top left to right: Jason Cannistraro '27, Kevin Goldberg '27, Keagan Hayes '27, Harry Finch '27, Mitch Goldstein '27, Leo Alger '27, Kyle Swan '27, Arnav Tevatia '27, Josh Evans '27, Jacob Cotter '27, Ryan Frigerio '27, Carter McClintock '27, Clay Malott '27, Aidan Kane '27, Sami Steinberg '27, Matthew Kodsi '27, Trevor Fecko (Herald '26), Chris Hunter '27, Noah Wishengrad '27, and Ellis Emouna '26.



Keagan Hayes '27
Major: Agricultural Sciences
Hometown: Fulton, New York



Christopher Hunter '27
Major: Biological Sciences
Hometown: Spring Branch, Texas



Aidan Kane '27
Major: Economics
Hometown: Brooklyn, New York



Matthew Kodsi '27
Major: Philosophy and Cognitive Science
Hometown: Brooklyn, New York



Clay Malott '27
Major: Atmospheric Science
Hometown: Menlo Park, California



Leo Alger '27
Major: Landscape Architecture
Hometown: Brooklyn, New York



Harry Finch '27
Major: Biology & Society
Hometown: Rancho Santa Fe, California



Carter McClintock-Comeaux '27
Major: Engineering Physics
Hometown: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



Jason Cannistraro '27
Major: Government
Hometown: Wellesley, Massachusetts



Ryan Frigerio '27
Major: Economics
Hometown: Brookline, Massachusetts



Samuel Steinberg '27
Major: Global & Public Health Sciences
Hometown: New York, New York



Jake Cotter '27
Major: Economics
Hometown: North Easton, Massachusetts



Kevin Goldberg '27
Major: Statistics
Hometown: Guilford, Connecticut



Kyle Swan '27
Major: Engineering
Hometown: Basking Ridge, New Jersey



Ellis Emouna '26
Major: Industrial and Labor Relations
Hometown: Roslyn, New York



Mitchell Goldstein '27
Major: Economics and Government
Hometown: Cos Cob, Connecticut



Noah Wishengrad '27
Major: Engineering
Hometown: New York, New York

2024 Chapter Executive Board

The newly elected chapter officers for 2024 are:



Sage:
Manoc Joa-Griffith '26
mmj57@cornell.edu



Vice President:
Finn McCooe '26
mfm223@cornell.edu



Treasurer:
Nolan Wilbur '26
nbw36@cornell.edu



Herald:
Trevor Fecko '26
tdf39@cornell.edu



Steward:
Andrew Gebicki '26
ajg334@cornell.edu



Fire and Safety
Chairman:
Henry Schechter '26
hvs23@cornell.edu



Alumni Secretary:
Justin Simon '26
jts295@cornell.edu



New Chapter Executive Board Left to right: Nolan Wilbur '26, Andrew Gebicki '26, Manoc Joa-Griffith '26, Henry Schechter '26, Justin Simon '26, and Trevor Fecko '26.

Sigma Pi Hosts Passover Seder Celebration



Dan Shapiro '24 and Andrew Danziger '24 organized a Seder in celebration of Passover, hosted by the brothers of Sigma Pi house. The brothers fostered a safe space for their Jewish friends on campus during a time of unease and uncertainty. Kudos to these Pi Men!

Best Wishes to Mu Chapter Brothers Class of 2024

Best wishes to the senior class as they get ready to graduate. Below are highlights from some of our graduating seniors.



Ricardo Melasecca '23
College/Major: Arts & Sciences/Government
Post-Grad Plans: Strategy consulting at EY-Parthenon
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Beautiful sunny days and sunsets on The Beach with great music and company.



Gabe Pasternack '24
College/Majors: Arts and Sciences/Computer Science and Math
Post-Grad Plans: Working as a software engineer in New York City
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Hanging out on the beach.



Dan Shapiro '24
College/Majors: Economics and Government
Post-Grad Plans: Analyst at Windrose Consulting Group
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Bills tailgate.



Robert De Jesus '24 is College/Major: Industrial and Labor Relations
Post-Grad Plans: Business Development for Topline Pro
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Buffalo Bills game trip in 2021.



Maxwell Trahan '24 represents Mumbai, India, and is a formidable presence on the Men's Varsity Squash Team.



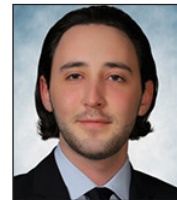
Ethan Mulroy '24
College/Major: Industrial and Labor Relations
Post Grad Plans: Not sure
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: All-nights.



Matt Nagy '24
College/Major: Hotel Administration
Post-Grad Plans: Incoming Analyst at J.P. Morgan
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Slope Day party on the beach.



Emir C. Erkenkalkan '24
College/Major: Arts & Sciences/Economics
Post Grad Plans: Equity research at Manning & Napier
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Intramural soccer.



