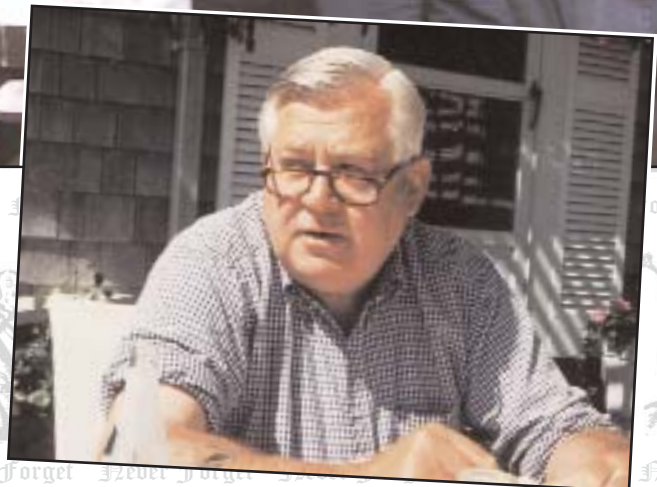


Sigma Phi

FLAME

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A Tribute to Cal Howard, S'54 1934 - 2008

Also Inside: Wisconsin Centennial Convention

The Chairman's Message: "An Old Pair of Shoes"

by Marshall Solem, F'79 marshall.solem@zsassociates.com

Close your eyes for a minute and think back to your days on campus. More specifically, consider your days at the Sigma Phi Place. Think back to the Sig alumni who influenced your undergraduate experience.

Perhaps it was the brother who presided over your initiation. Perhaps it was the alumni board president who helped guide the chapter's affairs. Perhaps it was an older brother whom you befriended at a homecoming or similar event. Perhaps it was an alumni brother who offered career guidance or helped you get a job.

I suspect it is fair to say that at least one alumnus had – and perhaps still has – a significant impact on your experience of Sigma Phi.

When I learned of the death of Chairman Emeritus Cal Howard, S'54, this past summer, I reflected back on his many contributions to Sigma Phi (as discussed on succeeding pages in this issue of the *Flame*) and to my experiences with him. Cal was a Sig for the eras. He truly left a legacy across many fraternal dimensions, both personally and through his skilled leadership. As I bring to mind Cal's many contributions, it's the most natural segue in the world to think about the ongoing contributions of many other alumni who likewise help this Society and its chapters make progress, year in and year out. And as we approach the holidays, it is appropriate to give thanks to Cal and these alumni for their contributions. Without them, our robust, 181-year-old

Society would have withered on the vine decades ago.

The easy truth is that we all know the impact involved alumni can have. The hard truth is that Sigma Phi needs still more alumni participation – today, tomorrow, and every day. When you think back to those alumni who influenced you, I suspect if we compared notes many of us bring to mind the same few alumni – the same alumni who still carry the torch! Compared to other fraternities, Sigma Phi achieves unparalleled alumni participation in our dues campaigns. But an equally vital dimension – leadership involvement – finds us comparing poorly ... and performing poorly, too.

Money helps us achieve certain things like engaging periodicals, quality merchandise, paid insurance premiums, and other fraternal bric-a-brac. It's an undisputed cornerstone for Sig survival. But, in a very different way, the continued growth and development of the Society really depends on more, and different, alumni stepping up – at regular intervals – to help guide and manage our chapters and our national affairs. Depending on the same few for decades is a recipe for "keeping the circle small" ... and for staleness in leadership.

As I said at Cal's memorial service, he left very large shoes for his successors to fill. And while I've been walking in those shoes for a few years now, they still feel a bit sloppy on my feet. Sometimes, I slip out of the shoes too easily as I try to balance Sigma Phi with




Marshall Solem, F'79

work and family commitments. But staying out of the shoes for too long is dangerous for our Society. If you have slipped out of your Sigma Phi shoes, perhaps it's time to go back to the closet, dust them off, and put them back on. Your leadership contributions could make a SIGNificant difference in the health of your chapter, in the health of your national organization and – yes! – in the lives of young Sigs.

Getting involved is easy. Just contact your alumni corporation president or me if you are interested in getting involved on the national level (contact info listed elsewhere in this *Flame*) and we'll be happy to make sure those shoes still fit you well and are comfortable.

Clearly, few will leave a Sig legacy of the magnitude of Cal Howard, S'54. But all of us can create legacies just the same, and the Society needs us to do so. "Esto perpetua" doesn't just happen, you see. It's driven by those who continue to care ... and to make themselves available.

Sig legacies. What will yours be? 

Sigma Phi



The Sigma Phi Society publishes the *Sigma Phi Flame* twice yearly. Please direct all inquiries, suggestions, photos and changes of address to Sigma Phi National Headquarters, Post Office Box 4633, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-4633.

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Sigma Phi Home Page: www.sigmaphi.org



Kudos & Thanks ...

... to the following Sigs for their articles, information or suggestions supporting this issue of the *Flame*: John Bonk, M'06; John Connelly, S'54; Glenn George, C'82; Scott Hekel, F'97; George Ketterer, F'65; Sean List, T'08; Scott McCrae, V'82; Dan Neumann, F'71; Josh Taxson, I'95 & Jesse Wetzel, S'04.

Issue after issue, we solicit Sig perspectives from real Sigs in all walks of life. Each shared viewpoint improves the quality and readability of the periodical in which it appears.

Each is a genuine gift to our readers, coast to coast: a modest, personal testimonial about brotherhood. Contact **Mike Imirie, M'69** (mimirie@aol.com) with your feedback, suggestions, photographs and – of course – Sig stories.

“The Classy Kids on the Block”

by Scott McCrae, V'82, General Secretary

scottmccrae@comcast.net

It was Friday night at the 2008 National Convention in Madison and I was at the Hicks Oratorical Contest. My mind was swirling with all the Sigly information I had gleaned that day: first from the delegates in the morning S&A meeting, and also from undergraduate Sig leaders in the afternoon workshop.

Sigma Phi is in a great place now: a place for proactivity, not reactivity. For example, during the S&A meeting, we talked about strategic planning and made a list of future agenda priorities. To tie this theme in with the undergraduates in their workshop, we did a group assessment about just who we are in this day and age. What are Sigma Phi's values? Why is Sigma Phi important? Who are the stakeholders? What makes us relevant on today's college campuses?

Such sessions invariably turn us towards the perpetual challenge of recruitment. While rush has always been vital, it's never been more challenging. Experts say that 90% of all fraternity and sorority problems stem in some way from poor recruitment of new members. Sigma Phi needs to continue to improve here.

It wasn't always so difficult. In my day – the early '80s – recruits came to us and we had fifty men or more from whom to choose a class of ten to twelve pledges. No longer! Finding willing “prospectives” is very difficult, and with good reason. First, reputation continues to be an issue. The media doesn't portray fraternities charitably. Second, underclassmen have more housing choices than ever; we compete against 1) other fraternities; 2) special interest groups; 3) clubs of all kinds; and 4) varsity and club sports. Third, fraternity houses – many of which date back 50 or more years – must compete with fancy dorms and apartments. Many (most?) offer single rooms, private baths, and the latest technology. Tough competition, eh?

The push among our Greek peers is to get back to basics in recruiting new members. “Values-based recruitment” is the catchphrase of this strategy. It involves determining and reemphasizing core values: those characteristics

which have brought Greek organizations through often-tumultuous environments on campus and in the larger society, too. Once such ideals and values can be identified, Greeks need to be able to communicate them extremely effectively to new generations waiting to be recruited.

But there's a catch. Today's students – “Millennial Generation” men and women – have some great attributes, you see, but their greatest shortcoming may be the ability to effectively communicate socially. It seems that enthusiastic (excessive?) use of text messaging, blogging, e-mail and all related techno innovations like Facebook and Myspace.com have worked to change (limit?) good, old-fashioned, face-to-face interaction.

But I see an opportunity in this strange social dynamic. In my mind, this makes Sigma Phi all the more relevant: an even more important factor in today's college experience. After all, wouldn't most Sig alumni agree that: “we learned academics in the classroom but our social education came from our days in Sigma Phi”? But how do we effectively convey this bedrock relevance and express it to recruits?

During Friday evening's Hicks, thoughts of the recruitment issue reminded me all over again what a “class” and “character” event our Hicks Oratorical Contest truly is. It teaches and rewards excellence in public speaking and writing among our undergraduates. It really represents one of our greatest values: earnest connections, one with another. If the Hicks interest I've witnessed over the years is any indication, such relevance rings no less true with today's active Sigs.

How does this relate to rush? Since we need to recruit based on our values, why not change the nature of our big rush events to portray what we are and attract the scholars, leaders and gentlemen we are truly looking for? Instead of an unrelieved rush diet of paintball, Texas Hold'em, bowling and the like, we could amplify rush by sponsoring “the classy kids on the block” events. You know: the kind that attract the well-rounded men this

Society has needed from day one.

In a rush setting, how about sponsoring a contest like the Hicks Oratorical? First, we open up the contest to freshman and sophomore men and allow them to apply with a copy of their speeches. Second – and very importantly – we enlist celebrity faculty members to be judges along with Greek advisors, IFC and even Panhel members and staff to administer the contest... We advertise all over campus – in a very classy way, of course! – and look for key sponsors (bookstores, educational venues, etc.) to donate cash and/or prizes for the winners.

With this groundbreaking initiative, two things happen. Sigma Phi stands out in everybody's eyes, making for remarkable public relations. More importantly, the event exposes a group of talented underclassmen to Sigma Phi through their participation. Wouldn't that be a great group of men on which to base the core of a pledge class?

The facts: we are the oldest national fraternity in the country. We exist at America's finest institutions. We administer the largest Greek scholarship fund in the country. Our membership rolls are studded with illustrious men. Our longevity is a testimony to owning and embracing solid values. Yes, recruitment is difficult these days and we need to innovate and think outside of the box to be successful. Nobody has all the answers, and everyone knows that our chapters could surely use a few good poker players, bowlers, etc.

