



BETA THETA DATA

Fall 2014 Volume 63 Number 1

Now THAT's More Like It!

It's been a long haul, guys. It really has. And I'm at a point in my life where *everything* seems to be taking longer than I want it to take. The "Return of the Pike House" has most decidedly been on that list. It's taken so much longer to get the house back up and running than I ever would have guessed. And it wasn't a foregone conclusion, either. At this year's Homecoming, you could see it on the faces of so many of the alumni: a combination of "that took a lot of time & effort" mixed with "Whew! That was a close one."

Ed Catto '85 edcatto@hotmail.com

This year's Homecoming was bit of victory lap for all involved. We've all worked hard, and now that Pike house has been rebooted all seems right in the world. We had an outstanding alumni turnout and the actives were gracious hosts. The new guys are an impressive bunch, and I know I speak for all the alumni when I say, "We're expecting great things for you guys."



As a returning alumnus, it all seemed so effortless and fun to be back on the hill this year. The agita will always be there, I imagine, but this year every Pike was enjoying the moment.

And one of the interesting things, for me at least, is how I don't take any of this for granted anymore. It was pretty special to spend time with the actives and the alumni on the main floor at the lodge. And while, on one hand, it seemed so "ordinary", it was *really* spectacular.

But you know, everything wasn't "the same". The Homecoming schedule was a little different this year. Some of the traditions will return next year, and I have a feeling that some of 2014 activities will become new traditions. One note, it was surprising how flexible the alumni seemed. I didn't hear a lot of "This is how we did it in the old days", but instead the alumni embraced a spirit of "Sounds cool, let's give this a try".

Part of it might have been the caliber of the alumni this year. We had an awesome turnout of A+ alumni. Some were the regulars, some were the recently re-engaged and a one was in the "I haven't been back to campus

ever" category. We shared a lot of laughs, told a lot stories and swapped a buncha lies. Man, it felt good to be a part of that.

This Homecoming was a fantastically fun and energizing weekend for us all. But in typical Pike fashion, none of the actives or alumni are content to bask in the good will. Everyone's excited to take this fraternity forward. As we've often said - the new Pike is going to serve as an example to all Cornelians for what a fraternity can be. We're keeping the good stuff and scrubbed out all the outdated nonsense. We were just at the starting line and the starter pistol has just been fired. We're off and it's going to be an incredible race!

postscript

One quick aside to shoehorn in here: As I type this, we're on the cusp of Veterans Day. It's a great day and we have so many great veterans to thank for their outstanding service. But sometimes I think about the war-time experiences of guys like Gibber - and reflect on the doubly difficult time so many African Americans had in the armed services, especially during WWII. I have double the respect for veterans like Hugh Sylvester Gibbs who served his country with dignity and honor at a time when it "wasn't easy" (what an understatement) for men of color.

Homecoming Impressions

Some of you wondered whether Beta Theta could ever return to the Hill. Wonder not. I went to Homecoming as did many other alums and even with so many alums coming back the undergrad chapter put out a great welcoming Homecoming weekend - perhaps even putting us ahead of usual

Rick Carrington '69 rcarrington@sbcglobal.net

Homecoming partying. The new undergrad brothers are a group of which you can be proud. They are friendly, involved in many campus activities (sports, leadership, academic, charitable), are from diverse areas, and studying varied academic pursuits.

They are friendly, personable and, with all the obstacles they had to face, have bonded well together as a mutually supportive and organized group. They are a top notch addition to what will be a long tradition for Pike at Cornell. In short they are a great group of guys to carry on and raise Beta Theta's stature. It's a new world for fraternities at Cornell and I think they are at the peak of that world.

Board of Directors, 2014-2015

<u>term</u>		
2015	Ed Catto, President	201-314-4558
2016	Bob Forness	973-701-7323
2017	Tim Cole, Vice President	508-982-5266
2018	Steve Amador, Treasurer	703-269-7096
2019	Jeff Reinders, Alumni Relations	630-639-8999

Advisor's Corner

This is likely my shortest update ever, because the news is all good. The

Andy Glasner '86 arg42@cornell.edu

brothers are back in the house, new officers are elected and in training, homecoming was a big success, and the level of alumni communication/interest is the highest it has been in a decade at least. I'm hopeful the success and enthusiasm of the past year will carry over to the capital improvement fund. So get out those checkbooks brothers and let's keep the momentum going.

Endowment Fund Goal Reached

The Beta Theta Chapter Endowment Fund (CEF)

Tom Sporney '75 tsporney@betathetaddata.net

now exceeds \$10k. Distributions from CEF interest to the chapter scholarship fund will start in 2016; these funds will be available for chapter education activities[www.pikes.org/media/documents/ef_pikeu_bro.pdf].

