

# BETA THETA DATA

Spring 2018 Volume 66 Number 2

## SMC Report

As Spring 2018 comes to a close, it gives us time to reflect on what has been an outstanding year in Beta Theta's history. This academic year not only brought us the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our chapter and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pi Kappa Alpha, but also Beta Theta's most successful philanthropic year since rechartering, a new and improved continuing education program, and a noticeable increase in campus presence.

Ben Kermisch '19  
[bkermisch514@gmail.com](mailto:bkermisch514@gmail.com)

This spring semester alone, our brothers have raised over \$7,000 for organizations both locally and nationally, such as The Mental Health Association in Tompkins County and the American Cancer Society. Beyond monetary contributions, an emphasis on establishing a better link with the community led to several ongoing service projects where brothers were able to form a bond with a local group by doing weekly projects.

Perhaps one of the biggest transitions PIKE has faced this spring at Cornell is the implementation of the True PIKE Experience, TPE. This is a new curriculum for continuing education from MHQ which ensures that brothers learn valuable life skills in their time in PIKE, from filing taxes to healthy eating. The program progresses from introductory level content in the first semester to more advanced content by the end, making sure to stay relevant to brothers' needs. While beginning any new program has its ups and downs, Beta Theta has done a tremendous job adapting to a positive change.

While the political climate remains hostile towards Greek life at Cornell, our chapter has positioned itself well to adapt to the changes and come out stronger than ever. Thanks to strong leadership since rechartering and excellent oversight from our alumni, we are uniquely prepared to deal with the new regulations being put into place over the coming years by Martha Pollack. I look forward to seeing how our brothers rise to meet the challenges of the coming months.

## Gibber Fund Report

Contributions to the Gibber Fund (formerly known as the Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign) in 2017 were used by Alpha Theta to pay for the projects required by the City of Ithaca's inspection and for the replacement of the boiler, which failed in December. The inspection projects included new fire escape ladders, a new patio railing, step handrails, a stone wall and grade elevation adjustments. Thanks to the donations of more than 100 alumni, who collectively donated \$41,510 during our end of the year fundraising campaign, the Pike house received a Certificate of Compliance from the City of Ithaca, making it possible for the active chapter to host social functions and participate in spring rush.

Elliot Dee '84  
[elliotdeellc@gmail.com](mailto:elliotdeellc@gmail.com)

We are excited to recognize all of our alumni who made a donation to the Gibber Fund in 2017:

\$4,000  
Brad Smith

\$2,000  
John Mangan

\$1,000  
Alan Becker, Logan Cheek, Elliot Dee, Hans Hahne, Paul Lego, James Miller, Johnny Olsewski, Bill Page, Marty Putenis, Marc Rockford, Marc Rubenstein, Dik Saalfeld, Charlie Snider, Tom Sporney, Chuck Whitehead, Donald Whitney (Whitney Family Fund), William Wood and Alan Zucchini,

\$500-\$999  
Bob Ball, Tom Berg, Kent Callahan, Jason Cavaliere, Ed Conti, Steve Entenmann, George Everitt, Paul Faber, Bob Forness, Ira Friedman, Chas Horvath, Paul Linskey, Aldo Morrell, Dave Miles, Bruce Pender, Jeff Reinders and Nathan Schreiber

\$250-\$499  
Chip Baines, Andy Bjork, Steve Crump, Joe Fiteni, Douglas Haller, Andy Glasner, Mike Greenberg, Robert Jenkins, Jon Lemp, Bruce Mackle, Chris Markham, Brian Pickerall, Richard Sasson and Kurt Schau

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## Board of Directors, 2017-2018

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<u>term</u>		
2018	Tim Cole, Treasurer	508-982-5266
2019	Jeff Reinders, President	630-639-8999
2020	Andrew Salamida, Vice President	607-245-6428
2021	Tom Sporney, alumni relations	410-863-5854
2022	Duncan McKeen	757-589-1717

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## Advisor's Corner

Beta Theta's spring term was certainly challenging.