Teo Gomez Cruchaga '24
College/Major: Arts & Sciences/Economics
Post Grad Plans: JPMorgan Private Bank
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Quarantine in the house with my boys.



Max Kanders '24
College/Major: Hotel School
Post Grad Plans: Working in real estate
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Beach parties.



Andrew Danziger '24
College/Major: Brooks/Public Policy
Post Grad Plans: Consulting at PwC
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Mixers with SDT.



Tor Haugen '24
College/Major: Operations Research and Information Engineering
Post Grad Plans: Business Technology Solutions Analyst at Deloitte in NYC
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: Sunset bool in 210.



Federico Sanchez '24
College/Major: Hotel Administration
Post Grad Plans: Investment analyst at PGIM Real Estate in NYC
Favorite Memory of Sigma Pi: House wine tours.

Dr. Nikki Moore, Cornell Athletic Director Featured Dinner Speaker



Resident Advisor Report

By Zion Sherin



I am writing this while waiting for a much-anticipated basketball hoop that is being delivered to be set up in the bottom lot. A lot has happened at Sigma Pi Mu Chapter. We started the semester on a win. After an incident with the fire department at the end of the fall semester resulting in the assembly permit being revoked through the academic year, the board, sage, and I worked tirelessly to get it overturned before the start of the semester and we were successful. With less than a 24-hour notice, and during move-in, the house had to prepare for our assembly inspection, and we passed which allowed the brothers to conduct rush at the house.

The whole house pulled together to prepare for rush with just a few-days notice. Despite the obstacles, the house attracted a great new group of 19 young men who make up the 2024 spring class. Unfortunately, shortly after rush, Sigma Pi had some difficulties due to allegations regarding new member education. After a thorough investigation from the university and a great internal investigation led by Liviu Rusu '98, it became clear that all the reported allegations did not apply to Sigma Pi, and the house was either swatted, when someone intentionally makes a false report, or mistakenly tied to allegations regarding other houses.

Although this unfortunately resulted in limited interaction at the house for a few weeks the new class is just as committed to the house. The house is quite a bit livelier than the start of the academic year with the common spaces full of students playing pool or studying together in the library. It is great to see that even with a packed house, the standards for the house have not fallen and it is staying quite clean. The new members have been very involved with many even running for executive board positions.

That brings me to our most recent elections of a new executive board. I am very excited to work closely with the incoming board, led by **Manoc Joa-Griffith '26** as the incoming sage. These men are excited to continue building on the Sigma Pi history of being a leading house here at Cornell University. Every one of these Pi men has the energy and excitement needed for the responsibilities that come with being a leader.

The house has had a great year, and we look forward to ending this year on a positive note with a smooth semester focused on the transition of roles. I look forward to a full house next semester with over 40 living in.

Annual New Member/Senior Tailgate Weekend

Steve Pirozzi '80

The alumni association has continued the practice, started by **Jim Keene '57**, of hosting a dinner for the new brothers of Mu Chapter.



This year the dinner was held on Friday, March 22. Both the fall 2023 and the spring 2024 rush classes were invited to the event. The evening's festivities began in the West Lounge with the brothers and alumni attendees getting to know each other. **Liviu Rusu '98** then led an orientation presentation. Liviu explained the responsibilities that come with being a Brother of Mu Chapter and reviewed the economics involved in the running of Mu Chapter.

At the appropriate time, we all moved to the dining room to enjoy the dinner. The new brothers and alumni continued to exchange life stories and get to know each other. **Jarett Wait '80** addressed the group and told a few stories from his time as an undergraduate.

After the meal ended, the festivities moved back to the West Lounge where many brothers stayed to watch the Cornell Men's Hockey Team play.

The next morning, the seniors' tailgate was scheduled prior to the Cornell Men's Lacrosse Team's game against Yale. Unfortunately, a snow squall prevented an outdoor get-together, so we moved the event to the West Lounge. Everyone attending enjoyed the food and camaraderie. Several brothers joined the alumni to attend the lacrosse game and were thrilled to see Cornell defeat Yale.

The Mu Chapter undergraduate officer elections were conducted in late March. **Andrew Gebicki '26** was elected steward and he has enthusiastically begun working with the brotherhood to establish what changes, if any, they want to make to the meal plan. This includes a full evaluation of the performance of the corporate meal provider.

This is an ongoing effort, by Alumni Association members, to work with the steward, other undergraduate elected officers, and the Brotherhood as a whole, to maintain and improve the Mu Chapter meal plan.



Alumni/E-Board Resolve IFD Citation

By **Jarett Wait '80**



On a Thursday evening prior to Thanksgiving break, the undergraduate brothers had a “foam party” with about 60–70 people in attendance. During the party, close to midnight, the

foam machine, adjacent to a fire detector, apparently set off the fire alarm. Sigma Pi Resident Advisor **Zion Sherin** saw what happened and knowing what caused it, turned off the alarm.