Brothers Alan Becker, Bill Cummings, Alan Zucchini, and Jeff Lowe have stepped up to the challenge. Lowell Figur has made a 5-year pledge, with a portion directed to the Beta Theta CEF. On behalf of Alpha Theta and the active chapter, thank you, gentlemen!

The balance is presently \$10,789. Lets not stop now! If you are considering a contribution to the PIKE Foundation, please think about marking it for the Beta Theta CEF. Now that we have reached the mark, let's start putting this resource to good use, helping active brothers attend PiKA educational programming.

Please contact me directly if you are interested.

Calendar

May 1, 2015	Spring 2015 BΘData deadline
June 4-7, 2015	Reunion Weekend
Sept 18-19, 2015	Homecoming
November 1, 2015	Fall 2015 BΘData deadline
November, 2015	Pike University, NJ
June 9-12, 2016	Reunion Weekend
Sept 23-24, 2016	Homecoming
March 26, 2017	Centennial of BΘ chapter founding
March 1, 2018	PiKA 150 th anniversary

Pike U Philly

Pike U occurred from November 7th to November 8th at the Renaissance hotel in Philadelphia. In attendance were three

Matt Lim '17 mlimpike@gmail.com

alumni (Tom Sporney, Ralph Oliver, and Bob Forness), and nine current brothers (Matthew Lim, Eric Lei, Andrew Salamida, Zack Dvornicky-Raymond, Sam Vrabel, Ben Krapels, Dan Fordyce, John Lemp and Javier Jimenez).



Together, these 12 Pikes represented the Beta Theta chapter of Cornell.

At Pike U, these gentlemen attended a plethora of events that were hosted by nationals. These events included a guest speaker, recruitment seminars, risk management seminars, and conflict resolution seminars. All of these events were informative and will definitely help the newly initiated Beta Theta Chapter to grow and to prosper. In addition to these events, the chapter made sure to save Brett "The Pink Cloud" Helberg a seat at their banquet table. The chapter is committed to form an everlasting bond with nationals and their representatives.

The Beta Theta chapter would like to extend a thank you to the alumni who attended. We appreciate your support and time.

*Safe & enjoyable
Holidays
to all!*

Active Brothers and Alumni Return to 17 South Avenue

Cornellians young and old alike know that the changing of the leaves and cooler temperatures each autumn can mean only one thing -- Homecoming Weekend is near. Homecoming provides a multitude of opportunities for alumni to convene with their classmates and reminisce about their glory days on The Hill. Current students and alumni involved in Greek Life look forward to this weekend each year as a time to cherish each other's company as well as share stories, life experiences, songs, and traditions new and old. This year's Homecoming Weekend took place Friday, October 17, 2014 through Sunday, October 18, 2014, and served as the first time Homecoming festivities were held back at 17 South Avenue in four years. Over 45 alumni of the Beta Theta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha joined active brothers for a memorable weekend filled with songs, stories, social gatherings, and a ubiquitous sense of brotherhood in the Pi Kappa Alpha tradition.

Several alumni returned to Ithaca Thursday and early Friday to come back to their home at 17 South where they experienced great joy in seeing active brothers once again residing in the Beta Theta Chapter house. The first event that was held was a Wine and Cheese Reception on Friday night at 17 South, where active brothers and alumni gathered in the spirit of brotherhood sharing stories, singing songs, and spending time with each other at a place we can all proudly now call home. Brother Rick Carrington, Beta Theta '66, Cornell '69, remarked, "You guys took on and presented an incredible Homecoming. I don't think there ever has been one like it... I had a great time and really appreciated the effort you all put into it and the welcoming you provided."

Saturday, October 18, 2014, was a busy day filled with meetings, tailgates, mixers, football, food, and fun. The annual Alpha Theta meeting took place 10 a.m. that morning in the Great Room on the first floor of the house. Later that morning, the active brothers had a mixer with Kappa Delta sorority in the basement of the house to celebrate the Homecoming festivities. Then, alumni and active brothers made their way to the Greek tailgate on Tower Road for a great barbeque prepared by active brother and PIKE grill master, Sam Vrabel, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '15. Following the tailgate, the Homecoming football game was played at Schoellkopf Field between the Cornell Big Red and Lehigh University, in which Cornell unfortunately lost 31-14. To conclude the evening Saturday, active brothers, alumni, and guests ate dinner together back at 17 South Avenue. Special thanks to our fraternity chef and current steward, Jon Levitan, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '17 for preparing the meal and setting up the dining room!