But, I see tremendous opportunity for Sigma Phi to advertise its relevance – and raise its profile – by leveraging the truly important things we offer. We don't need to reinvent the wheel; we could just rotate the tires by focusing anew on the values-based approach. We have never, after all, lacked solid values. Finding new ways to make them a more visible part of our recruitment efforts makes tremendous sense. Portraying our values might be just the catalyst we need to effectively tell our story to new rushee generations. The recruits we are looking for, I believe, will want to associate with – and become strong additions to – the “classy kids on the block.”

Long-time Society Chairman Cal Howard, S'54, Dies

by Marshall Solem, F'79 marshall.solem@zsassociates.com

Long-serving Chairman and Society stalwart Cal Howard, S'54 died on August 12th of this year at the age of 74.

Howard first initiated into the Serpentine Club, a local fraternity, in the last such class at the University of Virginia in 1953. In 1954, the Serpentine Club joined the Sigma Phi Society ... and so did Cal. As an only child, for the first time in his life, he was surrounded by brothers. Because the Serps were new to Sigma Phi, there were no older Virginia Sigs to serve as mentors. Instead, Cal met Sigs from all the other chapters who visited the Alpha of Virginia. "I never distinguished between chapters. All Sigma Phi chapters have always meant the same to me," he said. Sigma Phi became his family.



Upon graduation, Cal's professional career began with a job as a technical salesman for National Metals in New York. As he progressed through his career, he would hold positions as a research fellow for the Atomic Energy Commission, a consultant for McKinsey & Co., a director of planning and commercial development at Phillip Morris, and a vice president of H.J. Heinz Company. Cal retired at the age of 48 as the corporate vice president of Scientific, Environmental and Medical Research for the Mobay division of Bayer, A.G.

At the same time as he was beginning his professional career in 1956, Cal joined the Sigma Phi Standing and Advisory committee as the Virginia delegate. Simultaneously, he became the president of the Sigma Phi alumni association of Virginia, a position he held for the next 10 years. In 1968, Cal was elected as chairman of the S&A. During his tenure, Cal made many contributions to the Society. Some of the most notable include: expanding and diversifying the membership of the S&A, creating the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation, creating a national insurance program, and bringing the Viele Scholarship Trust under Society control.

After 31 years, Cal stepped down as S&A chairman in October 1999, but his influence and dedication continued. He served on the Chairman's Advisory Council for his three successors, continued to serve on the Viele Selection Committee until 2007. In



2007, with his good friend and Sig Brother Grey Perry, C'56, he embarked on an extensive research project to document the life of Francis S. Viele, G'1885, and the scholarship trust he left for the Society. The 468-page tome is a testament to the dedication of a man who gave endlessly to the Society for the vast majority of his entire adult life.

Cal Howard influenced and guided our Society for over 40 years – with honor, integrity, enthusiasm, intelligence and laughter. His influence will continue long into the future. He kept the flame burning brightly for us and for generations of Sigs yet unborn.

We owe that distinguished, caring gentleman a tremendous debt of gratitude.

Never forget the brother.



The Early Years (continued from page 5)

Standing and Advisory Committee. A few years later, I joined Cal on the S & A Committee and continued to serve after he was elected as Society Chairman. He could be very opinionated at times, but he certainly had a clear and passionate vision for our Society.

The years passed, and we did not see as much of each other as before. Cal and Dot (his dear wife and Sig Sister) moved first to Pittsburgh and then to Martha's Vineyard, but we would get together at S & A meetings, at Conventions and at March Fourth Dinners. Judy and I saw more of them when we moved to Florida in 2002. They had a winter home in Jupiter, close to where we lived in West

Palm Beach. He and Dot organized a Sig Reunion Weekend in 2003 to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the Virginia chapter and held a delightful dinner at their home. We reciprocated by hosting a Fourth of March luncheon at our place two years later.

While death has taken him from us, Cal's impact lingers. Almost two generations of Sigs have grown up while he led our Society. I cannot think of anyone who better embodied and articulated the true meaning of Sigma Phi. He was a real mentor and role model to so many of us, throughout this Society.

"Esto Perpetua," old friend.

You will be sorely missed. 

Cal Howard: The Early Years

by John Connelly, S'54 JCONNVCA@aol.com

Cal and I first met in the fall of 1953, when I had just started at the University of Virginia. At that time, fraternities were allowed to begin the rush process in a candidate's first year, and several good friends and I had invitations to attend a "libation" at the Sigma Phi house. We had received interest from numerous Greek houses, but were especially intrigued with Sigma Phi. That Society was very new in Charlottesville, having only expanded there that very year.

Cal greeted us at the door as the Rush Chairman. I remember being very impressed with his wry sense of humor and his rather courtly manner. He was only a year or so older than I, but – at the time – he seemed light years more mature than we lowly freshmen.

We met only a handful of brothers that day, for there just weren't that many undergrad Sigs on campus. There were a number of older gentlemen there, however, and I discovered that those alumni had been instrumental in setting up the Virginia chapter.

The rush process on campus really accelerated after the Christmas break, so life was a series of very uptight cocktail parties, "smokers" (the very thought of this still upsets my stomach) and a full court press by rush committees from, the various houses trying to convince you that theirs was the only house to join. Cal and company at 163 Rugby Road, by contrast, were so laid back that their approach really appealed to me and five others who had bonded while living in the first-year dorms. We accepted our bids from Sigma Phi and marched to the house on "Bid Sunday" to accept.

Afterward, we discovered that Cal was also the pledge master (!) and nearly as unfamiliar with Sigma Phi as we were. However, we all made the effort to learn as much Sig history as we could from the various Sig publications of the time and we even involved some of the older gentlemen. There was one real stumbling block: No one in the house had even the foggiest idea about the Sig songs. We had a copy of the song book, but, since none of us could read music, we were at a standstill. In desperation, we turned to one of our pledge group (Tony Edgeworth, S'54) who could play a few tunes on the much abused upright piano in the North room. Cal listened in horror as one day we belted out a Sig song to the tune of "Lady is a Tramp." He wisely decided that we should go on to other subjects but the incident – and our lack of singing ability – came back to haunt us at our initiation at Lehigh the following fall. It had now sunk in that the Charlottesville chapter really was brand new ... and we were its first pledge class.

All our pledge class passed UVA's first-year academic requirements, so we were all eligible for initiation. Upon our return to campus in September 1954, however, we found that only five active brothers had returned ... so we outnumbered them, 6–5! Cal (who by now seemed to hold every office in the house by default) was undaunted as we prepared for the big event at the Sig chapter in Bethlehem,



Cal Howard, S'54, John Connelly, S'54, & Ed Twohy, S'55 in a 1961 photo

PA. With the exception of some very upset Michigan Sigs who did not appreciate our version of an old Sig classic, things went well. We made a lot of friends with the Lehigh Sigs, especially the ones who were being initiated with us. It was also the start of a very good friendship with Wink Mayer, L'10, who was then National Secretary.

Back at Virginia, Cal held things together by keeping up our spirits (or partaking thereof) and trying to make sense of our finances. With such a small group, it was hard to pay house expenses, but we somehow managed. Cal convinced me that I should take over as Rush Chairman and try to build up the membership. Fortunately, the S&A had contracted to put in a kitchen and dining room underneath the North wing and this was almost completed. Art Salomon, S'54, was the first kitchen manager and found an excellent chef who stayed for many years. This addition was a major boost to our recruiting efforts; we took in several new members in the winter and a large group in the spring. Some of our new pledges were former Serpentine Club members who had returned to school after military service.

In spite of our abbreviated experience with Sig songs, Cal asked us to write a Sig song for the Alpha of Virginia and we immediately went to work on it. I selected the tune ("The Yellow Rose of Texas") and, along with Bill Poarch, S'54, Ralph Miller, S'54, Tony Edgeworth, S'54 and Ed Twohy, S'55, wrote the lyrics in a day or two. Cal loved it and we sent it to Wink Mayer who approved it.

Under Cal's leadership, the house grew in numbers and became an established presence on UVA's Grounds. It looked more and more like we would survive! Cal graduated in 1956 and we appointed him our delegate on the
(continued on page 4)

SPEF Announces:

Alumni Leadership Fund to Honor Cal Howard

At its September meeting, the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation announced the establishment of a new fund to memorialize the legacy of Cal Howard, S'54. The idea for the fund was the brainchild of several of Cal's contemporaries from the Virginia chapter, spearheaded by Michael Jackson, S'62.


One of Cal's major contributions to the Society was expanding the circle of people involved in its leadership. From his early days on the Standing & Advisory Committee, when S&A membership was predicated on residence in the New York metro area, Cal began to change the paradigm and recruit Sigs from around the country to help lead the Society. Later in his tenure, Cal recognized the need for helping chapter alumni corporation presidents learn and share best practices. To do so, he created and hosted at his home in Florida, several alumni president workshops. (Due to funding constraints, these workshops have since been suspended.)

The purpose of the Cal Howard Alumni Leadership Fund is to provide the capital to ensure the Society can

continue to help our alumni leaders to:

- grow in leadership and management skills,
- develop and share best practices for making our chapters strong &
- stay abreast of the latest developments in the Greek community.

"We all know that without strong and vibrant alumni leadership, our active chapters tend to slip," advised Dell Hutchinson, SPEF President. "We've seen it over and over again. On the flip side, we've clearly seen the positive impact of strong alumni leadership. We hope this fund will grow to enable us to resurrect many of the alumni leadership programs our long-serving Chairman cared so deeply about, and, in the process, ensure the strength and vibrancy of all of our chapters."

As you consider your year-end giving, please consider a tax-deductible contribution to the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation for the Cal Howard Alumni Leadership Fund. Our goal is to raise \$200,000, the income of which can then fund the alumni programs in perpetuity. 

