



BETA THETA DATA

Spring 2021 Volume 69 Number 2

Alpha Theta President's Report

This academic year continues to present numerous challenges for the actives and Cornell campus. COVID directly impacts the lives of everyone via modified class structure to social interactions. I would like to commend the E-board and Alumni Advisory Group for implementing ongoing Cornell policy changes. Special thanks to Greg Dusenbury, Chuck Whitehead and Andrew Salamida for all their work, and a big shout out to the actives for their efforts to comply with mandates and keeping our chapter strong and vibrant during this difficult time.

Since its formation last September, the Capital Improvement Committee has been meeting regularly and has made significant progress assessing our numerous needs (please see its special report). Many thanks to all of you on the committee for providing guidance and expertise so we can properly address our major and minor improvement needs.

Finally, I want to give a special thanks to Tom Sporney for his many decades of incredible service to Beta Theta PiKA. Tom is retiring from service later this year and he will be deeply missed. Tom was President of Alpha Theta when I was an active in the early 80's. He later transitioned to AT Alumni Rep where he has worked diligently updating the alumni database, and communicating with alumni directly along with publishing this Beta Theta Data bi-annual report. Tom's continued involvement has provided critical guidance, mentoring and continuity for the AT BOD and the chapter in general. I can think of no other person who has done more to create the strong brotherhood that we have today. Tom, thank you for your 40-50 years of service, and I hope you and Jerri have a seamless move to England and enjoy your many years to come.

Our annual Homecoming Alpha Theta meeting will be held September 18, 2021. The meeting will be available via Zoom if you are unable to attend in person. Hope to see you there.

Bill Page '85
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Capital Improvement Committee Progress Report

The Alpha Theta Board of Directors created the Capital Improvement Committee in October of 2020 to address a number of long-standing capital needs at the chapter house. The goal of the Committee is to create a comprehensive renovation plan that inventories capital needs, estimates costs, establishes priorities and outlines the timetable, funding sources, logistics and budget to implement the plan.

The Committee includes twelve alumni and two actives who span three generations of Pikes, from the Class of 1960 to the Class of 2022. The members of the Committee are: Finbarr Huff '22, Greg Dusenbury '21, Ben Krapels '17, Andrew Salamida '15, Andy Glasner '86, Joe Kane '86, Paul Faber '85, Bill Page '85, Elliot Dee '84, Chuck Smith '79, Alan Zucchini '67, Tom Helfrich '64 and Logan Cheek '60.

So far, the Committee has compiled a list of potential renovation and improvement projects based on lists from alumni over the years, renovations recommended by members of the active chapter, projects identified by members of the Committee and defects inventoried through a professional home inspection. The inspection included a structural assessment of the building, an analysis of all mechanical systems, a review of the interior and exterior components of the house and an analysis of drainage on the property. The Committee, working with the actives and members of the Alumni Advisory Committee, also has considered the space needs of the house in the future and the possibility of an addition.

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Elliot Dee '84
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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

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

Advisor's Corner

Being on campus during a pandemic is surreal. Empty hallways, largely vacant classrooms, only occasional music blaring outdoors, and green lawns sans red Solo cups. As someone who

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teaches here, I see firsthand how difficult it is for students to cope under pressure that is substantial even in

ordinary times. Some classes are in-person, but most are remote or a hybrid between in-class teaching and students zooming in from around the world. The expectation is we will return to normal next semester, and so fingers are crossed.

Still, as we limp towards the end of another academic year, Pike has continued to be strong – among the strongest rushes on campus, a strong GPA (some alumni assumed it was the sum of four years of averages), and a real focus on safety even as students are vaccinated and on-campus infection has dropped. Hats off to the active Brothers for navigating what has been a difficult period – without even accounting for the nationwide pressure that Pike now faces, and the stricter guidelines from National, after problems arose at a different university.