Sunday, October 19 marked the end of Homecoming Weekend in which several alumni joined us for Sunday brunch at 17 South. At our weekly chapter meeting that evening, the active brothers all spoke on how much they enjoyed the weekend: a common point reiterated throughout the discussion was how much fun we had getting to know those alumni that returned for the weekend, on both personal and professional levels. We all understand and cherish the notion that being a brother of the Beta Theta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha is part of a lifelong fraternal experience and we look forward to working and communicating with you going forward, as well as welcoming you all back to 17 South for next year's Homecoming, taking place September 18-20, 2015!

I would like to thank active brothers Russell Sesler, President, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '16; Nick Toth, Graduate Live-In Advisor, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '14; Andrew Salamida, Special Events Chairman, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '15; Matt Harkins, House Manager, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '16; Chris Larmore, Treasurer, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '15; Colin Travers, External Vice President, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '16; and Erik Engberg, Internal Vice President, Beta Theta '14, Cornell '15 for all of their efforts in preparing for and successfully executing the weekend's events. Thank you to all alumni that attended Homecoming 2014 -- we are tremendously grateful of your financial contributions, advice, and the company and support you continue to provide us. Special thanks go out to brother Logan Cheek, who generously donated grape pies as dessert for the dinner on Saturday night. On behalf of the active brotherhood of the Beta Theta Chapter, I would like to once again thank you all for making Homecoming Weekend 2014 a remarkable success -- one that will surely provide us with lifelong memories!

Homecoming Minutes

The Annual Meeting of the Alpha Theta Fraternity was held at 17 South Avenue, Ithaca, New York, on October 18, 2014, being the 96th Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

The Meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by President Ed Catto.

42 members were in attendance in person, and 51 by proxy.

Minutes of the last annual meeting were read and approved.

Open comments were made by President Ed Catto concerning recent events, and the recovery of the active chapter.

A report by Treasurer Steve Amador was read and approved.

A report by Tom Sporney on Alumni Relations was given, including two awards given out at the National Convention to Beta Theta alumni: Alumni Advisory Board of the Year, and the Order of the West Range, given to Josh O. Bernstein, '90. Tom also reported that enough donations had been made by Alumni to bring the balance of the Beta Theta account with the Chapter Endowment Fund of the Pike Foundation above \$10,000, which entitles us to participate in any income generated by the fund.

A report on the Alumni Advisory Group was given by Bob Forness, including a brief outline of the Group's responsibilities and objectives.

The following reports were given by officers of the Active Chapter:

- Russell Sesler, SMC of the Active Chapter.
- Nick Toth, Graduate Advisor.
- Ben Krapels, IMC-elect and member of the Rush Committee

A report on the Hugh Gibbs Capital Improvement Fund was given by Ralph Olivier, including the results of the energy audit, copies of which were handed out, the work done over the summer, and the upcoming major project, the stabilizing of the front porch and the repair of the front steps.

A report by Treasurer Steve Amador was read and approved.

A motion was made, seconded and passed that all official acts of the Officers, Directors, and Trustees of the Corporation during the previous year be ratified and approved.

The meeting was opened to nominations for Director to succeed Josh Tauber, whose term expired today. Jeff Reinders was nominated. A motion was made and passed that nominations be closed. A motion was made and passed that Jeff Reinders be elected by acclamation. Jeff Reinders was elected.

The meeting was opened to nominations for Trustee of the Hugh S. Gibbs Capital Improvement Fund to succeed C.B. Smith, whose term expired today. C.B. Smith was nominated. A motion was made, seconded and passed that nominations be closed. A motion was made and passed that C.B. Smith be elected by acclamation. C.B. Smith was elected.

NEW BUSINESS:

Logan Cheek gave a brief summary of the work he had done in researching the first ten years of the history of Beta Theta Chapter, and some of the outstanding athletes who were members during those early years, resulting in a monograph prepared by him ultimately comprising approximately 160 pages. He also commented on the collection of athletic equipment of that period which he assembled and hoped to display in the Chapter House on a temporary or permanent basis.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
David S. Miles, Secretary

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Alpha Theta Fraternity was held at 17 South Avenue, Ithaca, New York, on October 18, 2014.

The Meeting was called to order at 11:28 a.m. by President Ed Catto.

The following Directors were present: Catto, Amador, Cole and Forness.

Also present: Miles, Secretary.

Reading of the Minutes of the last directors' meeting was waived.

The following were elected officers of the corporation:

- President – Ed Catto
- Vice President – Tim Cole
- Secretary – David Miles
- Treasurer – Steve Amador
- Alumni Relations – Jeff Reinders and Tim Cole

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:33 a. m.