Unfortunately, this was the wrong, yet understandable, response. Everyone at the house evacuated when the Ithaca Fire Department (IFD) arrived at 730 University Avenue. Three firemen entered the house, met with the RA and sage, conducted an inspection, and inquired as to why was the alarm turned off. Zion proactively spoke to the IFD officers about his mistake in silencing the alarm and accepted responsibility. The IFD representatives proceeded to chastise Zion for silencing the alarm, but nonetheless appreciated him owning up to his mistake. The IFD crew then gave the “all clear” signal to permit people to reenter the house. Much to everyone’s surprise, a short while later, a senior IFD official arrived at the house and was irate that the alarm had been silenced. In his eyes, the house was not evacuated. The official’s interaction was confusing and unnecessarily confrontational with our sage and RA. The IFD subsequently cited Mu Chapter for turning off the alarm, not properly evacuating the premises, obstructing entrances and hallways, and hindering an IFD investigation. This resulted in the IFD revoking Sigma Pi’s assembly permit through June 1, which placed January recruitment and all spring social functions in peril.

An emergency leadership team quickly came together consisting of **Jarett Wait '80, Liviu Rusu '98, Jim Franz '77, Zion Sherin, and Sage Rob de Jesus '24**. The group moved to quickly hire a savvy attorney to represent us and file an appeal with the Town of Ithaca for a hearing to overturn this unfair and arbitrary citation. The team conducted a thorough investigation reviewing security footage, interviewing brothers, etc. After a three-hour hearing on January

16 (three days before the start of rush) the Town Board voted 3-0 to overturn the IFD action and subsequently gave the IFD a verbal rebuke in front of the Mu Chapter team. The next day, a new crew from IFD conducted a fire safety inspection whereby our assembly permit was formally reinstated just in time for recruitment!

As an outgrowth of this incident, Mu Chapter has developed and implemented a new set of fire and safety procedures and rules. This was an unbelievable result in the face of many obstacles in a short timeframe and is a testament to the spirit of partnership between the alumni and executive board. Jevo!!!



Brothers Awarded IFC Grants

Congratulations to Brothers **Leule Ashenafi '26** and **Andrew Haight '26** who were awarded fall 2023 IFC Dues Incentive Grants. Every year, the Interfraternity Council (IFC) sponsors grants for new members joining fraternities; merit-based scholarships for students who exhibit the ideals and values of our fraternity system through scholarship, leadership, and service; as well as needs-based scholarships.



Alumni Treasurer Report

By John Haggerty '78



Greetings from a typically rainy spring day on the lake north of Ithaca!

As is detailed in other parts of this *Muse*, it has been an active and interesting few months as we have had repeated challenges and have found ourselves needing to increase spending across multiple lines of purchased goods and services. That said, and despite running deficits (expenses exceed collections), we are current on all our bills and we are likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. Moreover, we have begun to take steps to “re-imagine” Sigma Pi Mu Chapter as a house that is attractive to many future generations of Cornell undergraduates whose needs and interests will likely differ from those that made Mu Chapter attractive in the past. So, despite the challenges, it is an exciting time at 730 University Avenue!

Thanks to the heroic efforts (and raw skill) of guitarist and vocalist extraordinaire **Dave D’Orlando ’79**, we were able to secure new liability insurance policies despite the lack of competition in the market. Insurance has been one of the fastest-growing line items on our income statement for the past four years. Without insurance, it would be simply impossible to operate a fraternity. But the rise in costs is straining our budget. It may soon be necessary to add an “insurance surcharge” to our rent bills in order to recover the rapid rise in premiums and allow us to make adjustments independent of the Cornell dorm rates which are the foundation for rent in today’s Mu Chapter budget model.

Taxes are another significant line item that is increasing, albeit not as rapidly as insurance. Real estate taxes (city and school) total over \$46,000 per year and are likely to increase along with the value of the house and the inflationary forces affecting city services. In just the last four years, our spending on supplies and maintenance has increased by 43% to more than \$42,000 for the current year. And there is a long list of projects in the hopper that **John Morrison ’75** and **Liviu Rusu ’98** would like us to fund now to keep ahead of the ordinary abuse that happens in a college fraternity house.

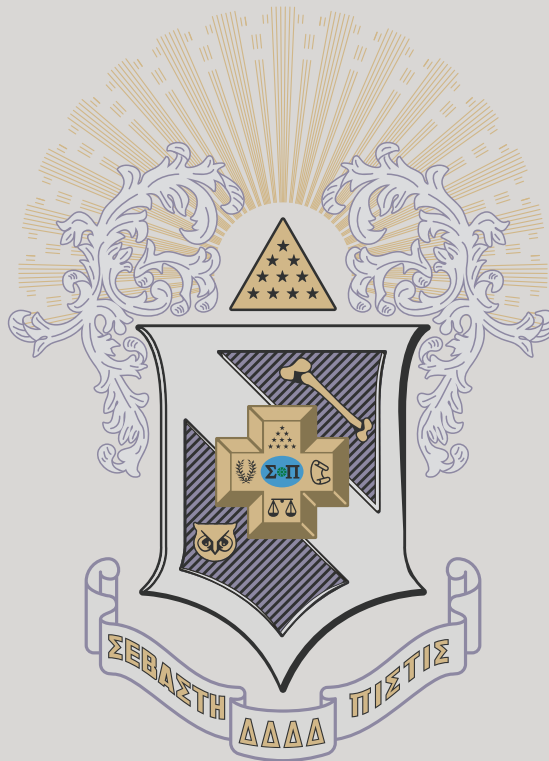
We continue to struggle to get ahead of the slow payment

