



BETA THETA DATA

Fall 2020 Volume 69 Number 1

SMC Report

Fall 2020 will go down in history as one of the Beta Theta chapter's most resilient semesters on record. Our chapter

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has thus far been able to weather the COVID-19 pandemic and keep its members and the community as safe as

possible. Even amid the unusual circumstances, our chapter not only managed to stay strong as a brotherhood but also expanded our brotherhood and our influence. Recruitment this year consisted mainly of virtual events and was dominated by strict guidelines. Furthermore, recruitment numbers for the IFC as a whole were down this year, but still, our chapter managed to prevail. We handed out eight bids to the most best men, all of which accepted our invitation and have joined our brotherhood. Our chapter had the second-largest new member class, and our brotherhood now stands more robust than ever at 76 members.

Not only did our chapter manage to expand our brotherhood, but we were also able to expand our chapter's influence on campus, even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. This semester, five of our brothers were accepted to the Order of Omega, which recognizes outstanding Greek community leaders. Our chapter also initiated fifteen new sweethearts, acknowledging their dedication to our chapter's efforts. During the two months in which our chapter has been on campus, our brotherhood has completed 415 hours of community service. Of the 415 hours completed so far, a sizeable portion of these hours was dedicated to COVID-19 safety ambassadors on campus. Even when our chapter was still in quarantine before returning to campus, we managed to raise ~\$4,000 for the Black Lives Matter campaign and ~\$5,000 for COVID-19 relief efforts. All in all, our chapter is more committed than ever to give back to our community in a multitude of different ways.

For the first time ever in the Beta Theta chapter's history, we held our Executive Board elections virtually. Along with the help of Chuck Whitehead, Bob Forness, Andy Glasner, and all the other alumni, the new chapter officers took decisive action to create a rigorous and responsible COVID-19 plan, titled the π KA COVID-19 policies. In the document, our chapter's executive board outlined the procedures brothers must follow to keep the brotherhood and our community safe. Furthermore, with the assistance of the brotherhood, the officers managed to create a new set of guest policies to be utilized when deemed safe. Our brotherhood also implemented and maintained a new meal

plan system in which brothers can order food on their phone and pick their food up at the house using a contactless pickup system. As a result of our chapter's commitment to ending the COVID-19 pandemic, our brotherhood has seen zero diagnoses of COVID-19 among the brothers present on campus.

With COVID-19 cases rising worldwide, it is challenging to say whether or not our brotherhood will be welcomed back on campus next semester. However, this semester, our brotherhood has proven that we can stay strong apart, whether through a socially distanced lunch or through a video chat across the globe. On that note, our brotherhood has time and time again stayed united as one in this digital age. Even our brothers living in the UK, India, France, and Pakistan managed to keep in touch with each other over the previous years. Our brotherhood will continue to remain strong, no matter what the next semester holds in store for us.

Enjoy the holidays and stay healthy!

Alpha Theta President's Report

This has certainly been a challenging year for the Cornell campus and all of this great country.

Bill Page '85
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Cornell students finished off their spring semester online. My daughter was one of the seniors who missed out on

the traditional Schoellkopf graduation ceremony, and many of us had our Cornell reunions canceled. What is much worse is that numerous seniors had their job commitments rescinded and their future employment put on hold.

During the summer, Cornell provided the lead for universities across this country by creating committees and enacting comprehensive plans to open the campus for students this fall. I would like to commend three of our brothers: Bob Forness, Chuck Whitehead and Andrew Salamida. They and others worked diligently with the University and coordinated procedures with the actives who returned to campus in August.

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Board of Directors, 2019-2020

term		
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
2025	Andrew Salamida, Vice President	607-245-6428

Calendar

May 1, 2021	Spring 2021 βΘData deadline
June 10-13, 2021	Reunion Weekend
September 17-18, 2021	Homecoming
November 1, 2021	Fall 2021 βΘData deadline
June 9-12, 2022	Reunion Weekend
July 29-31, 2022	PIKE Summer Reunion
September 23-24, 2022	Homecoming

Advisor's Corner

COVID, COVID, and COVID – pretty much sums up a principal driver of what has been going on, both on campus and with the active Brothers. The

Chuck Whitehead '83
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remoteness of Ithaca, sometimes a burden, has been a real boon in helping Cornell manage a

hybrid semester with some on- and off-campus course work. Nevertheless, there remains a real risk of transmission, and a recent increase in cases following Halloween, the elections, etc., so the University has been vigilant in testing, following-up, and quarantining, as needed. The active Brothers have continued to stay on top of things – and they should be commended for doing so, even as other campuses (and other houses) have had covid flare-ups.