Respectfully submitted,
David S. Miles, Secretary

5 Questions with...

Josh Bernstein '93

Josh [www.joshbernstein.com] was 2-term chapter president, as well as vice president of the Cornell IFC, and president of the Order of Omega. He was keynote speaker and received the PiKA Order of the West Range at the National Convention in August.

- *Josh, recount some of the challenges of Beta Theta in the early '90's.*

[JB] During the 90's, Cornell's Greek system transitioned from unregulated keg parties to very regulated catered parties. So the introduction of liquor licenses and third parties for ID checks and tighter risk management standards were a big deal for the entire Greek system. Specific to Beta Theta, we faced the temporary condemnation of the house due to fire code changes (the Nest, in particular) and the social suspension of the Chapter due to an incident with Delta Upsilon. Thankfully, both resolved quickly and relatively favorably.

- *We've heard about the 'during' and 'after' of Digging for the Truth, but how were you 'discovered' for that show?*

[JB] It's a long story, but the quick version is that in 2000-2001, there was a fascination with all things Survival-related due to the huge success of CBS's Survivor show. Since I was then the CEO of BOSS (the Boulder Outdoor Survival School) I made a bunch of on-camera appearances for the school and a number of production companies asked if I wanted to host something myself. I said no. Being on TV was never really an interest of mine. However, when History Channel contacted me about a new, high-definition flagship series on archaeology and world mysteries, I was intrigued. My degree in anthropology was close enough to the topic that I looked at this as an opportunity to continue my learning. I never really thought it would lead to a #1 hit show and start a new career path for me.

- *Tell us about your new Explorer At Large venture with the Smithsonian Institution.*

[JB] Explorer At Large is a media platform launching in Summer 2015 to engage and inspire the world with educational videos and content focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM). Basically, it's an effort to raise the bar for educational programming. Rather than work with networks like Discovery and History, I've decided to partner with the Smithsonian, NASA, NOAA and other scientific institutions so I can tell their scientists' stories. Stay tuned for updates on that as we get closer to launch by visiting ExplorerAtLarge.com. I'm pretty excited about it.

- *What Pikes have you managed to stay in touch with personally? Who have you lost touch with and would be interested in seeing?*

[JB] Through Facebook, there are maybe three dozen brothers that I keep track of. I travel a lot, so it's harder for me to see people regularly, but I do enjoy conversations and e-mails with a lot of Pikes. With my attendance at the Pi Kappa Alpha Convention this past summer and some of my ongoing work with Pike HQ, I've heard from and connected with a bunch of Pikes in other classes and chapters, too, which has been great. As for who I'd be interested in seeing, I'd honestly be happy to re-connect with everyone and anyone from my years (89-93). There was one brother (Chris "Ogee" Perez '89) who I was trying to connect with *forever* but I finally tracked him down last year and had dinner with him, his wife and kids. It was great!

- *What's your fondest memory of 17 South Avenue?*

[JB] I put a lot of time into the Fraternity during my time on campus. I held officer positions in the house and on campus and, as a result, I learned a tremendous amount about myself, leadership dynamics, and the joys of Greek life. Cornell was a fantastic four years for me and Pi Kappa Alpha, in particular, gave me so much. As a result, I have a lot of great memories so it's hard to specify any one moment. However, now that I think about it, we held a Black-tie Gala for Beta Theta's 75th Anniversary when I was president. We rented a ballroom in the Statler and really went for it. Not only was Gibber there as a guest of honor - which was great - but Pi Kappa Alpha National President Jerry Askew attended, as did Judge Elbert Parr Tuttle (Beta Theta '17) and his wife. That was a very special event that, to this day, I still reflect upon and appreciate.

If you'd like to participate in Five Questions, or have a suggestion for someone you like to hear from, finger him to Tom Sporney [tsponney@betathadata.net].

Dik's Ravings

You would think from my columns that I hang out at the Fraternity house almost as much as when I was an undergraduate, but the truth is that this past Homecoming was the first time I had been back in years. You guys

Dik Saalfeld '80 rfs25@cornell.edu
Washington correspondent

have gotten old. With minor exceptions, I, on the other hand, am indistinguishable from my 19-year-old self, those minor exceptions being my wrinkled, balding gray head covered with liver spots, my paunch, my creaky joints, and my inability to stay awake past 10. If I talked to you and smiled when you told me how horribly your life has turned out, don't despair – I'm also going deaf, so it's nothing personal.