problems that became our issue when Cornell ended fraternity access to its Bursar billing system. It has required a significant increase in time and effort, as well as money spent on outside services. We are paying increased amounts to our accounting firm to prepare the information we need to manage delinquent accounts. We are transitioning from relying primarily on the undergraduate treasurer to keep bill payments visible to all undergraduate members to a 30-60-90 system owned by our business partner, Elevate. We have also ramped up our communication with parents, describing the difficulty we face when bills are not paid when due. In some cases, communication is all that is needed, but sadly not in all cases.

There is good news on the near horizon. The undergraduates have managed substantial gains in pledge class size in the last two cycles, and house occupancy (the primary driver of revenue) is slated to increase in the 2024–2025 academic year. But with increased occupancy will come the need to purchase more beds and furniture, and maintenance costs are correlated with the number of members living in the house. The net, however, should be a positive increase in cash flow to help mitigate the inflationary pressures. We hope this increased occupancy can be sustained.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you for the now-annual reunion celebration in June. I would also like to again ask for your (continued) generosity to Sigma Pi Mu Chapter. Gifts to the alumni corporation, while not tax-deductible, help to close the gaps created by inflation and slow payment of some student bills. Every dollar contributed to the alumni corporation is invested in the operation of the house. If it has been a while since you contributed, now would be a good time to do so. And of course, there is also the Educational Foundation, where donations are tax-deductible, and they have been helping an increasing number of our younger brothers meet their financial obligations to the fraternity. As always, thank you for your generosity.

If you are planning to be on campus, send me a note. I have transitioned to “half-time,” so you are much more likely to find me on or near campus in the fall semester, but reach out any time.



Re-imagine Sigma Pi Facilities Campaign

Liviu Rusu '98



I practice construction, fly hang gliders, and think insurance is for pessimists.

So, what keeps me up at night, given this level of risk tolerance? Only two thoughts: window air conditioner units falling out of windows at the Pi house and an earthquake in Ithaca making the house cave in along the bathroom stack. Two AC units have already fallen out of windows in prior years and a 4.8 magnitude earthquake hit 40 miles west of NYC on April 5, 2024. I was working on the second-floor bathroom, and when phone alerts of the quake started coming in, I ran out of the house, literally.

To add some appropriate context, we must start in 1994, after the fire. The house was rebuilt in a rush. Mistakes were

made. The plumber, trying to get his toilet piping down through the wall, cut away at the triple beam in his way, cutting through two of the three individual beams. "See, no big deal," I'm pretty sure he thought to himself afterward, with the structure still standing. But that was before the two-inch concrete slab was poured to give the bathroom floor a slope to the floor drain. That was before time slowly worked to sag the remaining beam. It became noticeable to the naked eye about 10 years ago. Concerned, we had an architect and contractor team open the wall between the bathroom and hallway and inspect the area, revealing nothing. The sagging continued, causing the wax toilet seals to leak, seeping water through the wood and compounding the problem. And one day the first-floor bathroom ceiling fell off; the sheetrock waterlogged. With the ceiling open, the cause of the problem was now evident. And so was additional damage: the rot to the remaining structure. That was a year ago and we placed "the beam" on "the ever-growing list" of projects to address when money

allows. This year, the second-floor bathroom ceiling fell off, the sheetrock waterlogged from a toilet leak above it. With the ceiling open, the growth of the problem was now evident, it wasn't just one triple beam compromised, but two right on top of one another, meaning the lower beam is carrying two concrete slabs and failing at an increasing rate. There's now a distinct and regular popping sound that's perceptible in the quiet of the night. Sagging is not a continuous process, but a stepped one, each step having this unique audio signature.

So, this is the context in which I ran out of the Pi house when my phone received an earthquake alert. Currently,

I'm scrambling to install temporary shoring on each side of each beam so I can sleep soundly, without worries about earthquakes in Ithaca.

What was once important, but not urgent, has become urgent.

Will we have an earthquake in Ithaca? Maybe. Will we have a safety inspection? Definitely! Having an AC unit in the hallway led to losing our assembly permit and cost us \$30,000 in legal fees to reinstate it. Losing our occupancy permit would be much more expensive. And the underlying problem must be addressed regardless. But

who's to pay? We're past the statute of limitations for holding the builder or plumber accountable, and the cost of these renovations is substantial. We have a full house slated for next semester and a forecast

budget surplus for the first time in four years, but that's not enough.