Viele Scholarship Update

by Glenn George, C'82 ggeorge001@yahoo.com

The Francis S. Viele Scholarship Trust awarded \$99,000 for the 2008-09 academic year to 34 very accomplished and academically promising Sigs. The total dollar amount awarded this year was down significantly from recent years due to turmoil in the financial markets, which of course has only worsened since awards were made. The average grant size (approximately \$2,900) was down around 40 percent from last academic year. The proportion of applicants receiving an award – approximately 40 percent – was also down, from the long-term average of around 50 percent.

The continuing distribution of significant scholarship monies in the face of major financial pressures demonstrates the Society's unwavering commitment to the pursuit of Truth through scholarly endeavor.

Details of the awards by

| Number of Awards | | | |
|---------------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Chapter | Grad | Undergrad | Total |
| Cornell | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Wisconsin | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Hobart | | | |
| Hamilton | | 1 | 1 |
| California | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Michigan | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| Virginia | 2 | 6 | 8 |
| North Carolina | | 2 | 2 |
| Union | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Vermont | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Grand Total | 9 | 25 | 34 |
| Scholarship Dollars | | | |
| Chapter | Grad | Undergrad | Total |
| Cornell | 4,000 | 13,000 | 17,000 |
| Wisconsin | 2,000 | 1,000 | 3,000 |
| Hobart | | | |
| Hamilton | | 4,000 | 4,000 |
| California | 1,000 | 8,000 | 9,000 |
| Michigan | 5,000 | 16,000 | 21,000 |
| Virginia | 8,000 | 10,000 | 18,000 |
| North Carolina | | 8,000 | 8,000 |
| Union | 2,000 | 5,000 | 7,000 |
| Vermont | 9,000 | 3,000 | 12,000 |
| Grand Total | \$31,000 | \$68,000 | \$99,000 |

chapter are shown in the tables here. The applicant pool was up substantially from recent years, with 83 Sigs applying (versus 66 last year, for example). "We continue to be impressed with the overall strength of the applicant pool," said Viele Scholarship Selection Committee Chairman Glenn "Rusty" George, C'82, a five-time Viele recipient. "Yet we wish more applicants would take care to ensure their applications are complete and of high quality. We continue to see applications missing financial data, containing poorly written essays, and with letters of recommendation from individuals (e.g., girlfriends) lacking objectivity and perspective, to cite just a few problems. We need to emphasize the quality, as well as quantity, of applications."

Among this year's winners are
(continued on page 5)

Society Welcomes New Treasurer

George Ketterer, F'65

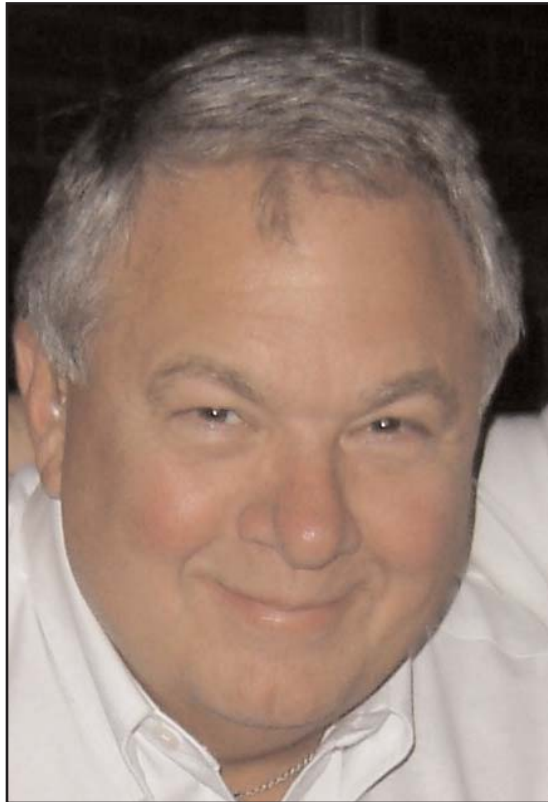
by Mike Imirie, M'69 mimirie@aol.com

The Society has a new Treasurer. Effective with Convention '08 in Madison, George Ketterer, F'65, has stepped up to that important responsibility. George replaces Alvar Soosar, S'96, who has served faithfully since 2001.

George, who was initiated in the fall of his senior year, nonetheless managed to serve as chapter vice president before he graduated in June of 1966. He earned his Bachelor's in Business Administration, with dual majors in Accounting and Naval Science.

His profession was a classic immersion in financial management, primarily in the administration of higher education. Over a span of 40 years, George served in a variety of positions, including Controller of University of Wisconsin–Madison, Controller of the UW System and Project Manager for the system-wide Shared Financial System, the PeopleSoft-based financial system for the 26 campuses of the UW!

George has been involved with the Sig chapter in Madison for virtually all of those years. "I began working with the Wisconsin Alumni Corporation in 1969 and have been at it ever since. I've served as Board Member, Treasurer, Alumni-Active Financial Advisor, and am currently Treasurer Emeritus. I'm also Treasurer of a 501(c)(3) corporation that was



Incoming Treasurer George Ketterer, F'65

established to preserve the National Landmark Bradley–Sigma Phi House."


As a seasoned, caring Sig and an accomplished financial talent, George was pleased to say "yes" to our Chairman's invitation. His reasons are twofold: "I thought it might be interesting to learn about some new facets of Sigma Phi beyond my local chapter. At the same time, I'm excited about serving in this capacity, and feel

I can possibly offer some new perspectives."

George has many strong memories of his early days as a Sig. They involve Monday night dinners, Friday night beer suppers (since discontinued), Saturday morning work sessions, and spending time with people he cared about deeply. Very distinctly, he remembers being initiated by the esteemed Wink Mayer, L'10, like it was yesterday!

Now retired from managing financial matters for the University of Wisconsin, George currently spends his time on projects at the Verona home he shares with Mary, his wife of 40 years. In addition, he's rebuilding a 1950 Ford pickup truck and restoring a 40-year-old wooden boat. He and Mary spend January through April in Florida, staying out of Wisconsin winters. George plays golf (not well), takes long walks, and lifts weights to keep in shape. He enjoys reading voraciously. While recent "reads"

include *The Great Train Robbery* by Michael Crichton and *Truck* by Michael Perry, it is widely rumored that his very favorite all time tome is ... the Sigma Phi Catalogue!


Should you need to reach that esteemed and financially accomplished Brother, either to extend congratulations or simply for consolation regarding your 401K, feel free to use this e-mail address: glketter@wisc.edu 

Viele (continued from page 6)

two Viele Mentors: Brendan Matthews, V'02, who is attending the University of Wisconsin law school, will continue to serve as Mentor to the Alpha of Wisconsin. Jonathan Sabol, M'01, who is attending the University of Michigan law school, will serve as Mentor to the Alpha of Michigan. The Viele Selection Committee is delighted to be able to continue this important program. We are also delighted that two members of the founding class of the Alpha of North Carolina were among this year's winners.

The Viele remains the largest scholarship program of

any fraternity or sorority in the country. Since its inception in academic year 1978-79, over \$2.9 million nominal dollars in Viele Scholarship funds, worth well over \$4 million in current dollars, have been disbursed to over 500 Sigs.

Applications for 2009-2010 scholarships will be posted on the Sigma Phi Web site (www.sigmaphi.org) in January and will be due by the first of April 2009. Sigs with questions about the Viele program can contact Rusty at ggeorge001@yahoo.com. Rusty asks Sigma Phi alumni to encourage any Sig they know who will be pursuing a degree to apply for a Viele. 

And the Winner Is ... “Guinevere”

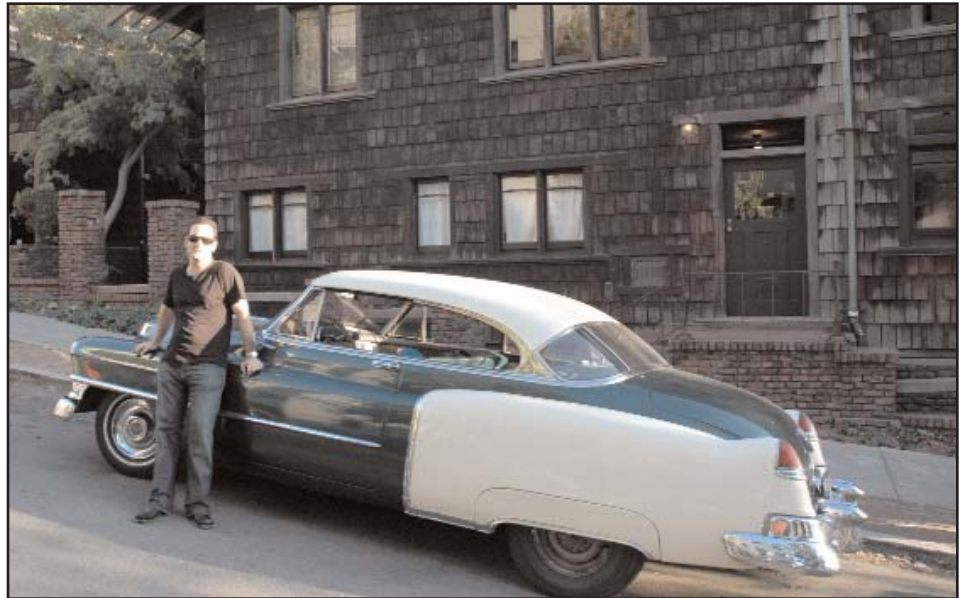
by Mike Imirie, M'69 mimirie@aol.com

If Sigma Phi had an official car – like states have official flowers or birds – what would that car be like? Hmmmm ...

Clearly, it would have to have character. It would of course be well maintained. It would attract only the right kind of attention, not unlike the Brothers of our band. It would need by its appearance to suggest such attributes as “vintage,” “time honored,” and yet others indicating impeccable maintenance and high function through the years.

If I had a vote in this fictitious-but-fun designation, I think I'd vote for the set of wheels just purchased by California Alumni Corporation President Josh Taxson, I'95: “Guinevere,” an emerald green and white, V-8 powered 1950 Cadillac two-door coupe.