Bob Forness '87

[bob.forness@gmail.com](mailto:bob.forness@gmail.com)

In December, Ryan Lombardi, Vice President for Student and Campus Life, wrote a letter to the Cornell

Greek community stating that hazing would no longer be tolerated and sanctions would be severe. A number of chapters ignored this warning. Sigma Nu has now lost recognition for three years. Delta Phi, subject to an appeal, is highly likely to be next.

This month, President Pollack announced a number of significant changes to Greek life at Cornell. Immediate changes include harsher sanctions for hazing and prohibition of hard alcohol in chapter houses. From now until 2021, other changes will include more formal education programs, upperclassmen needing to fill key chapter officer roles, and live in advisors. Beta Theta is better prepared than most due to our response to probation this year. However, these changes will still be significant and will have both intended and unintended consequences. By taking this step, Cornell has drawn a line in the sand. Cornell Greeks will be required to live up to the higher standards of Greek life or risk seeing the system come to an end. The national trend toward harsher sanctions against Greeks for hazing, high risk drinking and drugs, sexual assault and racial incidents is now being reflected in Cornell's own campus climate and responses.

Despite the overall frosty climate toward Greeks, our chapter has done extremely well. Pike's chapter consultant's report rated Beta Theta as Near Excellent with an overall 85 score. With a bit of help from Mother Nature, the chapter worked very hard to plan and execute a successful Slope Day. And most importantly, Beta Theta's probationary recognition status was removed on May 8<sup>th</sup>. The E-Boards of last fall and this spring, under the leadership of Harrison Johnson and Ben Kermisch respectively, as well as the entire brotherhood, are to be congratulated for delivering fully on the action plan required to bring probation to an end.

We are now surveying the Alumni Advisory Group's members. We'd like to know who will continue, what advisory roles each person wants to fill, and how we can improve the AAG. Most importantly, we want to "refresh" the ranks of the AAG especially with brothers younger than yours truly. Please reach out to me at [bob.forness@gmail.com](mailto:bob.forness@gmail.com) or +1 441 534 9394 if you can step up to this challenge. I can assure you it is inspiring and personally rewarding to work with the chapter and can make a real difference in the current climate.

## Calendar

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June 7-10, 2018	Reunion Weekend
July 25-29, 2018	PIKA Int'l Convention, Richmond
Sept 21-22, 2018	Homecoming
November 1, 2018	Fall 2018 $\beta\Theta$ Data deadline
November 3-5, 2018	Pike University, Philadelphia
May 1, 2019	Spring 2019 $\beta\Theta$ Data deadline

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## Gibber Fund Report (continued)

\$100-\$249

Bill Andrews, Tom Atwood, Marco Boyce, Larry Brown, Richard Carrington, Tim Cole, Gringo Criscuolo, Joey Dashevsky, Bill Dinan, Mark Doing, George Downs, Hans Drenkard, Jon Flaks, Lars Fuchs, Richard Girands, Charles Hainz, Robert Hastings, Jim Hegenbarth, Tom Helfrich, Eric Helland, Andrew Henderson, George Henry, Jeff Hubley, Mark Johnson, Andrew Kaufman, Paul Kinderman, Lucas Kovalcik, Jeff Lowe, Bruce MacNair, Robert Mackeown, Barry Marcus, Mark Martin, Kevin O'Connell, Ken Parsons, Mark Podgainy, Bill Robinett, Bernie Rosner, Paul Sanik, Mike Schadle, Lawrence Schwartz, Charlie Shafran, Jake Sigmund, Michael Swartzon, Brett Sylvester, Alan Tantleff, Andy Traum, James Webb and George Weiner

\$10-\$99

James Campbell, Joseph Connolly, Charles DeVenzio, Jeffrey Hill, John Peterson, Robert Salamida, James Schatz, John Sulich and Ari Rom

All alumni and actives are encouraged to donate to the fund at whatever level is meaningful and comfortable for you. Please send checks payable to Hugh S. Gibbs Community Improvement Campaign to: Bill Page, Treasurer, 1201 Meadow Sweet Lane, Victor NY 14564. Contributions to the Gibber Fund are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. If you make a contribution at the same time that you pay your Alpha Theta dues, please send a separate check made payable to the Hugh S. Gibbs Community Improvement Campaign.

