



BETA THETA DATA

Fall 2019 Volume 68 Number 1

SMC Report

The Fall 2019 semester has been a good one for Pike at Cornell, but a rough one for Greek life. The chapter is recording very high philanthropy numbers, and is gearing up for hopefully yet another successful spring recruitment.

The Beta Theta chapter initiated 4 men in our Fall 2019 class. Three of the individuals are first generation Greek life members, and one is a first-generation college student. They come from diverse locations, including New York, Minnesota, and Venezuela.

John Carboni '20
jcarbonipike@gmail.com

The chapter has been incredibly successful with philanthropy this fall semester. Our second annual Pi Kappa Aqua event, where brothers were placed in a dunk tank to support the Tutu project, raised over \$500. Our new event Piketoberfest, where we sold food, carved pumpkins, and had our own brothers perform as a rock band, raised \$502. Our ongoing Movember group has raised \$700 so far and is still counting towards our goal of \$1000. And finally, our annual Pi Cocoa Alpha hot chocolate sale is in the works to take place in the coming weeks.

But not all is going well for Greek life at Cornell University. I'm sure many have heard the news about Antonio Tsialas, a freshman student who died one night after leaving an unregulated fraternity event. Following this loss to our community, there were many discussions about the safety of Greek life events. Following another incident where a freshman was hospitalized, the IFC presidents decided to suspend all social mixers for the remainder of the semester to work on policy to make our events safer and address the dangerous "dirty rushing" culture in our fraternities. I am proud to say that Pike has not been involved in any of these incidents or misconducts, but as a member of Cornell's IFC it is our responsibility to ensure the safety our Greek community and help with reform.

Finally, we look forward to our upcoming executive board elections. The next group of Pike leaders will be taking over soon, and I am excited to see our brotherhood reach new heights.

Alpha Theta President's Report

I am very excited to be a new Alpha Theta Director, and I am humbled and honored to be your new AT President.

Bill Page '85
wpage2@earthlink.net

The Homecoming AT meeting brought many pleasant surprises. Congratulations to the actives for attracting so many great new brothers. In addition, the previous AT BoD has taken numerous steps to provide fiscal transparency and have placed us on a solid financial foundation by paying off our 11 year mortgage (5½ years early) and reinstating funds for our yearly needs. Kudos to Jeff Reinders and the rest of his Directors for their great work. I also want to give special thanks to John Lemp, Tim Cole and other members of the Finance Team. Well done!

For the upcoming year, Alpha Theta just signed a contract with Firehouse Architectural Lab to prepare a feasibility study to determine whether the Nest can once again be living space or perhaps used for storage. We will also be revising our By-Laws to make them more current for Cornell University Greek life along with updating our Capital Improvements list (small and large projects) with projected needs dates.

Finally, there have been numerous alumni CU Pike gatherings throughout the country (NYC, out West and the Finger Lakes Wine Trail). Homecoming is not always an ideal time to return to Ithaca, and Reunion weekends are limited to 5-year intervals. I am interested in resurrecting the Pike summer party, which provided a wonderful time to gather with old and new brothers and their families the last weekend of July. The weather is usually beautiful and accommodations are readily available. Please let me know what you think and whether you'd be interested in attending future CU Pike Summer Parties.

Please feel free to contact me anytime.

Board of Directors, 2019-2020

term		
2020	Andrew Salamida, Vice President	607-245-6428
2021	Tom Sporney, alumni relations	410-863-5854
2022	Duncan McKeen	757-589-1717
2023	John Lemp, Treasurer	845-625-7940
2024	Bill Page, President	585-737-7567

Calendar

June 4-7, 2020	Reunion Weekend
May 1, 2020	Spring 2020 $\beta\Theta$ Data deadline
July 8-12, 2020	π KA International Convention
September 25-26, 2020	Homecoming
June 10-13, 2021	Reunion Weekend
June 9-12, 2022	Reunion Weekend

Advisor's Corner

The chapter has never looked stronger, and while I don't want to jinx it, the actives are

Chuck Whitehead '83
ckw26@cornell.edu

in shooting distance of a Smythe Award. In no small part, this is the result of past and current strong leadership within the active chapter and a collective focus on growing and strengthening Beta Theta.

Following Bob Forness as Chapter Advisor is no small task. Thank you, Bob, for the leadership and guidance you have brought, and continue to bring, to the active chapter and the alumni. Your hard work has made it easier for me to take over as Chapter Advisor, but much more difficult to measure up to the high standards you have set.

I am proud of the character and resilience of our active chapter. The leadership is strong and, even though there have been occasional bumps in the road, particularly as we face a challenging campus climate, the actives continue to grow and get stronger, all while meeting the demands of Cornell's insane academic workload. On behalf of the Alumni Advisory Group, well done to the chapter for all that you have accomplished and the great things ahead.