This is where we, as alumni, come into play. The Pi house not only serves as a residence for our younger brothers, but

also stands as a testament to our shared history and our commitment to the future of Sigma Pi at Cornell. Every donation, whether large or small, will contribute toward preserving the house for future generations of Sigma Pi brothers.

In addition to financial contributions, we welcome any expertise our alumni network can offer. Whether you have experience in construction, engineering, legal, or fundraising, your involvement can make a significant difference. I truly believe that by pooling our resources and expertise, we can overcome these challenges and emerge stronger; as we have done repeatedly before.

Our immediate priority is to secure the structural integrity of the building. This necessitates removing the concrete slabs in the bathrooms, which are dead weight, replacing the compromised beams and re-routing the plumbing stack, then re-finishing the bathroom floors. The second priority, and almost as important, is a solution to window AC units. For over a year, the facilities committee has been evaluating and debating various systems and their pros and cons with a focus on long-term solutions rather than quick fixes. But our list also includes many other important and urgent items, like all the door locks, for which we can no longer source components, and which require new doors to properly address, bedroom floors that need refinishing after 30 years, a front porch with compromised concrete tiles and a leak into the dining room, a grab-and-go area

that needs to be more of a kitchen to meet the actual use scenario, and more.

Only together can we ensure that our chapter house remains a safe and proud home for many more years to

come. Let's rise to the challenge and keep the spirit of Sigma Pi Mu Chapter strong at Cornell.

Jevo.

“
What was once important but not urgent has become urgent.

“
Only together can we ensure our chapter house remains safe.

Mu Chapter Legal Entity Review

Officers and directors of the alumni board had a meeting recently with the Grand Sage and CEO of Sigma Pi Fraternity, International to discuss the need to reorganize our undergraduate chapter, house and property, and alumni organization's legal entity status to limit potential liability due to unforeseen risks, etc.

All of the fraternity's activities, members (undergraduates and alumni), and assets (house and property) are currently all under one legal entity.

Sigma Pi Fraternity, International recommends we consider creating three separate legal entities:

- Undergraduate Chapter
- Alumni Housing Corp (house and property included) – separate board
- Become a chartered Sigma Pi Alumni Association – separate board

In the spring of 2020, Mu Chapter filed a petition to form the Mu Chapter Cornell University Alumni Association. SPI Grand Council

approved the chartering of the alumni association back in 2020 right around the same time COVID hit. During that time there was a lot of transition at SPI and our application was lost. Thankfully during this review, the application was found and has been subsequently approved.

The purpose of the Mu Chapter Cornell University Alumni Association is to serve as a network for any Mu Chapter alumni and provide support to the undergraduate chapter.

The alumni board, led by **Peter Muth '74**, has started a small working group to examine what next steps are to be taken to establish the other legal entities highlighted above. This will obviously take some time and ultimately will need to be reflected in our brotherhood membership agreements, tax filings, etc. We hope to wrap this up in a few months so we can have new agreements for the 2024–2025 academic year and have a structure that reflects prudent risk management going forward.

Benefits of Being a Chartered SPI Alumni Association

Covered Under the Sigma Pi Fraternity, International Liability Insurance Policy

- Coverage up to \$250,000 (Provided Sigma Pi policies and risk management guidelines are
- Followed for any activity where alcohol is available)
- The association would spend well over the \$300 annual dues for such an insurance policy on its own, for every event it held

Automatic 501(c)(7) Status Granted

- After approval by Sigma Pi Grand Chapter
 - Officer names, social security numbers, and addresses will be given to the Business Operations Department so the association can obtain a Tax ID
 - Association is a subsidiary of Sigma Pi Fraternity, International

Please support Patrick Spirawak's retirement fund



Dear Pi House Alumni,

As we reflect on our time at 730 University Avenue, there's one person who stands out as an integral part of our fraternity experience: **Patrick Spirawak**. For over two decades, Pat served as our dedicated chef, friend, and guardian of the Pi House spirit. Now, as he continues life after the fraternity, it's time for us to come together and show our gratitude for his years of service. We have yet to demonstrate any type of formal appreciation to Pat, nor did he have a pension, so we hope this retirement fundraiser helps achieve that.

During his 26-year tenure, from 1994–2020, Pat did more than just cook meals; he embodied the essence of brotherhood. His authentic personality, signature dishes like champagne chicken, along with pizza and wings, heart-to-heart conversations over Marlboro Lights behind the house, and unwavering support made the Pi house feel like home for countless brothers. Whether it was fixing something that we broke or lending a listening ear, Pat was always there for us.



Last year, during our Reunion Weekend, the joy of seeing Pat reminded us of the impact he had on our lives. His presence brought back fond memories and reinforced the bonds of brotherhood that we hold dear. It's clear that Pat's legacy extends far beyond the kitchen; he is a

cherished member of our Pi house family. This is what truly sparked the idea for this.