Please feel free to contact Elliot Dee at [ElliotDeeLLC@gmail.com](mailto:ElliotDeeLLC@gmail.com) with any questions about the Hugh S. Gibbs Community Improvement Campaign.

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Elliot Dee, Tom Sporney and Bill Page  
Directors  
The Hugh S. Gibbs Community Improvement Campaign  
(The Gibber Fund)

## 5 Questions with...

### Bernie Rosner, BA '54

Bernie [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernat\\_Rosner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernat_Rosner)] is the co-author of *An Uncommon Friendship: From Opposite Sides of the Holocaust*. He has spoken to groups on many occasions about his experience.

- *In 1948, you arrived in the United States at 16, and completed high school. What were the circumstances that brought you to attend Cornell in 1950? What was your field of study?*

[BR] I was initially drawn to Cornell because it had a four year curriculum that combined liberal arts with an agriculture degree. I pictured myself bestriding my horse looking over my Texas sized spread. Looking out the train window going home on vacations and seeing the postage stamp sized, rocky, hardscrabble farms of upstate New York farms quickly disillusioned me of that idea, and I switched my focus to major in political science and economics. I had a wonderful professor (Robert Cushman) who taught Constitutional law, which steered me toward a legal career. My senior thesis was a 130 page opus on the ex post facto clause of the US Constitution. Side note: Ruth Bader Ginsberg was my classmate both at Cornell and Harvard Law School.

- *What positions did you serve in the fraternity chapter? What was significant in your Pike experience at Cornell?*

[BR] The highest position I reached in the chapter hierarchy was IMC in 1953-54. For whatever it's worth, I was voted by my brothers to receive the Senior Award in 1954 (I still proudly display the plaque in my office). I am also listed as a "Prominent Pike" in the National Fraternity's archives; to my knowledge Elbert Tuttle and I being the only Beta Theta alumni being so honored.

By far the most significant Pike experience was the lifelong friendships I formed during my four years at Cornell.

- *After Harvard Law School, how did your career unfold to become General Counsel for Safeway Stores?*

[BR] Very briefly, a high school girlfriend from St. Louis moved to San Francisco, so not having any other agenda at the end of my first year at law school, I went out to the West Coast and got a job painting anything that didn't move at the Safeway soap plant in Oakland. That summer I applied for an intern position for the following summer at Safeway's Legal Department. The result was that on a Wednesday in May of 1959 I took my last exam at Harvard, got married the following Saturday, our honeymoon was driving out to Oakland to start my 35 year legal career at Safeway, the last ten of which as that company's General Counsel.

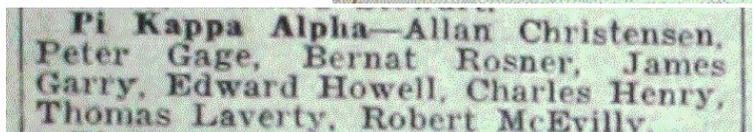
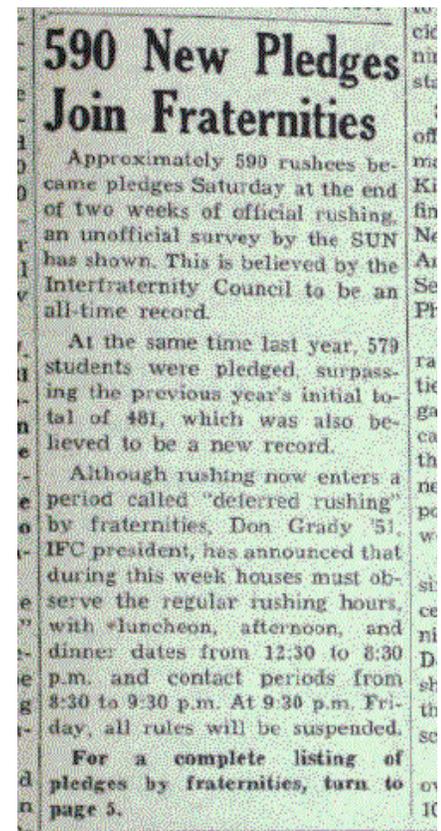
- *What Pikes have you managed to stay in touch with personally? Who have you lost touch with and would be interested in seeing?*

[BR] First and foremost was my dear life-long best friend Jim Garry who died last fall. Next, a group of between 12 to 18 brothers and their spouses, graduates

between 1952 and 1956, who would gather at Cornell bi-annually during Homecoming Weekend. I am hesitant to mention anyone individually simply because due to failing memory I may omit some of them. They were all dear, dear friends, and our reunions at Cornell were the highlights of my latter years.