Josh made this unpremeditated purchase immediately after a Board meeting in Berkeley this past July. In his own words: “It was late. I had just left a meeting at the Alpha in my black 2005 Mustang. The meeting had been choppy and passion-filled, and my mind swam with the many tasks facing the Board in supporting the chapter's inevitable struggles for survival and prosperity. I chose to drive to my Oakland home via the lovely, serene College Avenue, just to clear my head. (I like to take it all in as I ponder how lucky I am to be alive, and to be a Sig!) Fittingly, I pulled up at one point behind an amazing, magnificent old car. My heart raced; my eyes widened. I looked her up and down. I flipped through the automotive catalog in my head at light speed! THIS car was special. THIS car I had not seen many of. THIS car was a Cadillac. And hark, hark – is that a ‘for sale’ sign I spy??!! By Jove! My heart raced faster. There was no point in trying to reason with myself; I was going to do what had to be done. At the next stoplight, I jumped out of my car and ran up to the Caddy. An older man with piercing blue eyes looked up at me. I asked him if he could please pull over so I could talk to him about the car. He did. What he had to say captivated me. I was hooked!”



Josh Taxson, I'95, and Guinevere at the Sigma Phi Place

There was no turning back. Josh met with the owner the very next day, made an offer, and was overjoyed when his offer was accepted.

That Brother is no stranger to vintage cars, by the way. He's owned these special-interest cars over the years: a '54 Plymouth Savoy (“Tubby”), a '68 Buick LeSabre (“Sadie”), and a '67 Ford Camper Special (“Moby”). It's clear that his fondness for voluptuous Detroit sheet metal has stood the test of time! While Guinevere is an obvious continuation of Josh's passion, he sees this car as a new zenith: “Gwen is older, representing a crucial era in design and lifestyle. She demonstrates post-War flair, curves, the beginning of the tail fin, etc. She's also a 2-door coupe and is absolutely gorgeous.”

In the weeks and months which have ensued, Josh has of course made improvements. Mechanically, he removed the fiberglass homemade gas tank from the trunk and had the original gas tank patched and reconnected.

He also had the 3-speed GM Hydramatic transmission adjusted and replaced the voltage regulator. He dutifully adds lead to every tank of gas. (Weighing in at just under 5,000 pounds, the old car delivers about 13 MPG.) In matters of taste, Josh looks to purchase full retro wire wheels with four-inch wide whitewalls!

The mechanical feature of that remarkable Caddy which delights Josh the most is the fact that the rear windows roll completely down. The coupe has no roof “B” pillar, so, with all windows down, it can be completely open from front to back. The real joy, he confesses, is the attention that Guinevere gets: “The people love my car. I really mean ‘the people’: all people – kids, mothers, homeless, gangsters, youngsters, hipsters. They all look ... and they all smile.”

In the final analysis, what are the true Sig tie-ins to this remarkable old Cadillac? Josh explains: “I think the biggest factor is the simple truth that if I hadn't been on hand for the Board meeting that night, I simply wouldn't have discovered the car. The Thrice Illustrious was the connection.”

Another reason? Josh's love for vintage cars and for Sigma Phi represent two of the strongest passions in his life.

Finally, Brother Taxson speculates enthusiastically that, if he had the privilege of driving Brothers Bowie, Bowie, Cromwell and Witherspoon around town today, he's confident that – even in their 1820s top hats and tails – they'd be delighted to be on board!

For more info about Guinevere, contact Josh using this e-mail address: josh.taxson@vancebrown.com

Convention '08: What They Said

*Sometimes, in Sig circles and elsewhere, our best understandings are shaped by many different sources. Care to learn something about Convention '08 in Madison in the recollections of some who were there? Here's **What They Said** ...*

What I enjoyed most from the weekend was bonding with actives from the many attending chapters. We all come from such contrasting cultures, yet we are family, and it shows. Thursday night, actives started flooding in from the airport, and our basement continued to fill with Sigs from all over the country. It's a let-down to know I will never experience anything quite the same, yet, I remain enlivened by the bright future of our Society.

– Kraig Weber, F'06

The best memory for me was the vital gathering of 225 at the Banquet with ages ranging from the late teens to the '80s. Sigma Phi had meant a great deal to everyone there. It is powerful to recognize that such a bond draws us back together after, in some cases, forty years.

– Don Zillman, F'63

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Being a Wisconsin Sig, the highlight of the Convention was once again seeing all the brothers I went to school with from the fall of '61 until I graduated in February, 1970. It was also sad that a few of these brothers are no longer with us. I bemoan my inactivity for the last 35 years; I've always felt so isolated out here in Southern California, but I'm already making plans for the 2009 Convention in Berkeley.

– Steve Eckles, F'62

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The convention definitely opened my eyes to the grand scheme of the Sigma Phi Society that I had not quite been able to grasp before. I have always considered my chapter to be very diverse, and – now that I've been to a convention – I have seen how the entire Society is diverse.

– William Getts, C'08

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Being at this point in my life, I saw at this Convention the true meaning of the Brotherhood – that of generational continuity – in a new light. Although I have lived over half a century, I felt neither young nor old with this band of brothers. There were those in attendance who had gone before me and those who still have the lion's share of their life to lead. Each greeted me as if we were in the same pledge class and – in each greeting – I knew we shared a true bond. The theme of "generations" was brought home by hearing Rex Jones' father (Russ Jones, F'42) speak, as well as having my own

daughter in attendance. Although I know I will not be around for the next 100 years, I am delighted that I can continue to carry the Sigma Phi banner high so that future generations can share in it.

– Art Neudek, F'75

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Participating in the Hicks Oratorical Contest gave me a new and refreshing perspective on the Sigma Phi as a whole. It opened my eyes further to the great diversity and individuality that flourishes amongst our active chapters. Truly a testament to the power of Sigma Phi!

– John Bonk, M'06

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There are three things that made particularly lasting impressions about Convention 2008:

1. The incredible breadth of Sigs, grad and undergrad, participating in and enjoying the Brotherhood of Sigma Phi in Madison. That speaks to the viability of our Society.
2. Re-connecting with Sigs that I have not seen in many, many years. Those years just melted away as we re-lived the good times!
3. Seeing Rex Jones, F'72 & Sam Moore, F'70, recognized for all their hard work and dedication for the past 35+ years. I've seen firsthand what Rex and Sam have put into Sigma Phi and their award could not have been more deserved.

– George Ketterer, F'65

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After traveling to S&A meetings for almost three years, the trip to Wisconsin was my first where I was able – and truly delighted – to see several Sig alumni whom I've gotten to know on the road over the past years. More than just an informal sighting or commonplace conversation, I have come to understand, appreciate, and cherish the moments we share together, regardless of chapter. Just knowing that countless Sig alumni deeply share and invest in the furthering of the Society is enough to extol the events of the weekend, but it is because of our similar experiences and shared moments together, that real relationships develop well beyond graduation.

– Jon Bellona, H'00

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Iwas impressed with the participation and enthusiasm of those who took part. I also was impressed by the joint luncheon held with the Nordic Society, once again demonstrating to the world that although

Sigma Phi may look like just another fraternity on its surface, we are deep and caring in our Societal fabric.

– Kurt Haigis, V'73

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The 2008 convention was a wonderful experience. Having had some part in Virginia's hosting of this annual gathering of Sigs last year, you can understand how nice it was for me to arrive in Madison early on Thursday, check in at the Concourse Hotel, and then drive up to beautiful 106 North Prospect and be welcomed by an active brother, all without having had to worry about any of the countless supporting arrangements! The Wisconsin Brothers could not have been more warmly welcoming. Although I was early, they wasted no time in giving me a complete tour of the House ... and even locating a cool one for this wandering bird from Virginia.

– Jim Jenkins, S'58

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The convention was a wonderful renewal of old friendships and development of new ones. It is amazing how Sigma Phi can unite strangers and instantly give people the bonds prevalent in old friendships. Of course, catching up with old friends was the highlight of the convention followed closely by lingering at the Union on a gorgeous, 80-degree Saturday afternoon taking in all of Mendota's sights.

– Mike Reiels, F'80

mikereiels@wi.rr.com

In looking around Tripp Commons on Saturday evening, I was impressed by the span of history represented by the Brothers present. The gathering force of Sigma Phi that led us there surely represented our commonality rather than our differences.

– Sam Moore, F'70

Sam.Moore@dhfs.wisconsin.gov

Bekindling friendships with brothers near and a far was the most important and refreshing highlight of the weekend. It's always exciting to see how wandering birds change over the years and hear the fascinating stories they tell. I'm motivated by those who have a long history of support for Sigma Phi. Just as importantly, the enthusiasm shown by active brothers toward the organization reinforces my belief that Sigma Phi will live on for many years to come.

– Scott Tarmann, F'87

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Centennial Celebration Drives 2008 Convention

by Dan Neumann, F'71 DNeumann@orgdynamics.com

It's 1908. Ford Motor Company introduces the Model T. The FBI is established by the U.S. government. Mother's Day is celebrated in the United States for the first time. "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" debuts at Yankee Stadium in New York. The Harvard Business School is founded in Boston. Sigma Phi establishes a chapter at the University of Wisconsin.

In 2008, the 100th anniversary of the last of those auspicious events teamed up with the Society's national convention to draw nearly 250 Sigs and guests from twenty states as well as Denmark, Finland and Iraq to Wisconsin's capitol city over the weekend of September 19–21.

Like the group roughly half its size that gathered in Chicago's Congress Hotel on October 31, 1908, to mark the Alpha of Wisconsin's founding,

this year's convention participants anticipated a simple, satisfying agenda: to celebrate the ideals and friendships of Sigma Phi. Such a celebration certainly ensued.

The Society conducted its usual convention business in Madison beginning on Friday morning. Standing & Advisory Committee delegates and Sigma Phi Educational Foundation (SPEF) trustees convened for their biannual meetings. Concurrently, some 35 undergraduates from our ten active chapters took part in the annual Leadership Conference, reviewing risk management practices and plotting strategies for growth.