Now, as Pat looks toward the future, let's show him how much he means to us. With your generous contributions, we aim to provide Pat with a retirement fund that will allow him to enjoy his golden years to the fullest. Whether it's traveling, pursuing hobbies, or simply relaxing, Pat deserves to be celebrated for his dedication and service.

Every donation will make a difference in Pat's life and express our gratitude for all that he has done for us. Let's join together to give Pat the retirement he truly deserves and show him just how much he is loved and appreciated by the Pi house community.

Please scan the QR Code or visit gofund.me/2d8b0d02 to make your contribution.

Thank you for your generosity and for being a part of honoring Pat's incredible journey with us.

Sincerely,

Jon Morello '11, Alex Rawitz '13, Zach Smith '13, Matt Davis '13, Adam Cherubini '13, Peter Cherubini '10, and Robert Dicker '12



Risk Management Education, Process and Coverage

By David C D'Orlando '79

Risk management is a very important part of our operation at Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi. We have monthly safety inspections of our fraternity and annual education sessions with our undergraduate brothers to prevent incidents. We also have property, general liability, worker's compensation, and directors' and officers' liability insurance to help protect us in the event of a covered loss or incident.



This year, our April 1 insurance renewal was far more challenging than normal. Market factors such as large rate increases and new coverage exclusions made it necessary for us to explore other options. After several years of double-digit rate increases, we were able to obtain coverage at a reasonably competitive price but with new conditions, limitations, and exclusions. The cost to

protect our fraternity through insurance has now reached over \$43,000 a year, which is one of our largest expenses. This cost has doubled in the last four years. This year's renewal process has underscored the need for us to be vigilant in loss control so that we are never in a bad position to receive an insurance offer for renewal.

It is important that the brotherhood abide by all the policies and procedures in the chapter handbook to ensure fire safety and to prevent other forms of property damage. It is also important that there not be any personal injury on the premises or at any off-premises fraternity function. Safety is the number one priority. Our insurance provides very little coverage for hazing, alcohol-related incidents, assault and battery, sexual harassment, and any form of discrimination.

Thank you to all the alumni board members, fraternity officers, and undergraduate brothers for their efforts in maintaining the physical

integrity of the fraternity house and for their diligence in preventing unfortunate events.

At the start of the semester, Liam Murphy, a local Ithaca lawyer, gave the Sigma Pi brotherhood a presentation titled, "When Bad Things Happen, the World Takes Notice!" The presentation focused on liability, both personal and group, with a specific focus on:

- What liability is
- Differences between group and personal liability
- How group liability can impact individuals
- Resources the brothers have to be responsible and avoid liability

The discussion emphasized the role of safety and abiding by sound policies and procedures with a focus on the result of not taking responsibility.

Inaugural Family Camp Weekend June 28-30

I'm excited to invite you and your 4–17-year-old children, nieces, or nephews to Sigma Pi this summer. **Digivations Camps** are one of the **coolest** summer camp options for kids! Last summer, the Pi house hosted this two-week Cornell program, and it was such a hit that they're not just coming back, they're expanding the line-up.

THE OPENING WEEKEND OF JUNE 28–30
IS SPECIALLY TAILORED TO SIGMA PI ALUMNI AND FAMILIES

Whether your little one(s) are 4, 17, or in between, a special weekend of growth and bonding awaits you all.

Camp founders **Drs. Anne & Steve Berman** have been fine-tuning their program for two decades, and even NASA has taken notice. Bedrooms in the house will be professionally prepared, *à la* Airbnb, like last summer.

Adults and young children are on the third floor, teens are on the second floor, and staff are on the first floor.

Space is limited, and the *magic is real*, so don't wait to make your booking. Here's the link and more information in the brochure.

Registration link: campscui.active.com/orgs/DIGIVATIONSInstitute. If you would like further information about the camp or to register, please contact Liviu Rusu'98 lvrusu@gmail.com



Reunion 2024 Schedule of Events

THURSDAY, JUNE 6

7:00 pm: Casual gathering on the front porch of the house

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

9:00 am: Golf with $\Sigma\Pi$ alumni @ Robert Trent Jones Golf Course of Cornell University. If interested, contact Jarett Wait (jwait@jfwaitadv.com).

11:30 am–4:00 pm: Lunch and wine tasting, classes '71–'77 (hosted by Ted Chen '74 and Fred Bassette '76).

3:00–4:00 pm: Fireside chat with Sigma Pi Brother, Andrew Ross Sorkin'99, The Olin Lecture, Bailey Hall

4:00–6:00 pm: Happy hour, Pi house.

6:00–7:00 pm Buffet chicken dinner, Pi-house front porch. Vegan option is available.

7:30 pm: Socializing, **Band of Brothers** unplugged, and open mic on the Pi-house front porch.