We continue to benefit from strong support from Alpha Theta, the Alumni Advisory Group, Andy Glasner, Bob Forness, and Andrew “Floppy” Salamida. Not surprisingly, in light of all the problems the pandemic has created, there are occasional flare-ups among the actives. But they have been great at adjusting, largely benefiting from Greg Dusenbery’s leadership as SMC. Duse will be stepping down from what is a difficult job under ordinary circumstances, but he has kept the House focused and moving forward even as new hurdles have come up. Thank you for all the hard work!

Let’s hope for clearer sailing in the fall.

Capital Improvement Committee Progress Report

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The Committee has created a methodology to establish project priorities. This methodology considers the need, benefit, cost and ease of implementation of the 35 projects identified. Some of the projects marked as high priorities by the Committee and the Alpha Theta Board of Directors to date are: replacement of the roof, windows, interior doors, heating system and the wood floors on the first level of the house; repair of the exterior masonry and electrical system; reconfiguration of the first floor bathroom and Room 1 into a two-stall bathroom, laundry room and more private Room 1; remediation of drainage problems on the property; and a remodel of the 2nd and 3rd floor bathrooms.

The Committee is currently working with area contractors to obtain cost estimates for these projects. Once the costs are known, the Committee will work with the Alpha Theta Board to determine a budget to renovate the chapter house and will create a funding plan. Our expectation is that funding will come from the proceeds of our recent insurance settlement, a loan secured by rental income from actives over a set period of time and contributions from alumni through a capital campaign. The Committee hopes to complete its plan this coming fall. Please feel free to contact Elliot Dee, Chair of the Committee, with any questions.

5 Questions with...

[Paul Lego '80](#)

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- *You followed the footsteps of your father with a degree in electrical engineering, but followed a path into digital technology. Why that, rather than manufacturing, design, or other fields?*

[PL] By the time I was in my senior year at Cornell, I knew that I didn't want a career as an electrical engineer. Fortunately, General Electric was recruiting and they offered a management training program, which I jumped on. I spent three years in four assignments and three locations for GE, and that experience got me interested in business school. I left GE to get my MBA at Harvard. Coming out of business school in 1984, Silicon Valley seemed like the place to be and I joined my first tech start-up, a company called Pyramid Technology, where I did product management and marketing. That job began what ended up to be a 35 year career in digital technology.

- *You have been involved as consultant and angel investor for several companies. How did you develop the skills and resources to be able to do that?*

[PL] Those skills were developed over a fairly long period of time. My goal out of school was to get broad functional experience, so I took lower level assignments in engineering, manufacturing, marketing, and sales, rather than taking promotions. My first general management job was as Chief Operating Officer at an 11 person start-up called digidesign. I got a cool title, but made very little salary. Fortunately, I also got stock options. At digidesign, over time, I ran every function except engineering. I also had my first board of directors level experience, my first exposure to venture capitalists, my first IPO and my first company sale. After digidesign went public, one of its venture investors invited me to spend time in their partnership. It was at that venture capital firm that I learned about investing in early stage tech companies. I also learned that I preferred running a company to being an investor. I went on to run four more early stage tech companies, and went through another IPO and four more acquisitions. Through all of those experiences, I learned how to be a thoughtful investor and board member.

- *You are an instrument-rated pilot, and have spent time traveling and climbing big mountains, Denali in Alaska, Cho Oyu (26,000ft+) in Tibet, Kilimanjaro and several others, and also been to the North Pole on a Russian Icebreaker. Share with us an interesting story from one of your travel adventures.*

[PL] I have done most of my big climbs with an outfit called Alpine Ascents International. While the climbing and travel have been a spectacular adventure, the best part has been the people I have met. The American and Sherpa guiding team that I climbed with on Denali and Cho Oyu had over seventy summits of Everest between them. Several of those same guides were the heroes who rescued of nearly a dozen climbers on Everest in a story made famous in Jon Krakauer's, "Into Thin Air". All of those guides were incredibly humble about their experiences, but the stories they told in the dinner tent were amazing.