We were delighted to have the Pink Cloud virtually visit the house. Some of you may recall, from a few decades ago, an inebriated Cloud taking a short trip to a nearby airport. We learned from this visit that National recounts this story to incoming Clouds as a kind of warning about what can happen if they let their guard down. His comment: “We didn’t think this story was true, just something National told us to scare us a little.” Good to know we’ve had some impact on Pike culture.

Support from Alpha Theta, the Alumni Advisory Group, Andy Glasner, Bob Forness, and Floppy (Andrew Salamida) have made an otherwise difficult semester manageable. The actives have been great in adjusting – strong recruitment and a great spirit in working as a team to get through all of this. More hurdles are ahead – and some question about what the remainder of this semester and the spring semester will look like – but I’m confident we will get through everything together as a Brotherhood.

The Nest Feasibility Study

In early October, the Alpha Theta Board of Directors were presented with a 22-page feasibility study executed by Firehouse Architecture Lab in Ithaca. The report proposed three options, with two being most viable. These include up to five new bedrooms and a full, multi-stall and shower bathroom and lounge area. At this time, the board has not endorsed any option and has tasked the newly formed Alpha Theta Capital Improvement Committee to explore all options.

Andrew Salamida '15
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As many of you may know, Cornell will be requiring some upperclassmen (Junior or Senior) members of the Exec. Board to live in the house. This will take up rooms that are typically offered to the new member class. It is promising to know we have the capabilities to expand in-house living, attract upperclassmen to live-in, and satisfy the University's new reforms without limiting the active's new member class size.

Stay tuned for more updates.

Alpha Theta President's Report

[continued from page 1]

We had our first Zoom virtual annual Alpha Theta meeting October 10, 2020. Thanks to various officers who provided detailed reports and thanks for those of you who attended. One order of New Business is the creation of the Capital Improvement Committee, which has been established to assess and report back to Alpha Theta with a list of priorities and recommendations for capital improvements. We are very fortunate to have Elliot Dee as the chair of this committee.

Finally, Cornell will be minimizing graduation and Reunion activities for next May/June 2021 due to the continued uncertainties of COVID. We have decided to postpone the re-start of the PIKE Summer Party until the weekend of July 29-31, 2022. Please pencil in the date and stay tuned for future updates.

Homecoming Minutes

The Annual Meeting of the Alpha Theta Fraternity was held on October 10, 2020, being the 102nd Annual Meeting of the Corporation.

Cornell Homecoming weekend being held virtually due to Covid-19 pandemic, this annual meeting was likewise held virtually by Zoom.

The Meeting was called to order at 10:10 a.m. by President Bill Page.

27 members were in attendance by Zoom, and 25 by proxy.

Minutes of the last annual meeting were read and approved.

A report was given by Andrew Salamida, vice-president. In response to Covid-19, Cornell will have no on-campus classes in December and January. The actives will move out of the House for those two months, and rent will not be charged for that period. Fall rush is proceeding. Spring rush is unclear, but may be virtual. The fire code problem of the kitchen grill was resolved by the removal of the grill.

Greg Dusenbury, SMC of the Active Chapter gave a report. There are now 65 active members, and they are sending out 8 bids.

John Lemp, Treasurer, gave a report:

There is currently in the General Fund \$366,995.14, and \$90,836.00 in the Building Fund, for a total of \$457,831.14.

The net settlement from AIG for the funds misappropriated by Steve Amador was a net of \$289,352.75 after deductions for expenses and deductible.

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 122 dues-paying Alumni. A motion was made, seconded and passed that the report be approved.

A report was given by President Bill Page, including the creation of the new Capital Improvement Committee.

A report was given by Chuck Whitehead, chair of the Alumni Advisory Group.

A report on the Alpha Theta Capital Improvement Campaign was given by Elliot Dee, President. The Gibber Fund currently has assets of \$23,368.10.

Andrew Salamida gave a report on the feasibility study for converting the attic "Nest" to living space. Floor plans for the two most feasible of the three options were presented. Alpha Theta has not endorsed any options at this time.

Elliot Dee gave a detailed report on the proposed Capital Improvement Committee, including an outline of the structure of the committee, and the decision process from inventory of needs to project approval.