SATURDAY, JUNE 8

11:00 am–12:30 pm: Alumni brunch, sponsored by the $\Sigma\Pi$ alumni corp and the Mu

Chapter Educational Foundation. Hear about the state of the undergraduate chapter, the important role of the the Educational Foundation, and the launch of the Re-imagine Sigma Pi Campaign.

3:00–6:00 pm: Band of Brothers Unity World Tour 2024, Rock and Roll Tea Redux on the front porch!

4:30 pm: Sigma Pi **Reunion photo,** front lawn.

6:30 pm: watch the **Belmont stakes** live in The Learning Commons, Pi house.

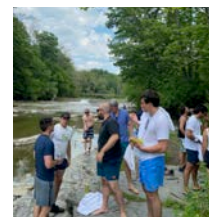
6:30–7:30 pm: Chinese buffet dinner, Pi house. Vegan option is available.

8:00 pm: socializing.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8

Open schedule, Departures

Register now - www.sigmapicornell.org/150-rsvp_reunion/



Classes '71-'77 Lunch and Wine Tasting

Ted Chen '74 and **Fred Bassette '76** are hosting this event for brothers in the '71–'77 classes.

We will meet at Sigma Pi on June 7 at 11:30 am and drive to O'Malley's Lakeside Tavern on the west side of Cayuga Lake for lunch at noon. Lunch is hosted by Ted Chen.

After lunch, we will proceed to Airy Acres Vineyard, owned by Fred Bassette and his wife Pam (Cornell '74). The wine tasting will cost a modest \$8.00 per person (after a 20% discount) for five tastings.

After the wine tasting, on the journey back, there will be an optional stop to see Taughannock Falls.

If interested, please contact Ted @ surfer26th@yahoo.com.



Andrew Sorkin '99 Fireside Chat

Sigma Pi Brother Andrew Ross Sorkin '99 will host a fireside chat, featuring **Andrew Ross Sorkin '99**, with Dr. Samantha N. Sheppard, associate professor of cinema and media studies and chair of Cornell's Department of Performing and Media Arts. The Olin Lecture was established at Cornell in 1987 through a generous gift from the Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Foundation.

Educational Foundation key Partner to Mu Chapter

Wayne Forman '80



Greetings from Mu Chapter of Sigma Pi Educational Foundation. The foundation continues to be an important source of financial assistance to undergraduate brothers while promoting leadership and community service within the brotherhood. **The Greek Affordability Fund (GAF)** grants, available for pledges to help offset new chapter dues, and for sophomores and juniors who commit to live in the Pi house, have been a great success. GAF grants were issued to eight brothers during the spring of 2024, the largest number of recipients in any semester thus far.

Applications are open for the **David Harrop Memorial Scholarship**, named for David Harrop, son of **Bert Harrop '61**, one

of the foundation's founders. This \$2,000 scholarship is awarded annually to the junior brother demonstrating academic excellence, leadership within Mu Chapter, and service to the broader community.

The foundation also is the sponsor of the annual NYC Career Event at the Cornell Club and of other speaker events during the academic year. And we've contributed a portion of the funds needed by the alumni corporation to meet the ongoing needs of the Pi house. These contributions have gone to supporting recruiting efforts, purchasing enhanced security equipment, and funding Pi house maintenance, repairs, and upgrades.

It is important to appreciate that the continued survival of Mu Chapter is not a certainty. It takes the dedication of many alumni, both those who are willing to take on the selfless burdens of day-to-day oversight,

and those who give financially, to keep the lights on and the brotherhood strong. For fiscal year 2023–2024, the foundation received about \$59,000 in donations. Our sincerest thanks to all those who have contributed. We all have many great causes to support and the foundation is appreciative of those who continue to make financial commitments to ensure that the Pi house survives and thrives. I encourage all of you to go to the foundation's website and make a tax-deductible gift to help promote a strong undergraduate brotherhood and a healthy Pi house.

Happy springtime to all brothers and their families and hope to see you all at the next Sigma Pi reunion or alumni event.



“Welcome to Singapore Gathering” for Rob Fuchs '80

Rob “Fuchsy” Fuchs '80 spent years living abroad in Singapore, trading oil for a living. While shuffling oil tankers around the world, he met his wife Lilian, and started a family. The Fuchs clan eventually moved back to the States and settled in Austin, Texas, also home to **Jay “Sac” Sacco '80** and **Luc “Canuck” Chabot '80**. Time flew as the three classmates saw Fuchsy's son Brian graduate from Cornell and his daughter Chelsea graduate from Georgetown. Lilian and Rob, now empty nesters, began their well-deserved retirement, which includes a move back to Singapore. That move is happening soon and the Texas crowd couldn't let them leave without a Sigma Pi-sized send-off.