Thank you also to the members of the Alumni Advisory Group. It isn't easy to take time out of an already crowded schedule to support the House, but you have always been ready to throw in when problems arise. Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do.

For those interested in volunteering as a member of the Alumni Advisory Group, please drop me an email. We would welcome anyone interested in joining the Group, but we're particularly interested in engaging the young'uns as us older guys begin to shuffle off to the corner, drink beer, and swap lies. It would be great to have you join us.

Alpha Theta Meeting Minutes

The Annual Meeting of the Alpha Theta Fraternity was held at 17 South Avenue, Ithaca, New York, on October 5, 2019, being the 101st Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

The Meeting was called to order at 10:03 a.m. by Vice President Andrew Salamida, in the absence of President Jeff Reinders.

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

Minutes of the last annual meeting were read and approved.

A report was given by John Carboni, '20, SMC of the Active Chapter.

John Lemp, Treasurer, gave a report:

1. That the mortgage to White Horse Capital had been paid off.
2. That Sciarabba Walker, an accounting firm in Ithaca, had been retained as tax accountants, and to provide financial oversight.
3. A claim under the Corporation's employee dishonesty policy had been filed with AIG in September of 2018 for the Amador embezzlement, which now totals \$331,022.09, as determined by Baker Tilley, a forensic accounting firm retained by the Corporation. A resolution of this claim is expected before the end of the Corporation's current fiscal year (August 1 through July 31).
4. The annual income statement was presented to the meeting and discussed, along with a comparison of the 2017 and 2018 fiscal years. The annual income statement will be published in the Beta Theta Data.

A motion was made, seconded and passed that the Treasurer's report be approved as given.

Tom Sporney, Alumni Relations, gave a report. The dues are now \$75.00. There are 116 dues-paying Alumni. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the report be approved.

Bill Page gave a report on the Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign, Inc. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the report be approved.

Andrew Salamida presented a list of possible necessary or desirable future projects;

- Code problem with the use of the grill in the kitchen, which may require replacement of the range hood.
- Possible replacement of the dishwasher.
- Paving of the parking lot.
- New windows throughout.
- Replacement of the ceiling in the basement.
- The possibility of turning the Nest in the attic, now closed off, into living space.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to:

1. Direct the Board of Directors to establish the charter and composition of a long term planning committee (LTPC) to focus on the capital maintenance, expansion, planning, zoning and other matters related to the preservation and growth of the chapter house for the benefit of the brotherhood. Members of the LTPC, which will be a standing committee, will be drawn from alumni with engineering, architecture and planning experience, as well as one or two active representatives with similar background and experience. The LTPC will be operational by the next annual meeting.
2. Direct the Board of Directors to conduct a review of the bylaws in regards to best practices and risk management for the corporation. The review should include consultation with legal and non-profit governance resources. The review will be completed in time for next annual meeting.

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4 Questions with...

Ken Eisner, BA '90

Ken [<https://www.linkedin.com/in/keneisner/>] is the Director of Worldwide Education Programs at Amazon Web Services (AWS). His experience includes success designing, launching, and scaling Amazon Web Services' (AWS) most prominent education program.

- *Your career has weaved its way through various facets of commerce, from its beginnings at Cornell (government) and Georgetown (public policy and business), to its current emphasis on e-learning. How did it happen that your interest became directed toward e-learning?*

[KE] Like any good Cornellian, I meandered quite a bit in my early days -- beginning in collectibles with a company called MBI directly out of undergrad, then to sports licensing with NFL Properties (#FlyEaglesFly) where my claim to fame was running the first league run trading card line. The card line called NFL GameDay lasted all of two years before going belly up. I did get to sit a row behind Jack Nicholson at Super Bowl XXVII -- at least in that game, he was a Cowboys fan. Anyway, my career found a home in the education industry when I joined a startup called VarsityBooks.com while I was in grad school -- ran marketing for the e-commerce college bookseller as they marched their way to a 2000 IPO right before the internet bubble burst. Found that making an impact in education is really what I care about, providing students from all backgrounds with pathways into careers. And I'm super fortunate as there is no better place to make an impact than Amazon Web Services.

- *Amazon is in the news almost daily. What's it like to work for such a well-known technology company?*

[KE] It's awesome. Amazon's culture breeds innovation -- the pace is super fast, the opportunity to own is immense, and no ideas are too big. I think the most impressive thing about Amazon, and my area which is AWS, is that it can move so nimbly for such a big company. When we see a customer need, we attack it with a missionary zeal. To understand Amazon, you have to begin with our 14 leadership principles -- Think Big, Customer Obsession, Bias for Action, Have Backbone - Disagree and Commit. These principles affect each and every day at Amazon: they guide our interview process and employee reviews, and they really impact decision making on a daily basis.

