



BETA THETA DATA

Spring 2020 Volume 68 Number 2

SMC Report

It sure was a unique semester for the actives here on the hill. From new Greek Life reforms to the Coronavirus outbreak, Spring 2020 was one to remember. Although we were forced to leave the University only after a short month and a half, Beta Theta was having a successful semester. The 92 actives we had this year made us one of, if not the most, populated Houses on the hill. Although the new Recruitment Week rules made it more difficult, we initiated 16 of the most best men into our Fraternity. Over half of these 16 men are first-generation fraternity members, and collectively, they are involved in over 20 on-campus clubs. They are all sure to add to the Brotherhood in positive ways.

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As you are probably aware, in the wake of the tragedy that occurred last October, the University has implemented significant new rules and regulations over Greek Life. The rules, which include all mixers must now be Bring Your Own Beer ("BYOB") events and mandatory third party caterers for alcohol and security for larger events, are sure to bring a cultural change to Greek Life. While there will inevitably be a learning curve, I am confident that with the assistance of Chuck Whitehead, Bob Forness, Andy Glasner and all other alums, we are ready to adapt and be prepared to not only withstand but lead the way with these cultural changes. In addition, we have one active on a new IFC Risk Management committee which will draft proposals and work with the administration to bring about change.

Although most of our planned philanthropy events were canceled, we still managed to raise money. Our public relations and philanthropy chairs came together to organize a t-shirt sale to benefit healthcare workers through the Frontline Responders Fund, and I am proud to report that we have raised over \$1,000 for this very important cause. Although our 2nd Annual Picketoberfest Music Event and Relay for Life were both canceled, Beta Theta still pulled its weight.

When we return to Ithaca – whenever that may be – we will hold our elections. I am optimistic that the Brothers who will step into their new executive board roles will continue to lead us in the right direction. I would like to personally thank our new Chapter Advisor, Chuck Whitehead, for stepping up in his role. With his legal expertise, along with the countless stories of his days as an active, he has truly been an asset during this difficult semester.

Stay safe Brothers!

Alpha Theta President's Report

Greetings from upstate NY.

Things were going well throughout the Fall and early Spring. We have a large number of excited new initiates. Improvements were made to the kitchen sanitization areas and repairs were made to Gibber's library sliding doors. The actives and officers are wonderful young men and we are fortunate to have them, especially with recent Cornell mandates on fraternity Rush and house sponsored events.

Bill Page '85
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Then, COVID-19 hit. Kudos to counselor Whitehead and Andrew Salamida for writing and managing a proactive, well-designed response for our house. Their plans were used by other houses on the Hill. I'm happy to see that PIKE is still a role model during these difficult times.

I'd like to also thank the active live-ins who all agreed to leave the house within the timeline of safe departure. One of Ithaca's biggest concerns was overloading local hospitals. Thankfully the departure of the majority of CU and IC students averted this issue. The house has been locked with no social events since the start of the shutdown. Alpha Theta has provided a prorated rent reimbursement for all live-ins. While most CU students will not be given relief, we want PIKE to continue to be seen as a better option for young Cornell students.

The timing of this virus is very disappointing. As Andrew mentions in this publication, we are excited about the path to

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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

September 25-26, 2020	Homecoming
Nov 1, 2020	Fall 2020 $\beta\Theta$ Data deadline
June 10-13, 2021	Reunion Weekend
July 30-Aug 1, 2021	PIKE Summer Reunion
June 9-12, 2022	Reunion Weekend

Advisor's Corner

Hello to everyone from a very quiet Ithaca. As I'm sure you have heard, Cornell University

Chuck Whitehead '83
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closed its physical campus and moved all courses on-line. That also meant moving much of the active chapter outside of Ithaca, with a few staying on to finish out the semester.

In line with University direction, the active chapter, with the help of the Alpha Theta board, Andrew Salamida, and others, was able to quickly shutter the 17 South Avenue chapter, while maintaining some basic services for actives staying in Ithaca. Thank you to everyone for responding so quickly! The actives did a great job moving off-campus, and we should all be proud of their resilience in the face of a fairly miserable spring semester.

A special thank you to the graduating seniors. It's terrible for the last semester to be off-campus and remote, but I'm hopeful we will have a chance to celebrate your graduation once the Ithaca campus re-opens.

When Ithaca will be open again still remains an open question. There is a possibility that in-person classes will not begin in the fall, and this is something we're working with the actives to address.

Thank you to the members of the Alumni Advisory Group. The Group has been instrumental in guiding the House this semester, throwing in when problems arise. Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do, with a special thank you to Bob Forness and Andy Glasner. It's great to have strong support when we need it.

For those interested in volunteering for the Alumni Advisory Group, please drop me an email. It would be great to have you join us.