Under SPEF sponsorship, all came together in the Grand Ballroom of the historic Memorial Union for an engaging presentation by UW History Professor John Sharpless during a joint

luncheon with the Brittingham Viking Scholars organization. That cultural/educational association, which counts eighteen Sigs among its members, hosted its 55th annual convention the same weekend.

Friday evening's barbeque dinner at the Sigma Phi Place was followed by speeches from ten eloquent actives who participated in the Society's annual Hicks Oratorical Contest (see related story) at UW's Law School. As is customary of convention Fridays, the evening culminated in a late conclave roll call.

The Annual Meeting of the Members on Saturday morning was driven by ten encouraging chapter reports. In addition, there was serious discussion and subsequent adoption of several Society by-law revisions, plus the election to three-year terms of S&A



Appreciative Hicks Contest crowd at the Law School on Friday night

Executive Committee members Chairman Marshall Solem, F'79, Vice Chair Pete Harter, G' 65, General Secretary Scott McCrae, V'82, and newcomer Treasurer George Ketterer, F'65. Two unexpected, heartwarming meeting highlights came from the floor: a presentation to Wisconsin's alumni leaders by George Mercer, M'68, of a video CD commemorating the 1982 Wisconsin convention (!) and a proud and poignant centennial greeting from the heart, by Bob Brunzell, F'42.

The afternoon provided ample time for Sigs to reinforce old friendships and forge new ones. They lunched at the Sigma Phi Place and then watched various televised football games or took advantage of the astonishing 80-degree weather by playing golf, sailing Lake Mendota (see related story by Andy Jackson, F'72), touring the State Capitol building, or any of a dozen other engaging, enjoyable ways to make memories in Madison. (Many of these varied choices, I understand, were topped off by Babcock Hall's famous ice cream!)

That evening – still enjoying truly marvelous September weather – 225 Sigs and guests gathered at the Memorial Union for a cocktail reception on the terrace overlooking the Lake Mendota sunset. At 7 P.M.,



Enthusiastic banquet-goers at Tripp Commons

we moved indoors to convene for dinner in the English Tudor-style Tripp Commons, richly decorated with oak paneling, hand-painted ceilings, and starched white linens.

The evening's program was masterfully emceed by Bill Cohen, F'90. Fresh off another tour of duty in Iraq as a civilian contractor helping soldiers employ leading-edge robotics technology to avoid injuries, Bill reminded attendees to keep a special spot in their hearts for the women and men – including Navy Captain and medical unit commander Ted Briski, F'80, aboard ship in the Gulf – serving our

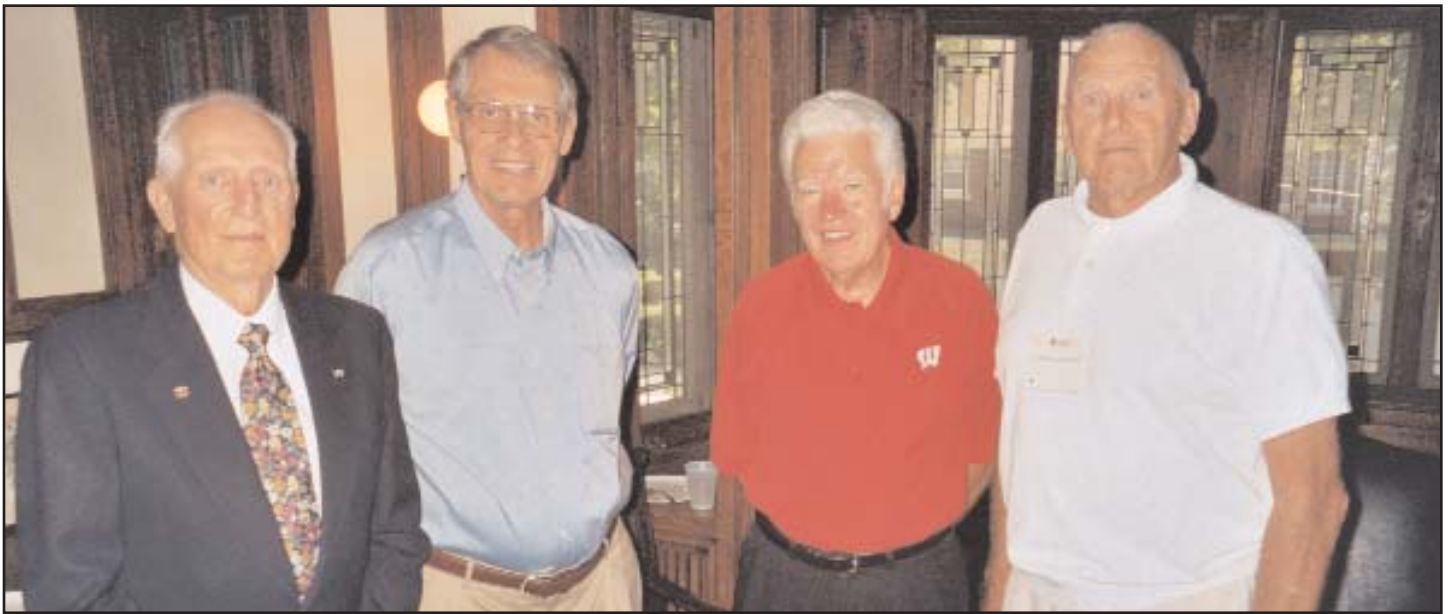
country at war on two fronts.

The banquet program was liberally sprinkled with Sig songs led by Songmaster Rex Jones, F'72, and featured a variety of speakers. There was a special nod to the legacy of Wisconsin chapter cofounder Henry Bryant, C'1900, by sons C. Brate Bryant, C'47, and Tony Bryant, C'49. Those two animated Sig gentlemen shared wit and wisdom as they described their family's rich Sig heritage over the decades. Tom Jones, F'42 – a Brother of 66 years, Rex's father, and the senior Wisconsin initiate in attendance – expressed profound gratitude to the Sig who arranged a senior year date for him that has led to sixty years of marriage to his wife, Betty! Tom also encouraged young and old to cherish their Sig values for the irreplaceable part they play in life's important fulfillments.

In addition to an inspirational poem delivered by this year's Hicks winner, John Bonk, M'06, the evening's featured speaker was Don Zillman, F'63. Don, who serves as President of the University of Maine at Presque Isle, shared numerous insights about our world contrasted to the world 181 years earlier when Sigma Phi was founded. He also stressed the importance of keeping healthy the tradition of affordable higher education in America for those with ability and drive. Finally, Don observed that – based on daily interactions with hundreds of students at UMP – our



Sig songs aplenty from Badger troubadors



(L to R) Bob Brunsell, F'42, Rollie Smith, F'51, Jack Harned, F'51 & Tom Jones, F'42

Society is in good hands for a prosperous future.

Our September weekend was an occasion befitting the Society's annual convention gala, amplified by the Alpha's celebration milestone. But why? How? Why do so many Sigs, wives, and guests turn out to mark a Sig event like this? Why were 35 Brothers and wives who attended the Alpha's October 1973 Rededication Dinner motivated 35 years later to be in attendance, all over again?

This Brother believes the answer is clear: Sigma Phi has consistently connected Sig to Sig ... and generation to generation ... through friendships rooted in special values and ideals. Each Brother, after all, has had unique experiences along life's journey. All

have chosen differing Sig alumni relationships over time, but so many are still fueled in ways that matter ... Thrice Illustrious ways ... long after our college days have concluded.

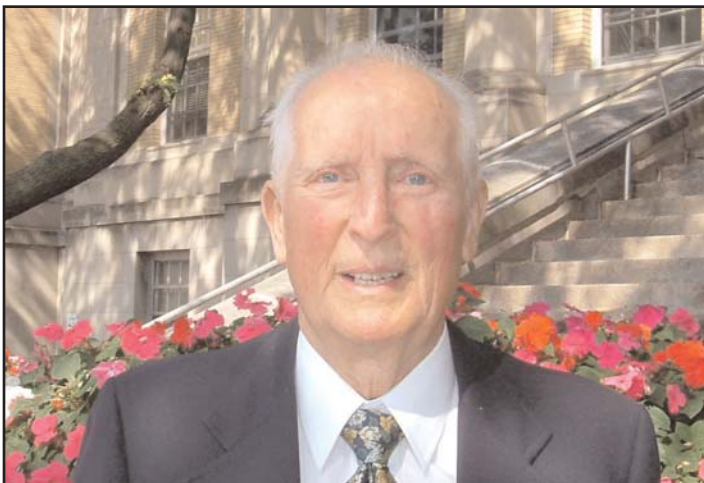
While emceeding the 1973 Rededication Dinner, Edwin C. Austin, F'09, asked a similar question. The answer Ed supplied came from the oft-cited 1935 letter of Elihu Root, H'1860:

"The Society, which a century ago undertook to supplement the intellectual training of the college course by the training of character through self-devotion to the cult of friendship and human sympathies, was not a mere social incident. It was an expression of the better part in human nature. The collective body joined in this expres-

sion became something a little different from any of its members – it became superior to the limitations upon human life; it acquired the mysterious gift of spiritual succession so that you, a century later, share in the spirit that moved the founders, and inherit their title to honor and affection; and it became the mother of happy memories that warm all our hearts – even the oldest."

On our recent Saturday evening in Madison, Brother Zillman brought Ed's thoughts full circle, noting: "There have been remarkable changes (since our founding). But the values of the Society have endured and that says something quite remarkable about the Sigma Phi."

Indeed! Esto Perpetua. 