- *Your pledge class was 20 strong, and, by my reckoning, there are still 14 active. You have kept in touch with Brad Smith and Kevin Dean. How would you characterize the chapter in the late 70's when you were there? Who have you lost touch with and would be interested in seeing?*

[PL] The Chapter in the late 70's was strong. We had a large pledge class with a really broad mix of majors and personalities, including several Hotelies, like Brad and Kevin, some pretty gung-ho ROTC types, and more than a few hardcore partiers. That diversity caused a little tension, but ultimately made us a great pledge class. We were also an intramural sports powerhouse, particularly in hockey and lacrosse. The house itself was always full, with three or more brothers to a room, and we had several large annexes with 5-10 brothers in Collegetown. We had just gotten the firetruck (thanks Chas!) and had lots of fun with house parties and sorority "raids". We also did some major renovation on the house during our years there. Other than Brad and Kevin, I haven't stayed close to many of my pledge class brothers. I'd love to catch up with all of them, but regret that we have already lost so many including my former Room #2 room-mates Friggy (Peter Dan Aufrichtig) and Peter Lee Connor Atcheson. May they rest in peace.

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

[PL] There were so many great memories, but three things stand out in my mind – 1) Gibber, who gave me more valuable advice than any professor, 2) Lee, the house cook during that era, "yah wanna eat?", and 3) "troughing", where, during our communal meals, you rolled up the edge of the plastic table cloth that covered each long table, someone started pouring water from a glass or pitcher, and the first person not paying attention got a giant puddle in their lap. Some epic "troughs" went around 2 or 3 table corners before reaching their final victim.

Alpha Theta Treasurer's Update

I hope all is well with all of our alumni and active brothers and their families as we move towards our collective new normal. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic did have a slight financial impact on Alpha Theta Fraternity Inc. during the Spring 2021 semester, although not to the extent as it had during the Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 semesters. We collected \$54,021 in rental income from the active chapter, for a lease term of February 1, 2021 to May 31, 2021, after having not collected rent for the months of December 2020 and January 2021, during which time the house was closed to occupants, due to the pandemic. Alpha Theta did pay for one brother's alternate quarantine housing arrangement at the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester, with these expenses totaling roughly \$700, considerably below the roughly \$10,000 in similar expenses at the outset of the Fall 2020 semester. Nonetheless, Alpha Theta Fraternity Inc. has navigated these challenging times and we remain in strong financial position, with over \$475,000 in our accounts at Bank of America.

The Alpha Theta Board of Directors is working closely with the Capital Improvement Committee on developing a renovation plan for the house and property at 17 South Avenue. Ten large scale, high-priority projects have been identified and the Capital Improvement Committee is in the process of obtaining hard quotes on those projects. For the smaller projects, the AT Board of Directors is working in conjunction with the active chapter brothers for their input and suggestions on items to be addressed during the Summer of 2021, during which time there will be two active brothers living in the house and paying pro-rated rent. We anticipate and have budgeted for the Fall 2021 semester being a return to normalcy in terms of house occupancy and rental income being restored to their full, pre-pandemic levels. With that, the AT Finance Committee and I continue to work on a budget that will be an integral factor to the overall renovation plan. Wishing everyone a nice summer and I hope to see many of you at Homecoming this September.

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Chapter Eternal

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

Frederick A. Crow, Jr.

Jun 16, 2020

<https://www.kalasfuneralhomes.com/memorials/col-frederick-crow-jr/4244464/>

Joseph H. Quade '49

Aug 26, 2020

<https://www.tapinto.net/towns/montville/sections/community-life/articles/montville-s-joe-quade-dies-at-97>

Carl D. Rugg '74

Dec 25, 2020

<https://www.hillierfuneralhome.com/tributes/Carl-Rugg>

Gurdon B. Wattles '57

Sep 27, 2020

<https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/fall-river-ma/gurdon-wattles-9380114>

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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