Gibber Fund Report

Thanks to the donations of many alumni over the past year, the total assets of The Gibber Fund have grown to \$17,087.26. The Directors opened an investment account for The Gibber Fund with Vanguard in July 2019. The purpose of this account is to steward donations from alumni in a way that preserves capital and at the same time allows for modest growth. The fund selected is 80% intermediate bonds and 20% equities. The account currently has a balance of \$4,000. The main bank account of The Gibber Fund at Bank of America will be maintained with a minimum balance of \$10,000 in order to avoid monthly bank charges and to have a reserve in case there is an emergency capital project at the Pike house.

One of the benefits of the new Vanguard investment account is that The Gibber Fund can now accept stock gifts from alumni. If you would like to make a donation of stock, please contact Elliot <ElliotDeeLLC@gmail.com> for more details.

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.

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

Alpha Theta President's Report

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opening the nest and there are numerous other major repairs to be considered: replacing most electrical (with numerous non-functional outlets), fixing exterior water flow on East side of house (basement flooding), restoring hardwood flooring first floor, carpeting throughout, and restoring windows with double-panes to meet current energy codes. Hopefully we can move forward once the current concerns are transcended.

I'd like to give a shoutout to brother Thrax for bringing together so many brothers to their pre-COVID Vegas reunion. I regret not being there but embrace any opportunities for brothers to reunite and extend our bonds.

Along these lines, we hope to revive the PIKE Summer Reunion every other year on the last weekend of July. Hopefully this will add to class reunions and Homecoming as a chance for brothers to meet when hotels are available and Ithaca is most beautiful. The plan for the next event is **July 30-Aug 1, 2021**. Please mark your calendars and we will keep you posted.

5 (or 6) Questions with...

Eric Helland, BS '77

- *After you graduated from Cornell, you returned to Wisconsin Dells to assist your father to grow the family insurance business, which was sold in 2017. How did your hotel school education help you in the insurance field?*

[EH] Right after college I travelled the US selling novelty mannequins. From Idaho we meandered through the west and when my partner decided to stay in northern Wisconsin and pick wild ginseng, I continued to NYC to try my luck.

I left a very realistic, Native American, mannequin in the car on a hot day, outside Exxon Oil headquarters, while I went to sell my product. When I finally returned, there was a stoner, next to the car, who told me about his afternoon witnessing how the secretaries from the building had lunch outside and afterward all their bosses came down to see this Wisconsin-plated vehicle with a Native American locked inside. Meanwhile, back home there was a big protest over Exxon's plan to mine near a reservation and the tribe's sacred grounds. Though the police came by, nothing was done; no bomb squad like we'd see today.

From sales I went to work for Kahler Hotels in Rochester, MN. A marked change from school days; with the presence of the Mayo clinic, the ratio of women to men was the polar opposite of Cornell. Not being clever, I then accepted a move to Oklahoma City to help Kahler open up a new venture: a chain of Golden Skillet Fried Chicken restaurants.

After a year and the death of my mother, I returned home to Wisconsin Dells to help my father weather the crisis and run food operations for the family owned tourism business. I ended up with my own restaurant which opened for summers, then (being an idiot) bought the insurance business from my father in order to be busy year round. My happiest day in the insurance business was in 2017, selling to a great young man with real enthusiasm for the business.

- *In 2007, you won the vote for Mayor of Wisconsin Dells by 4 votes, in a race that started with 5 candidates. What was your motivation to run for mayor, and what was that experience like?*

[EH] 4 votes, thus my nickname "Landslide Helland". My remaining opponent did not ask for a recount.

My motivation was to keep a crazy lady from becoming the next mayor. The retiring mayor had served 5 terms, retired for a spell and came back for another term, to keep the same crazy lady from being the only one running. He was a fellow Rotarian and asked me to run, so he could retire again.

I enjoyed being a mayor. I have enough natural cynicism to not believe everything people tell me and enough naivety to want to. Watching our house government in action actually helped me; our city meeting didn't include beer, either. In Wisconsin, as in the fraternity, that is not normal.

We had some excitement during my time; torrential storms hit Wisconsin and our Lake (Lake Delton) drained, resulting in world-wide news coverage. I continue to be amazed that when I talk, people understand what I am saying.

- *Your experience includes the River Moon Café, the Mexicali Rose, and the Dockside Grille and Rum Bar in the Dells. Recently, you've worked on putting together a food service and entertainment venue on the Riverwalk Terrace. How is that going?*

[EH] Please don't forget the Waterfront, the Lighthouse and the Deck Restaurants. (The Lighthouse had serious late night credentials going during my early years, which lasted until I married).

Downtown had changed dramatically from its heyday, we had a hidden gem of a patio on the back side of a retail building and retail was in a tail spin. So it didn't take a genius to figure out that nothing was lost if we demo'd the building.