Dick Carrington displayed his boyish charm at Homecoming, then took a turn for the geezer when he got blood clots on the flight back to San Francisco. A few days in the hospital straightened him out. He figured out when the nursing shift changes were, and used the opportunity to break into the medication carts. He thought he was getting clinical grade smack, but it turned out to be an industrial strength laxative. Never one to waste an opportunity, he baked it into cookies he donated to the senior center in his neighborhood. Hilarity ensued.

Brothers from the '70s and '80s classes were there in force. (As always, if I leave you out, don't contact me, because I don't care. This is not third grade. You won't be getting a trophy, either.) Mark Martin can still bench press your house, so try not to piss him off. Bob Forness spends the work week in Bermuda, and weekends moving into his new estate in Pennsylvania – you really should have treated him better when he was a pledge. Bill Page and Ed Catto got drunk at the Friday night party and tried to get a coed to play "Come in, Rangoon." Said coed turned out to be Nate Rudgers' daughter, so she was wise to the ploy; she smiled demurely, and kneed them in their respective groins. Ed and Bill needed medical care, but the only doctor around was John Olsewski, so we dragged them out on the porch to suffer out of earshot. Incidentally, Johnny O's daughter is a Cornellian, but she spent the entire weekend avoiding him and us, so we never determined that, in fact, she exists.

Neil Best asked me to help convince his daughter, Simi, that Cornell is the university she should attend, she being a smart and discerning high schooler. When she was small, she idolized me as a god, but she's at the age at which friends of parents are on par with road-kill, and if the road-kill has had a couple of beers and intersperses his ramblings with tales of Fraternity hijinx involving police cars and intestinal gas, then maybe it's best to go to Brown. Which is where she wants to go, thanks to yours truly. I used to be better at this.

I rarely venture into serious topics, but something happened leading up to Homecoming that could have been tragic, had not brothers jumped to the rescue. I speak of an unfortunate email sent by Brother Rockford to me, Bjork, Eno, Casey, Wes, Lowie, Fid, and many, many others. While packing for the trip to Ithaca, Rock wrote – you should probably ask the kids to leave the room, and for crying out loud, sit down – "What are people wearing to the BBQ tomorrow night? I am thinking jeans, sneakers and a golf shirt." Fortunately, many of us instantly chimed in and ridiculed him mercilessly, bringing him back to earth. But what if we hadn't been there for Rock? He could have glided smoothly into a discussion of window treatments and furniture placement. He could have lapsed into raving about his bitchy manicurist and the scourge of uncomfortable shoes. Gentlemen, we are Pikes. If you feel isolated and out of touch, pick up the phone and call a fratboy. Go through that box of old pictures in the junk closet and dig out the snap of yourself from sophomore year with underpants on your head and a six pack of Genny Cream hanging from your belt. Scratch your nuts and think of Gibber. But don't make us come to your house with chloroform and a pillow, especially if you are still an active dues-payer.



Alumni Notes

"In February, all but four members of the Pledge Class in 1981 reunited for a weekend in Las Vegas, where we recreated a photo taken in Noyes Pub one Wednesday night before we headed over to the back lot of the house at the appointed hour.



This time around, we skipped the vintage tuxedos (rented from Revival in Collegetown for \$5 a piece), as well as the garnet and gold carnations. A good time was had by all. **Barry 'Thrax' Lawrence '84** deserves special thanks for making the hotel, banquet, and golf arrangements, and **Tom Lowum '83** for setting up the mountain biking excursion. Rumor has it that the next such event is planned for 2017, we hope with all twenty-one of our pledge brothers in attendance."



- Paul Barresi '84 [ppabarr@aol.com]

"We gathered together for a four day extravaganza for **Kurt Schau's '76 60th**. Present were **Justus von Lengerke '75 '76 '77**, **Bob Jenkins '72 & Hans Hahne '75**. **Bob Mateus '78** dropped in for one of the nights but apparently no longer has a four-day binge in him anymore. As for me, not sure if I'm semi-employed or semi-retired. Last one flies the coop in the fall."

- Chuck Swensen '76 [csjr@vhsinc.com]

Michael Swartzon '02 [drswartzon@gmail.com] got married to Dara Rose, now Dara Swartzon, in 2012. He is currently living in Miami working with athletes.

"My 50th Reunion was a very wonderful time on the hill. It was great to reconnect with some of my pledge brothers after all these years passed. The newly initiated brothers were very welcoming and cordial to us. I am sure they will bring Pi Kappa Alpha back to prominence on the hill."

- Mike Galiszuski '64 [mdgret62@yahoo.com]

Chapter Eternal

The brothers of Beta Theta Chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha extend their sympathy to the families and friends of the following brothers:

Charles L. Ivento '62

March 19, 2014

[www.legacy.com/obituaries/herald/obituary.aspx?pid=170236463]

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