The other thing that is really cool about Amazon is our narrative culture. No PowerPoints internally -- we write papers no longer than six pages on all major initiatives. Executives read the paper for the first 20-30 minutes of the meeting, then they fire questions and comments for the rest. With how deep people dive into these papers, you get fantastic discussions that build on the ideas and incorporate multiple viewpoints. Love the process.

- *Your division of Global Education Programs at Amazon Web Services started with AWS Educate in 2015. What is its mission? What metrics are used to measure its growth and success? Who/what is your competition?*

[KE] AWS Educate's mission is to provide students and educators around the world with the resources they needed to propel students into cloud computing careers. The program was "birthed" in a six pager that I presented not too long after I joined AWS in 2013, then launched it publicly in 2015. It's a no cost program for all students and educators, and, while it started for higher education, it's now available to students above the age of 14. Hundreds of thousands of students and over 10,000 educators at over 2,400 educational institutions are members. It's a global program, with members in over 200 countries and territories worldwide. We're being integrated into higher education and secondary school programs across entire states, such as Texas and Virginia, and into international curriculum in the UK, Middle East, and Asia. The focus is all about pathways for students into cloud careers -- from software development to cloud architecture to data sciences to cyber security. To be frank, we really don't focus on competitors -- everything we do is about listening to and driving benefits for students and educators.

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

[KE] I didn't serve positions inside Pike, but I was on the intrafraternity council. One of the things that always stayed with me was our bridge sessions with Gibber -- Dane Fernandez, Tim Lockwood, Ken Parsons, John Small, Tom Shpetner, Kevin Dukes, and so on. Gibber was such a kind man, one of those people that modeled behavior for us, no matter how childish you could be at that age. I play in a poker game in DC with several players who have been in the World Series of Poker. I really enjoy it, even though I'm a really weak player. Anyway, it's the wisdom, the thoughtfulness, the strategy, the human interactions that I really like during the card games, and it always makes me think back to those days at the bridge table, avoiding a rush event, with Gibber and that great group of guys.

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 [tsporney@betathetadeta.net].

Homecoming Minutes

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3. Authorize the Board of Directors to conduct a feasibility study for the future use of the Nest including one or more of the following functions: storage, common use, living space, bathroom, and a possible executive suite to satisfy the new requirement for four junior and senior officers of the active chapter to live in during the academic year. The Board will use a good faith effort to seek out at least one competitive bid in addition to the current proposal in keeping with good practice for tenders.

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

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.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:40 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 September 22, 2018.

The Meeting was called to order at 11:47 a.m. by Vice President Andrew Salamida.

The following Directors were present: Sporney, McKeen, Salamida, Page and Lemp. Also present: Miles, Secretary.

The following were elected officers of the corporation:

President – Bill Page
Vice President – Andrew Salamida
Secretary – David Miles
Treasurer – John Lemp
Vice Treasurer – To be appointed
Alumni Relations – Tom Sporney

Treasurer John Lemp reported that he was able to access additional Quicken accounts in the name of Stephen Amador, but that no additional assets were recovered.

Arranging a future meeting to discuss the motions concerning creation of a long term planning committee, review of the bylaws, and possible conversion of the Nest into living space was discussed.

The possibility of reviving the summer party, held the last Saturday in July, was discussed.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,
David S. Miles, Secretary

for minutes of 5Nov19 Directors telecom, see
<http://betathetaddata.net/MinutesBoDMeeting.191105.pdf>

Alumni Notes

Doug Haller '78 joyfully reports that he retired last year (2018), and that he will be splitting his time between Hallerville-on-the-beach (Kailua-kona, Hawaii Big Island), and Hallerville-in-the-mountains (Tahoe).

Chris, his lovely wife of 30 years, has also retired to join him in this endeavor. Their three kids are spread out over three states (CA, UT, TX) in grad school or in starting their new careers.... Life is great in Hallerville!

Dik Saalfeld talked to **Mark Nestle '79** recently. Mark's wife, Jodi Diehl Nestle '80, died in June from complications of Parkinson's. Jodi was a long-time Cornell Reunion co-chair for our class. Jodi lit up our lives with smiles. Mark says he's adopting her motto, "make the present more pleasant", to guide him as he lives out his days. He realizes that his brothers from that era may consider the motto a bit of a stretch for him, but I think he's up to it. He asks that those who knew and loved Jodi contribute to the Parkinson's Foundation.

Chapter Eternal

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

Donald R, House '56

December 22, 2018

John D. Stubbings '66

February 24, 2019

You can now pay your alumni dues or contribute to the Gibber Fund online at <https://alphathetaportal.herokuapp.com/>. Funds are collected through Paypal, and transferred directly to the accounts of Alpha Theta Fraternity or Alpha Theta Community Improvement Campaign.

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@betathetaddata.net