The meeting was opened to nominations for Director to succeed Andrew Salamida, whose term expired today. Andrew Salamida was nominated. A motion was made and passed that nominations be closed. Andrew 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.

Homecoming Minutes *[continued from page 3]*

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

Respectfully Submitted,

David S. Miles, Secretary

The Annual Meeting of the Board of Directors of Alpha Theta Fraternity was held on October 10, 2020.

The Meeting was called to order at 12:14 p.m. by President Bill Page.

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 – Vacant

Alumni Relations – Tom Sporney

John Lemp reported that he was getting assistance as treasurer from two alumni, and that it was not necessary to fill the position of Vice-Treasurer at this time.

With reference to the actions taken by Cornell in response to the COVID virus as outlined by Andrew in his report to the members, the Board of Directors confirmed their support for the active chapter during the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

Tom Sporney announced that he would be retiring sometime next summer, and not be able to continue in his Alumni Relations position. Finding a replacement for him in that position was discussed.

There was a general discussion of future capital improvements. The feasibility of performing some capital improvements to the house during the campus shut-down commencing Thanksgiving weekend, with students not returning for several months, was considered. The Capital Improvement Committee will be consulted prior to making any decision.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:34 p. m.

Respectfully submitted,

David S. Miles, Secretary

5 Questions with...

Alex Shealy, Jr.

[\[mailto:alexshealy@frontier.com\]](mailto:alexshealy@frontier.com)

- *When you worked for GE on a training program and lived in Johnson City, you and your wife were chaperones at Fall Weekend at 17 South Avenue. What were big weekends like in the early 60's?*

[AS] After transferring and graduating from Washington State with a degree in Engineering and an advanced degree in Business I joined GE on their manufacturing management program – three years, two assignment per year. In 1962 my wife, Janet and I landed in Johnson City and were invited to chaperone the Fall Week. We were met at the front door by our host brother with a large yummy bottle and were ushered into my old first floor room under the stairs. I don't remember much, but my wife does. For years she made me promise not to send our kids to Cornell. She spent most of the weekend in the "girl country" (third floor) bathroom consoling the ladies in serious distress. However, we had a great time!

While in school, in the fifty's, party weekends were fun. The drinking age in NY must have been 18. During my pledge year our house project was to convert the coal bin room into a bar area. I recall laying flagstones and epoxying the new bar top. Many fun weekends. At Cornell then you studied like mad Sunday evening to Friday noon. Then - the weekends - - -

- *You are a volunteer mentor [<https://decaturn.score.org/mentors/alexander-n-shealy-jr>] for small business entrepreneurs through the Service Corps of Retired Executives, SCORE. How did you get involved with this organization? How has the current COVID-19 pandemic affected the normal activities of the organization, given that small businesses have been significantly affected economically?*

[AS] One of my friends asked me to go with him to a monthly meeting. As I had been a senior business consultant (Earnest and Young) for the last 10 years of my career, this a natural to give back. Helping folks wanting to start and repair a business provides a great deal of satisfaction. In the COVID-19 our SCORE chapter has gone predominantly to Zoom meeting and Zoom client sessions. There are many requests how to gain financial assistance. As SCORE is a non-profit arm of the SBA, we have excellent information on this need. I have served as treasurer for 2 year, which has also been very satisfying. If any brothers wanting to "give back," go on the web for SCORE.org. This is the largest non-profit mentoring service, with over 400 chapters in the United States. The web contains excellent webinars and other help information.

- *You served two years as treasurer. During that time, you were successful with collection rates, enough to purchase the piano in the living room (now gone). How did you manage to do that? What else was significant in your Pike experience at Cornell?*

[AS] I moved into the house in the fall of 1956, joining Jim Hegenbarth and Ray Whitman. Our room was on the second floor NE corner. Jim became president and Ray was the steward. There had been an old tradition that the seniors did not pay their last house bill. I do not recall how the idea of collecting those unpaid bills began, but it fell on me to collect them. It took all summer, but all the seniors paid up. We used that money to buy a grand piano. We had just pledged a brother who was a skilled piano player, so we all enjoyed excellent music.