The Terrace is the first thing people see when entering downtown Wisconsin Dells. It is a visually appealing destination, has changed the pedestrian traffic flow and sparked a renovation surge for downtown.

What I learned from being mayor was to count on the abilities of others; our tenant, who is innovative and successful, does things I wouldn't have.... Speaks volumes, eh?

Kind of like my wife, Mary Eggenberger-Helland, she ran the River Moon Café, didn't allow me to talk to staff when and if I was allowed into the building, and was voted a top ten waterfront restaurant (nationwide) by Trip Advisor. A year later, she removed her equipment and recipes and said she was done. Reaching the pinnacle is a bitch.

- *What positions did you serve in the fraternity chapter?*

[EH] Ran for Secretary but Doug Sacha beat me out. I thought had a great speech...

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5 Questions...

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- *What was significant in your Pike experience at Cornell?*

[EH] The acceptance of my late pledging candidacy by greats like Mark Hu, Hans Hahne and Justus Von Lengerke. Without their advocacy, there would have been no Pike experience.

- *What Pikes have you managed to stay in touch with personally? Who have you lost touch with and would be interested in seeing? What's your best memory of 17 South Avenue?*

[EH] Contact is sporadic. But it is a small world. My brother-in-law worked closely at Sheraton and Starwood for Bob Cotter, my roommate Rich Cotter's brother.

My brother partied with Hans Hahne and his brother Jurgeon, during Octoberfest, years ago. If the story is right Jurgeon got them kicked out of a number of establishments: it was a night for swinging from chandeliers.

My sister was teaching in China and still speaks of an excellent evening out with Mark Hu, his wife and Bob Mateus.

I would like to catch up with my pledge class, it was not large, but had great individuals who put in a lot of time and effort that seeded large pledge classes in subsequent years.

I have been fortunate to drive through Ithaca multiple times, up until my wife, yes the same Mary Eggenberger-Helland, discovered it wasn't a short-cut to Boston or to New York City.

Over the decades I've seen cycles in the condition of the house. There was the time of finding scores of neglected composites haphazardly strewn on a beer soaked basement floor, including my own class. The horror, brothers! And yet each time, the brothers were welcoming, though occasionally hung over.

And each time, Gibber would remember.

And like everyone else, Gibber is the center of my warmest memories. But he was not faultless; he championed a game of bridge centered on a "club convention" style of play. No one plays a "club convention" game of bridge in the Mid-West! He caused innumerable dissent and hardship and now I only play euchre and cribbage.

Fond memories: Hans Hahne, after graduating, sitting in a large lecture hall, for a freshman level final exam and 10 minutes into it, while loudly ranting; standing up, tearing apart the exam and then singing "If they could see me now, those old friends of mine" as he made multiple exits and entrances into the room. In his defense, he had spent his final night on campus with fellow Pikes Mark Hu and Justus Van Lengerke, both of whom, no matter life's latter contributions, were at the time not representing the garnet and gold responsibly. Another fond memory: Rich Goeggel's laugh.

Final fond memory: the race in Barton Hall to see who controlled the clicker in the TV room; the smokers or the non-smokers. Complete with one more cigarette before the mile race and oxygen for after.

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@betathetadatanet.net].

What's Up in the Nest?

To bring everyone up to speed, several years ago the City of Ithaca Fire Department and code enforcement marked the Nest as a space that cannot be used for living or storage. As Bill reported in the previous issue, we're now exploring options to bring the Nest back. With the University's new reforms in mind, we saw an opportunity to turn the unused space in to a great spot for the active chapter, as well as a potential revenue generator, provided that bedrooms can be added.

Andrew Salamida '15
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Since Fall of 2019, we have made a lot of progress with the feasibility study. The main challenges we needed to look into were the fire escapes, light and ventilation, electrical services, parking requirements, sprinklers, and letting the City of Ithaca Building Departments know our plan. So far we are successfully through about 95% through these steps, still under budget, and hope to have a final report within the next month as we push through some delays from COVID-19. This report will let us know if we can add bedroom(s) or if we can use it as storage space, or if it has to remain off limits.

Alumni Notes

On December 31, 2019, **Alan Becker '67** stepped down as the Managing Partner of the law firm (Litchfield Cavo LLP) that he co-founded 21 years ago. In that time the company grew from 12 lawyers in Chicago to 290 lawyers with offices in 22 cities across the country.

Alan has no plans to retire, and will continue in practice as a trial lawyer. The firm is a defense firm: it primarily represents insurance companies and their insureds, and also represents parties in business litigation.

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 H. Ogren '52

April 16, 2020

Herbert P. Orland Jr. '64

December 28, 2019

Robert C. Rogus '54

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.

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