When news of Fuchsy's departure hit the class of '80, everyone was all in. Six brothers traveled to Austin from all parts of the country; the rest participated via Zoom. The Canuck and Janet hosted a festive evening of barbecue, made to order TMBCs, a “Fuchsy's—this is your life” slide show, boisterous song, and an epic Zoom call for everyone to reminisce with the guest of honor. Chuck Timson made a surprise appearance for the group photo. Sac and Bridget put an exclamation point on the weekend by hosting Sunday brunch with Pines-worthy Bloodies and a Texas-sized spread that was second only to the sense of brotherhood shared by all. Bon Voyage Fuchsy, your brothers will not forget you!



Mu Brothers' News & Notes

George Parker III '65: My wife died seven years ago. I am living with my daughter-in-law and two grandchildren. I still play golf once a week and enjoy it. I understand that Nick Long '68 is still alive. I know Tom Morrow '64 joined the catholic church as a priest, but I haven't heard from him for a long time. I no longer drive and miss it.

Wally Knox '71, Whit Garlinghouse '71, and Dave Miller '71 in Vail, Colorado, last January. We did this same trip five years ago, decided to give it another go, and were successful. If anyone wants to join us for the next one in five years, let one of us know! Wishing good health and cheer to all our '71 Brothers. Vail (right).



The 22nd annual "Pagapalooza" ski event at Stowe, Vermont. Everyone enjoyed dinner at the von Trapp Brewery & Bierhall. Sitting, left to right, **John '82** and **Laura Roche**, **Joanne Barmasse**, and **Laurie Kruse**. Standing: **Chris '79** and **Cindy Olie**, **Larry '79** and **Nancy MacLennan**, **Mark Barmasse '78**, **Crystal**, **Larry Paglierani '78**, and **Kevin Kruse '79**. Back row: the Yak (above/left).

Dr. Joseph Dervay '80 has the honor of serving this year as the president of the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA), an international professional organization for aerospace medicine, physiology, and human performance. Their Annual Scientific Meeting was held in Chicago in May. He assembled an outstanding lineup of keynote speakers, including Astronaut and Senator Harrison Schmitt, one of the last men to walk on the Moon during Apollo 17 in 1972. He also had the pleasure to moderate a morning panel with Astronauts Dr. Joe Kerwin (the first US physician in space during Skylab), Col. Bob Cabana, Joan Higginbotham, and Dr. Serena Aunon-Chancellor.

Barry Weiss '81 and Gary Wagner '81, went to Israel post the October 7th tragedy. Pictured right are Barry & Gary with two IDF members.

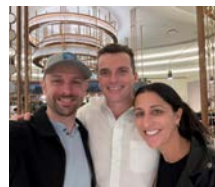


Greg Vojnovic '85 believes the Hot Dog Shoppe is ready for expansion. Watch the interview: www.restaurantbusinessonline.com/financing/why-greg-vojnovic-believes-hot-dog-shoppe-ready-expansion.

Gordon Adelsberg '90: I recently started a new job sourcing deals for a boutique investment banking firm. Turns out we're all retired water polo players. I guess all those hours in the Teagle pool finally paid off! Any Pi-men here in sunny Miami: please get in touch.

Noah Koretz '04 has started a new position as director of neighborhood investments & partnerships at Graffito SP.

David Rosen '05 has been promoted to managing director at Blackstone.



Pledge Brothers **Quin Garcia '05** and **Jonah Allaben '06** and his Sigma Pi sweetheart, **Marissa Allaben**, in Vegas! (left).

Scott Melman '06, Jason Brown '06 and Carl Majette '05 (right).



Anthony Majette '09 started a new position as senior project manager, People Team at Block.

Brody Ehrlich '10 started a new position as head of finance at Skyflow! He is excited to join one of the most innovative companies of 2024 and ready to help secure PII, PCI, PHI, and LLM along the next generation of tech.

Nick Ornitz '16: Starts Topline Pro, a Lead generation platform www.forbes.com/profile/topline-pro/

Nico Capalongo '20 started a new position as an associate at Brookfield Asset Management.

Jason Spector '20 and Richard Greenbaum '20 recently launched Lucite. Lucite increases productivity in financial professionals, saving firms time and money. Our first product automates some of the most common finance pages, which can be downloaded for your desired target in minutes. Lucite presentations are fully editable and come with sources.

Jonah Hutchinson '20 has been promoted to associate, hotel investments at London & Regional Properties!

Ricardo Melasecca '24 shares that on February 18, **Kai Merritt '23, Ethan Wood-Thomas '23**, and I embarked on a month-long graduation trip around South East Asia after ending our time at Cornell in December. We bounced around four countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Singapore. Each city had its own story and culture to discover, making the once-in-a-lifetime journey unforgettable for us (right).



In Memoriam

The alumni board has been notified with the passing of our dear departed brothers.

Jarvis Lang '54

February 22, 2024

MacDonald J. Holmes '61

August 30, 2023

Lawrence D. McGuinn '67

November 20, 2023

Martin J. Neenan '72

February 8, 2024

Honor a deceased brother with a memorial plaque; visit

sigmapicornell.edu/150-giving-memorial.asp