Bob Brunsell, F'42



Chuck Heisinger, F'76, Dan Neumann, F'71 & Rex Jones, F'72

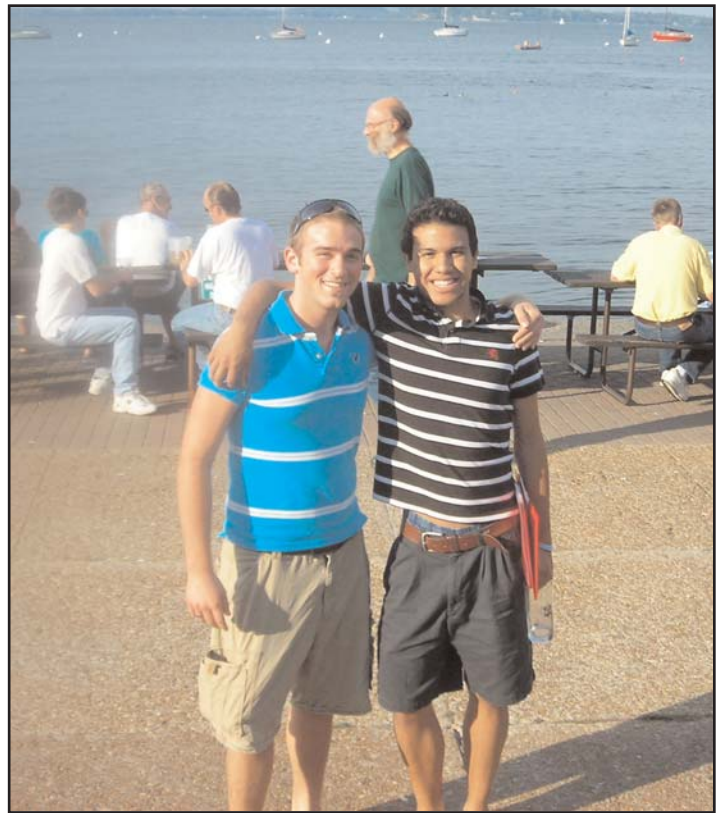
A Tarheel in Madison

by Sean List, T'08

This fall, there was a new group of delegates present at the 177th National Convention of the Sigma Phi. It was a true honor for the men of the Alpha of North Carolina to be united with their brothers from across the nation. The ties of brotherhood were felt immediately after touching down in Wisconsin, with the Carolina boys running into the active Serps in the Madison airport! A few minutes later, our brothers from the Badger state picked us up and escorted us back to 106 Prospect.

Even in the dim midnight light, the house stood before us, a beacon of craftsmanship and design. The second we walked through the door, there was a feeling of being at home. The Spirit of the Sigma Phi was ever present in each room, as we learned about different stories shared here throughout the past. After a long day of traveling, it was nice to come to a place that felt like home. I believe it would be valid to say that Breeze Stevens would be proud of this chapter on its centennial.

Over the next few days, my brothers and I explored the city between Mendota and Monona. The architecture, landscape, and nightlife combined altogether for an outstanding experience – both sensory and experiential. Perhaps the most amazing thing about this University was its Memorial Student Union. Not only is this gorgeous gathering place nestled scenically on the breathtaking Lake Mendota, but additionally, this Union just so happens to be the first student union in the nation to serve a perfect concoction of barley and hops ... which it still does today, and a fine job



Sean List, T'08, Javier Herrera, T'08 on the shores of Lake Mendota

of it, if I may be so candid! The Union's venerable past also made it a great setting for the convention dinner. This history, along with the several hundred Sigs in attendance – some, the noblest of alumni; others, the NIBliest of NIBs – combined to make this a truly memorable experience for me as well as a historical event for Sigma Phi's Alpha of North Carolina.

While walking with my fellow T's along the shore of Lake Mendota, a powerful feeling came over me. These two guys, people whom I hardly knew one year ago, have started a great endeavor with me in Chapel Hill. They have become my friends, confidants, and brothers. It was after contemplating this evolution of friendship and brotherhood that I started to understand that the future of our Tarheel Alpha is not reliant on such superficial factors of whether or not we have a giant house. Our prosperity will not be determined by the amount of parties we throw, the number of actives we have, or how many pairs of Nantucket Reds we own. The future of the Alpha is determined by the words instilled in us one late April night in Charlottesville: "Nothing short of greatness." The Alpha is going to attain that greatness. It is now our duty as brothers of the Sigma Phi to spread the Friendship, Love, and Truth that we have been charged to share.

To the future of the North Carolina Alpha – may she lead or may she die. And special thanks to the Alpha of Wisconsin for being the portal for the ceaseless Society magnanimity that was shown to us at our very first Society convention. (What, I wonder, will the Alpha of North Carolina be like at our centennial?)



The Sigma Phi Place in Madison



Hicks Oratory in Madison

by John Bonk M'06 jabonk@umich.edu

The Hicks Oratorical Contest is a unique highlight of brotherhood at each convention. In this year's Hicks in Madison, ten different undergrads representing seven chapters took part, regaling their large and Sigly audience on Friday evening with poignant, personal viewpoints about this Society. This year's winner was senior John Bonk, M'06, of Rochester Hills, Michigan.

The aspect of our heritage that best perpetuates the lofty intentions and fundamental tenets of our glorious Sigma Phi is the rich historical tradition passed down through the generations and protected as the cultural watermark of our Order's place in time. It is this pantheon of beliefs, ideas, songs and procedures which crystallizes and isolates the moments that most define us. Such ephemera preserves in grand romance the trivialities and minutia of being a Sigma Phi and ensures that they are kept alive by those Sigs who are certain to follow.

To combine this past with the present is to acknowledge where we come from. To sing old songs and main-

tain tradition is to say that we are connected with those who came before us. To speak of our history and the lofty ideals of our founders is to say that we, despite our responsibilities and obligations to this mortal realm, are intimately connected and woven into the glittering fabric of time's expansive tapestry; we are Sigs now, just as Sigs were then and will be one hundred years from now!

The Sigma Phi is bigger than any one man. It is that understanding that stokes the fires in our hearts, bringing forth the ardor and the love required of us by the Goddess and propelling us with gilded wings into the chronology that will be remembered and eternally revered.



Hicks winner John Bonk, M'06

As this history is kept alive, so too must we maintain our understanding and appreciation of the intellects that came before us, those Sigly souls lost in rumination long ago whose hopes and daydreams now stand strong as glorious reality. We must revel in the ancient songs and the sacred incantations that still echo proudly through our collective's hallowed halls

I choose to lift this Society in poetry ...

A blue and white-hued gallery of brilliance wheels on high,
the testament reflection of the essence: Sigma Phi.

The tree city, buried in green groves and tall pines,
the lone hawk circling its wild domain disguised
with the old bricks and worn pages of a
palace steeped in rumination,

deep contemplation cast with honor and a thirst to find
the truth, the beauty, magic and the mystery untwined.

Tall doors, carved geometry: dazzling gold veneer
beckons, nay, demands with siren tones so clear
to enter, wisely, with nothing but the will to see
one's self and others, new, unveiled to that which is, indeed,
the truest and the purest free of compromising focus,
a hunger burning deep to find and justify the chosen
path of difficult discovery, untold uncovering
of that inner curious wondering, consumed now by life unbridled,
the wide-eyed wonder calling forth the spirit of a child:
open eyes peeled, roving
diffusing problems, feeling, coping,
forcing back the choking seeds of self-doubt creeping
and climbing strong through gnashing, teeming throngs
of that which binds and bleeds
to testify the Goddess and her song:

Behold the bold and brightest, valiant, gallant Sigma Phi!

The grace of mystic majesty, the ardor in their eyes!

A song betwixt their lips, they sit: eyes cast upon the starry sky
the memories will never fade, those made within the Sigma Phi!

So soon the boyish fog relents
in favor of the newfound sense of something greater,
more than merely walls and names and laughter.

Those times well-spent with those who then became
young faces in the faded frames
of pictures hung and left, as memories for all times after.

This new resolve, this primal call
embodied in these Sigly walls becomes the voice,
an echo faint in subtle sweetness
despite the fleet fragrance racing soulful up the spine
and into spirit, soaring close behind
a gilded Seraph
dancing, with the Goddess in her eyes.

Oh, the Goddess in her eyes!
They shine, this brotherhood alive, so kind
in purpose driven wholly by a love
for all the good that can be done
when those who see things clearly meet to
share what they've divined!
through life's long stations, contemplation
born of artists' motivations:
leave this place a legacy
that future Sigs will find!

Behold the dreaming, sharp and scheming minds of Sigma Phi!
A heart that burns, its energy the wisdom to be kind!

Wild tales they tell with tongue-in-cheek,
the raucous laughter rolling high
The eaves still shake with merriment,
above the halls of Sigma Phi!

In conclave warmth our hearts delight,
rich tomes, the history brought to life
from ages past, the torch now passed
through sequenced Sigly generations.

Continued on page 15

Wisconsin Celebrates Centennial, Commissions a History

by Tom Galfano, F'87 Tom.Galfano@wellsfargo.com 414-803-2451

Many of you know the Alpha of Wisconsin has begun a book project, an effort to document 100 years at 106 North Prospect in Madison. Brothers Rex Jones, F'72, Dan Neumann, F'71, Craig Garrett, F'67, Marshall Solem, F'79, and I have selected a Massachusetts book publisher who is the son of a Cornell Sig. The publisher, Bespoke History, has nearly finished an anniversary book about the Epsilon of New York. This historical collaboration by Cornell Sigs and Bespoke will be a full color pictorial: a chronological timeline of the creation and life of the Epsilon.

At the Convention banquet on Saturday night, we appealed to Brothers in the ballroom to join in our quest to make the Centennial History of the Alpha of Wisconsin a reality. We know that the finances necessary for this project are significant, yet we worry about the risk to our Alpha's history as time goes on and our memories become more challenged.

At one point during our Banquet, Dan Neumann stepped over to my table with an important message. Apparently, Dan had spied five old milk crates full of photo albums and papers at the Sig House. With the need this project has for photographs, letters and other history, Dan asked me to go return to the Sigma Phi Place to borrow the dust covered, heirloom documentation for our Centennial History project. My wife, Paige, was a good sport, not only flipping through a few books in the upstairs library, but helping me carry the dusty, old crates out to our car!

They sat in my trunk until Sunday morning. Paige and I took our coffee cups out to the garage and started to thumb through what we'd found, looking for slivers of Sig gold. Surely, a few of the pictures from the '80s albums would not be appropriate to use in our Centennial book (we'll be archiving them in the coming year and providing opportunities for you to identify your friends...). We found some remarkable artifacts from the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Much credit deserves to go to house historians over the years; you gentlemen spent countless hours cataloging your time at the Alpha, and those "investments in memory" will drive this important project.