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

[AS] Unfortunately, I have not had any contact with my brothers. I am from Baltimore, and my folks moved to Spokane in my first year at Cornell. I transferred to Washington State when my brother started college there and roomed with him. That is still disappointing. Recently I became aware of our house's Facebook site and have joined it. I have made a beginning contact with Jim. I sure would like to visit with him and others. I wish that we had a registry of our brothers, and contact information. I suppose that privacy must be maintained, yet we are all brothers.

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

[AS] I do have great memories of living at 17 South Avenue. There were many close friends. As my family home had moved to Spokane, I was stranded at the house during long vacation periods. Colin Browning, my big brother, invited me to spend the Christmas holidays with him in NJ. That was a special treat for me.

I have not mentioned Gibber. Hugh and I spent a great deal of time together during many holiday periods. He was such a wonderful person. He was kind and smart and fun. And, Mrs. T, our cook, would leave a saucepan of butter with a paint brush on the stove, and some bread for us to enjoy in the evenings after the kitchen was locked up. Our house was wonderful.

And then there was Gurdon Baines Wattles III. First, he had placed a small fish tank in our second-floor room the year before. When he moved to the third floor, he installed a huge tank. It was most impressive.

In those days, the only phone we used was in the closet beside the front door entrance. There was a signup clipboard for the brothers to note their calls so I, as treasurer, could assign the charge to that brother's monthly bill. In the fall of 1957, I drove back to CU, and upon arriving at the parking lot I found an extension cord from that house phone to Gurdy, at his boat in the parking lot. He was on the phone with the president and chief engineer of Chris Craft trying to get the boat's motor running. Shortly thereafter Gurdy had his own phone in his room! We all had a good time. Excellent memories.

My wife and I live 20 miles southeast of Decatur, IL just north of Lake Shelbyville, on a five-acre hilly (for prairie land) with trees and streams. We would enjoy your visit.

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].

Alpha Theta Treasurer's Update

I hope all is well with all of our brothers and their families during these extraordinary times that we are currently living through. Like the countless number of individuals and businesses that continue to experience the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Alpha Theta Fraternity Inc. has also been financially impacted, but we are weathering the storm and are in a strong financial position. The Board of Alpha Theta refunded rent to the Beta Theta active chapter when Cornell's Ithaca campus shut down during the Spring 2020 semester, since the property at 17 South Avenue was closed to our active brother tenants. Also, at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester, Alpha Theta paid for alternative housing for active brother tenants scheduled to live in 17 South Avenue during the fall semester. This alternative housing arrangement was provided to these active brothers in order to comply with New York State and Cornell guidelines requiring individuals from high infection rate states to quarantine for a two week period prior to living in the fraternity house at 17 South Avenue. Between the Spring 2020 semester rent refund and the Fall 2020 semester alternative housing short-term leases, these expenses totaled roughly \$40,000.

Moving on to some more positive news - Alpha Theta's commercial Crime / Employee Theft claim that had been previously filed with AIG was settled and finalized in August 2020. This Commercial Crime / Employee Theft claim was filed with AIG in September 2018, after discovery that the prior long-time Treasurer had misappropriated Alpha Theta funds over a period beginning in 2012 and ending in the Fall of 2017. The amount submitted for claim was \$331,022.00. As part of a forensic accounting investigation that was conducted by accounting firm Baker Tilly, the amount that was formally deemed misappropriated with concrete evidence backing such was \$305,342.00. After AIG applied the Policy Deductible of \$5,000.00, Alpha Theta received a remittance check in the amount of \$300,342.00 in August 2020. This figure will be recognized as "Other Income" on Alpha Theta's 2020 Fiscal Year (8/1/2020 to 7/31/2021) financial statements. Alpha Theta spent \$10,989.25 on Baker Tilly's forensic accounting investigation, so the Net Result was as follows: \$305,342.00 - \$5,000.00 - \$10,989.25 = \$289,352.75.

With this insurance settlement, as well as rental income from the active brothers, Alpha Theta is in a strong financial position at this time, with over \$450,000 in our accounts at Bank of America. We are working in conjunction with the newly established Capital Improvement Committee and the Beta Theta active chapter brothers on putting together a prioritized list of projects to improve the house and property at 17 South Avenue.

John Lemp '15
jl264@cornell.edu

Chapter Eternal

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

Henri Van Bemmelen '50

April 22, 2020

Henry E. Otto '42

March 17, 2020

Marc E. Thorne '60

December 16, 2019

<https://www.lawrencefuneralhome.com/obituaries/Marc-E-Thorne?obId=9627258>

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@betathetadata.net