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

[BR] There are many treasured memories. Probably the fondest is from the period that I was manager of the JV Crew, and because of crew practice I had to miss the regular dinner hour. The cook (Mrs. Shelby) left a dinner warm for me in the oven, and when I got home about 7:30 - 8 pm, more often than not, Jim Garry and the legendary Hughey Gibbs would join me in the kitchen and we would shoot the breeze for hours.



## Dik's Ravings

The late Steve Amador used to berate me for my liberal political views.

Dik Saalfeld '80 [rfs25@cornell.edu](mailto:rfs25@cornell.edu)  
Florida correspondent

Politically, Steve was to the right of Vlad the Impaler. I recently visited Steve's 90-something mother in a nursing home, and discovered that

she made Steve look like a flower child. Through her grief over Steve's recent demise, she also sputtered about Hillary Clinton and the unholy back benchers in the Congress. I made soothing sounds and gently agreed with her, knowing that now was not the time to sow discord. Ha ha! Just kidding. I let her have it. I tell you what, that old broad can SPIT. But she ended up laughing heartily as the orderlies dragged me away, so I had succeeded in cheering her up! Mission accomplished.

Chas and Mary Horvath accompanied my wife and me to a Red Sox game in Fenway recently. Springtime in Boston! It was colder than billy-be-damned. Chas is in touch with a few brothers, including Mike Dowd. He said Mike is a fervent Sox fan, and that, many years ago, he ran into Mike in Fenway. Mike had what appeared to be a month-old baby hanging in a sling from his shoulders. Chas said "does your wife know you're here?" Upon which Mike looked horrified and swore Chas to eternal secrecy, and Chas has dutifully kept his mouth shut. Mostly.

I saw Tim Cole recently in Massachusetts. Tim has graciously stepped in to take over the alumni corporation books after Treasurer Amador's sudden death. We owe a lot to Tim, who has taken on many thankless roles over the decades. He works tirelessly on our behalf.

Ken Lauricella is on IBM's graduated retirement program, and spends as much time hiking and smoking meats as he does working. He and his wife live in glorious Vermont, where they are occasionally visited by their three grown children. (Vermont, incidentally, is hands-down the craft beer capital of the world, in case you need a reason to visit Celli.) Celli was our Samurai Social Chairman back in the day, and threw some outrageous parties. He considered a party less than successful if the punch didn't catch fire. After college Celli achieved immortality by hosting the infamous Pearl Harbor Day Christmas Party, which is still the subject of stories among those who survived it. For example, the next morning I woke up in bed with three other people and a mummified squirrel. We were all dressed, except for the squirrel, but not in our own clothing. I make up a lot of stories, but, disturbingly, not this one. As to how we came to be clothed in random attire, theories abound. It's a mystery for the ages. In case you've ever wondered, panty hose are not designed to cradle your goodies – it was weeks before them fellers came out for air.

Andy Henderson spends his leisure time turning wood in his garage. When I first heard this, I thought that hard living had finally caught up with him and his mind had gone to mush, but it seems "turning" involves power tools. He can take any piece of trash he finds alongside the road and turn it into a bowl, or a chalice, or, if he's jacked up on crank, an entire bowling alley. He makes so many bowls he has taken to leaving them on people's porches at night. But it keeps him out of trouble, if you exclude the occasional mangled finger tip.



## Alumni Notes

When you receive this newsletter, please review the contact information on the bottom of the cover letter. We would be grateful for you to fill in any blanks, and correct any contact info, especially phone numbers and email. Thanks.

[tsporney@betathetadata.net](mailto:tsporney@betathetadata.net)

## Chapter Eternal

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

**James P. Garry, '54**  
October 20, 2017

**Robert C. MacKeown, '45**  
September 4, 2015

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/hartfordcourant/obituary.aspx?n=robert-c-mackeown&pid=175875591>