As we pull together 100 years of history at the Alpha of Wisconsin, we will be calling on many of you to help us docu-



ment your experiences. We've received numerous offers for interviews already, and we thank those Badger Sigs for their early enthusiasm and support.

Please be in touch with me if you'd like to contribute your memories to this history. What you recall about the Alpha of Wisconsin, the Bradley House, your brothers or any other Sig topic dear to your heart will contribute in a mighty way to what we're trying to do. The formative years we spent and shared at Sigma Phi, after all, helped make us who we are today. Together, let's do what we can to preserve our stories and images.

Consider ... Louis Sullivan was in financial ruin in 1908. At a bleak professional time, the Crane family hired him to design a residence in Madison, providing him with income to survive. His work and that of George Elmslie resulted in the masterpiece that became our house: the Sigma Phi Place at 106 North Prospect. Ultimately, you see, Louis Sullivan's legacy was not wealth. In fact, economic stresses during his lifetime left him broke. His living legacy was giving Sigma Phi a home, one we can proudly say has helped shape the lives of Badger Sigs for 100 years.

Let's work together, gentlemen, to preserve that remarkable, dear legacy.



Continued from page 14

Endless seasons march along,
in rhythm with our roaring songs
that tell the tale and mark the trail
of that which we have brought to be:

an order of purpose so defined
as demonstrating will and fire,
vigilant to keep in mind
the aspirations and desires
fit for those who seek to see

the highest peaks of time-true harmony,
the liberation of the right philosophy
and dedication to deny the lies we see
then roar into our lives triumphantly:
The Sigma Phi will always be a home to me!

Behold compassion, fire and fashion! Who? The Sigma Phi!
With hearts that glow, our pride defined, the Goddess' song does shine!
Around our table, minds and eyes steeled strong in always asking "Why?"
The things that keep the Spirit strong and flourishing in Sigma Phi!"

Madison Convention Reminds of “Strong Bonds”

by Jesse Wetzel, S'04 wetzel.jc@gmail.com

For me, the highlight of this year's convention was the chance to go out sailing on Lake Mendota with some of the actives from a few of the other chapters. Not only was it my first time sailing, but it was really cool to get some time to just chill out with some of the younger guys and enjoy really good conversations with them: you know – not the typical “hey let's go party” conversation. I meet college/“frat” guys from time to time who I have difficulty having an interesting conversation with, but I found that, throughout our convention, there wasn't a single brother I couldn't have a comfortable, meaningful conversation with. That's a testament to the kind of young men we have in our Society. It was also cool to see two experienced Sig sailors (Scott from the California and Tom from Hobart) in action at the same time that I watched water newcomer Richard Hsu, I'06, hang on for dear life!

There was one thing in particular that Convention '08 reminded me of, and it really fanned my personal Sig flame: the feeling I get of being among family at events where Sigs from every corner of our country come together. There's an unmistakable comfort and an immediate bond that comes with meeting Sig brothers new to you. There's a level of trust – a genuine interest and caring – that you don't get from others. It makes Sig relationships – even the new ones – special.


With the very real pressures of work, obligations, school and life, it's great to find people you can identify and share stories with. I've found that – like family – Sigs listen and share their own insights and stories. These gatherings are like family reunions, and I'm blown away every time I get to meet a new brother and establish a connection that I know I'm going to have for years. We may go months to years without seeing each other again, but it doesn't matter; it's great to reconnect again – just like family.



Sailing on Mendota. Jesse Wetzel, S'04, is at left

That's what I take away from these Sig gatherings. No matter how isolated or busy or stressed out you get, you know that there are brothers out there who would love to hear from or see you. Sigma Phi represents a coast-to-coast family just waiting for you to call up or visit! For me, knowing that there's a legitimate, deep and unqualified bond between us – regardless of year; regardless of Sig peer group – means a lot.

The older I get, the more cynical I become regarding society (note the small “s”). I find that people just don't do for each other. Within our Society, however, I see strong bonds played out personally and consistently.

Convention '08 reminded me that what we Sigs have is very special. I cherish it every day. 

(Jesse graduated from the School of Architecture at UVA in 2006. He currently lives in Chapel Hill, works part-time at Duda Paine Architects in Durham and advises our fledgling Tarheel Chapter by serving on the local Sig alumni corporation.)

Convention '09: Go West, Young Man!

Hark! Hark! Save the date, make your reservations and dust off the steamer trunks – for convention is in California next year! Make your way to the wild West for the Sigliest of celebrations! As our planning continues, we have targeted the weekend of 25 September 2009 for our celebration ... which coincides, serendipitously enough, with the 100th anniversary of the magnificent Thorsen House.

We anticipate booking rooms at the fantastic UC-Berkeley Faculty Club, an architectural masterpiece in the heart of campus, and a mere five-minute stroll from the Sigma Phi Place at 2307 Piedmont. Plan ahead, boys ... California is overdue for a cosmic Sig gathering ... and this is one you won't want to miss!

For more information about this evolving extravaganza, contact **California Alumni Corporation** President **Josh Taxson, I'95 ... josh.taxson@vancebrown.com**

Alumni Sail on Mendota

by Andy Jackson, F'72 ajackson@johnsonindint.com

(In an unusual "Convention hospitality" direction, the host Badgers made sailing excursions available to interested Sigs. Skipper Andy Jackson, F'72, describes, below.)

Two boats did the duty that spectacular Saturday afternoon. A non Sig friend named Pete Mooney skippered Soma. Pete is a fixture around the University's sailing area who has taken many beginners out to sea to show them the ropes. Soma is a 34-foot boat designed by Gary Mull. She is fondly known as the "Cow Boat," because, aptly for Wisconsin, she's painted black and white like a Holstein cow!

About 18 or so Sigs sailed. Ten young bucks sailed with Pete. Some already had a good knowledge of handling a sailing boat, which Pete greatly appreciated, since handling a 34' racing boat isn't just sitting around with a beer in hand!

The winds that day were a moderate 8-9 knots. Soma sailed upwind to the west end of Lake Mendota to have a spinnaker (the huge parachute-like sail used downwind) ride down. Unfortunately, after a couple hours of beating to windward, the wind died, so Soma had to motor in.

On our Tartan 27-foot vessel, my first mate, Barbie, and I sailed the "statesmen" of Sigma Phi. They included Mike Reiels, F'80, Sam Moore, F'70, Jim Behrend, F'76, George Mercer, M'69, Mike Imirie, M'69, and Chairman Marshall Solem, F'79. The Chairman came dressed in his Brooks Brothers best: a shirt, tie, slacks and black leather shoes. Hands down, he was the best dressed sailor we've ever had on board!


When I offered to add more sail area for a little more excitement, Sam Moore calmly demurred, saying: "Let's have an 'old man's sail.'" So, we took a single tack across the lake



Thinking Nautical! Andy Jackson, F'72, is at right.

on only the head sail, came about, and sailed back. Of note was the view of the capitol dome, which was magnificent.

Of further note was passing the new weather buoy in the middle of the lake, which promptly brought out the iPhones to Google "Lake Mendota buoy." With that new buoy's prompt response, we suddenly had empirical knowledge to verify our sensory perception of the exact wind speed and direction, as well as air and water temperature.

But did I need that high-tech confirmation? No, thanks. I just knew that, on that fall day, Mendota was sunny and beautiful ... and that was good enough for me. 

Nominations Open For The Elihu Root Distinguished Sigma Phi Award

The Standing and Advisory Committee is soliciting nominations for its highest alumni recognition award. Initiated in 1989, the Elihu Root Distinguished Sigma Phi Award honors a Sig's lifetime achievement that reflects Sigma Phi's values and brings credit to the Society. The award is intended to provide inspiration for all Sigs, and in particular, undergraduates, our leaders of the future.

Worthy candidates for selection are graduate brothers who have distinguished themselves by achieving national or international prominence, providing broad public service to others in society, and/or rendering outstanding service to the Society or to the fraternity system. Over the years, the award has been conferred to Charlie Boswell II G'47, Chet Eaton V'30, Hastings Keith V'34, Art Nielsen, Jr. F'38, Larry Perkins F'25, Barney Rocca I'34, and Chet Sawtelle U'29.

Nominations are due by July 1 and welcome anytime. They may be made by any individual or group, with or without the knowledge of the nominee. All nominations, which should be descriptive, comprehensive, and in publishable form, will remain confidential to those brothers who are directly involved in the selection process.

Candidate nominations are being accepted by Dan Neumann F'71, the Society's Recognition Co-Chairman, who may also be contacted concerning additional details, at dneumann@orgdynamics.com or 120 Campbell Road, Trumbull, Connecticut 06611.



News of INTEREST

Tom Bleezarde, H'54, writes: "I retired from the Williams Alumni Review in 2000 and have been accepting some freelance editing (and a little writing) from the news and alumni offices. I've worked on a couple of books for them, as well, but nothing I can't say 'no' to on a moment-by-moment basis ... i.e., if someone's looking for a squash game or if the weather is so good I can't resist the golf course! The best part of my 'work' these days is that there isn't any outside of my volunteer work. I just retired after 35 or so years on the area Boy Scout Council's executive board and am still serving as president of the local ambulance service and as a board member of the Williams basketball program's fan organization. That's all, and it's enough!"
tom@bleezarde.com

We have this mid-October update from **Mark Breitlinger, H'00**: "Assembled Brethren, Esteemed Sisters, I'm happy to announce that this past Saturday, **Thomas Murphy Keane, H'01**, (tom.keane@yahoo.com) and Morgan Denise Miller, HSS '03, were married at the Chapel on College Hill, with a reception following at the Hotel Utica. Historians are checking the record books, but it is suspected that it was the first ever sunny October weekend at Hamilton! From the 'thumbs up' on the altar after rings were exchanged to the crazy dancing that only Tom and Morgan can do, it was a day that reflected their love and happiness. They've jetted off for a week in Rome, but I'm sure they'd appreciate your well wishes upon their return."
mark.breitlinger@gmail.com

"Have been retired since 2001," advises **James Brown, L'54**. "I spend summers on a small lake in New York and on the St. Lawrence River. Winter's great, too, with lots of time spent skiing all at Snowbird, Utah."
vesta@clarityconnect.com

Ship designer **Ben Capuco, M'84**, has been busy – maybe even obsessed – for

the past five years. Ben is the Gibbs & Cox program manager for a new Navy vessel called the Littoral Combat Ship (LCS), meaning "close to the shore." Its very low draft allows it to get closer in to shore than larger frigates and destroyers. (See <http://www.lmlcsteam.com/> for the official web site.) "In August, we tested LCS1: Freedom - the first ship in this series - on Lake Michigan. Testing was a success; Freedom went well over 40 knots during these trials. It's been pretty exciting stuff – with hundreds of shipyard workers building it, offices full of Navy personnel planning how to use it an actual Navy crew preparing to sail it – and great to understand we have finally made it this far." The ship was commissioned in November in Milwaukee. She then transited out of the Great Lakes through the Saint Lawrence Seaway to Norfolk (VA) for additional work and testing.
BCAPUCO@gibbscox.com

"We've moved to Buenos Aires, Argentina!" writes career Ford Purchasing man **Karl Gigante, M'86**. "We left Thailand at the end of June to start our new adventures, and moved into our new home August 1st. Buenos Aires is a fantastic city. Our two girls are going to an American School called Lincoln that is only a few blocks from our home. I serve as the Purchasing Director for Ford–Argentina. We make the Ranger and Focus here in a plant that's nearly 100 years old – the 2nd that Ford built outside of the USA. Having learned Portugese during my Brazilian assignment, I am now embarking on learning Spanish ..."
kgigante@terra.com.br

We have this update from **Jason Go, M'93**: "I'm pursuing a masters degree

in Chinese Medicine. I find that studying this form of health care, which has been around for over 2,000 years, is fascinating. One of the things that has helped me the most is separating Eastern and Western medical thinking. There are some connections that can be made, but it's best to stay in the mindset of Chinese medicine and try to remember that, when this body of treatment and healing was created, they didn't depend on technology. I'll be learning acupuncture (I'll be a licensed acupuncturist) as well as Chinese herbs (licensing too) with other Chinese health care modalities. I'll graduate in another year and a half and have a master's in Oriental Medicine plus a BS in Nutrition by the end." Jgo247@yahoo.com

"My wife and I both finished our PhDs in history at Yale this summer," writes **Charles Keith, C'96**. "We both started as assistant professors in the history department at Michigan State University in Lansing this fall. I teach Southeast Asian history, focusing on Vietnam. It's been a busy transition but a happy one, and I continue to stay in close contact with many other Cornell Sigs as my life moves on; just this fall, I've seen a number of brothers in New York and Washington DC, and just hosted a few Sigs this past weekend for the MSU football game."
charles.keith@gmail.com

"Bonnie and I continue to reside in downtown Baltimore, Maryland," writes **Ted Ochs, L'83**. "Our home consists of the two of us and sons, Trey (5 years) and Marco (2 1/2 years). The end of the year will mark my 4th year as CFO at Connections Academy."
tedochs@aol.com

We have an update from **R. B. Quinn**,

Never Forget These Brothers

Since the publication of the Summer 2007 edition of the *Flame*, we have learned of the deaths of the following Sig brothers:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Jacobson, Jr. Alvin E., M'42 ... 16 Oct 08 | Sayre, Francis B., W'34 ... 3 May 08 |
| Newnan, Henry L., M'46 ... 25 Sept 08 | Scheenoch, Kenneth, U'49 ... 6 May 08 |
| Torphy Jr, Michael B., F'49 ... 20 Nov 08 | |



Tom Roderick, M'48, Jim Moran, M'49, and their wives breakfast on blueberry pancakes at Jordan's Restaurant in Bar Harbor, Maine

H'80, that your editor sees as both literary and taste bud based. You, dear reader, must be the final judge about which is more prominent!

In September, R.B. Quinn, H'80, became a published author. His first creative work, *Cheater BBQ – Barbecue Any Time, Anywhere, in Any Weather*, was published by Broadway Books. This compendium follows the journey of Nashville co-authors R.B. Quinn and Mindy Merrell from weekend outdoor pit barbecue fans and competition judges to crusaders for barbecue freedom and diversity in the everyday kitchen. R.B. confesses: "We still love making southern-style barbecue the old-fashioned way – parked outdoors next to a slow, smoky hardwood fire, lots of cold beer, and plenty of time. But, when that kind of fun isn't possible ... or even your kind of thing, *Cheater BBQ* helps everyone make excellent homemade barbecue using the same traditional techniques – dry rub, low slow heat, a good sauce, and some time." R. B. wryly confesses that he's come a long way from his days at the Beta, when he didn't know how to turn on an oven! Learn more about creatively "cheating" at the art of barbeque at this web site: www.cheaterbbq.com. You can contact R.B. directly at rbquinn@comcast.net

In news from the East, **Tom Roderick, M'48**, writes: "**Jim Moran, M'49**, and wife Janet came to Bar Harbor for a visit in October. The color was at its peak, and the lobster at top flavor. We had a grand time together. Jim's a federal judge in the State of Illinois and a Civil War expert, too. The Morans were on their way from here to NYC and thereafter to visit Gettysburg. Here we are [in the picture shown above] at Jordan's Restaurant for a breakfast of blueberry pancakes, another 'must' when visiting this part of Maine." roderick@gwi.net

"I live in Michigan and am across the lake from my Madison Sigma Phi house," writes **Chuck Sheldon, F'46**. "At 83 years young, I probably will not drive there any time soon but I still have happy memories – and lots of them – about life at 106 Prospect Ave!" Chuck's address is 140 George St., Frankfort, MI 49635.

Gil Stannard, F'41, writes to advise of a Sig conclave of a different sort. "Bob Yeomans, F'38, lives here with me in this Retirement Village in northeastern Wisconsin. He and wife, Charlotte, are in the nursing home part of this facility." Write to Gil at this address: 2293-B Villa Drive, Sister Bay, WI 54234

In this posting, **Fred Tucker, S'93**, reflects on the role played by Sigma Phi in support of an important career direction: "As odd as it may be, since the start of the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program at Michigan State University (8/06), Sigma Phi is the one thing that I haven't given up in my life ... call it my addiction, if you will. I've missed a few weddings, one funeral, and haven't seen most of my family but once in the last year. The ideals and strength of the Society and its members help maintain a great deal of hope on my part for the world around me while in the midst of a rather narrowly-focused and demanding program. I can't thank the many individuals of the Alpha of Michigan enough for showing this Wandering Bird the kindness, camaraderie, and conversation over the last two years. How wonderful that an entirely new generation of young men has answered the call to carry the banner and ideals of our Society into the future for many years to come."

ftiv@mac.com

Ken Van Dyke, Jr, F'96, has finished his Anesthesia residency and NeuroAnesthesia fellowship training at the University of Wisconsin Madison. He is currently an Assistant Professor of NeuroAnesthesiology at UW Hospital & Clinics. Ken is very proud to be a Badger! He and Jackie celebrated 10 years of marriage this June 20th. They live in Middleton with their two daughters, Olivia, 4, and Annaliese, 8 months. Vandyke@wisc.edu

"It was with real frustration that I had to forego taking part in Wisconsin's Centennial Celebration of Sigma Phi," wrote **Gene Woroch, F'44**. "A commitment we made a year ago with non-Sig friends at our annual long weekend in Europe kept us away. There aren't an awful lot of F'44-ers around. I just learned a few weeks ago that a very close member of my pledge class, **Dick Reiss, F'44**, suffers the ravages of Alzheimer's and that another very close Sig friend, **Bill Herschberger, F'46**, lost his battle with Alzheimer's. But life goes on and Sigma Phi continues to attract stellar young men to the ranks of Sigma Phi membership. Esto Perpetua!" geneworoch@aol.com





2008 Dues - Final Notice



In our 181st year, some facets of Sigma Phi remain constant.

Brotherhood. Sharing. Expanded horizons. A profound and thankful awareness for the fraternal vision of Brothers Bowie, Bowie, Cromwell and Witherspoon.

And the need for your personal support. Your dues each year enable the Society's publishing, training, and expansion efforts. Without active support from Sig alumni, there's no progress in those key areas, just as there would have been no Sigma Phi at all had the Brothers Bowie, Witherspoon and Cromwell not put a brave stake in the ground in Schenectady in 1827.

If you haven't yet responded to the dues notice in the July *Flame* or to your mailed appeal from Chairman Marshall Solem, F'79, please invest a moment now. Mail your dues check (\$50 before 2002; \$30 for those initiated after), payable to Sigma Phi Society, to Sigma Phi, P.O. Box 4633, Chapel Hill, NC, 27515-4633.

"Among so few, Brothers, the influence of each one is deeply felt."

18% and Counting!

Usage of the Sig web site (www.sigmaphi.org) grows every day. We have well over 500 logins a month, with August reaching a high of over 1,400. But so far we only have about 18 per cent of Sigs registered on the site. If you have not yet logged into the site and registered, please do.

There are many benefits to being a registered member of our site. Most importantly, we'll know we have the most recent contact information for you in our records. Secondly, you can use the web site to connect with other Sigs from your city or chapter. The web site has become a great tool for tracking down "lost" Sigs - i.e., those for whom Sigma Phi no longer has a valid mailing address. Once you register, please check the Lost Sigs section to help us reconnect with any brothers with whom Sigma Phi has fallen out of touch.

Other functions on the web site include an on-line store for Sig merchandise, a 'no muss/no fuss' vehicle for paying annual dues or making donations and the ability



for you to stay current on events across the Society.

If you are among the 82% of Sigs not yet registered on the Society's website, help us drive that number down ... and drive Sig connections up! Please visit the web site at www.sigmaphi.org today.



Sigma Phi FLAME

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