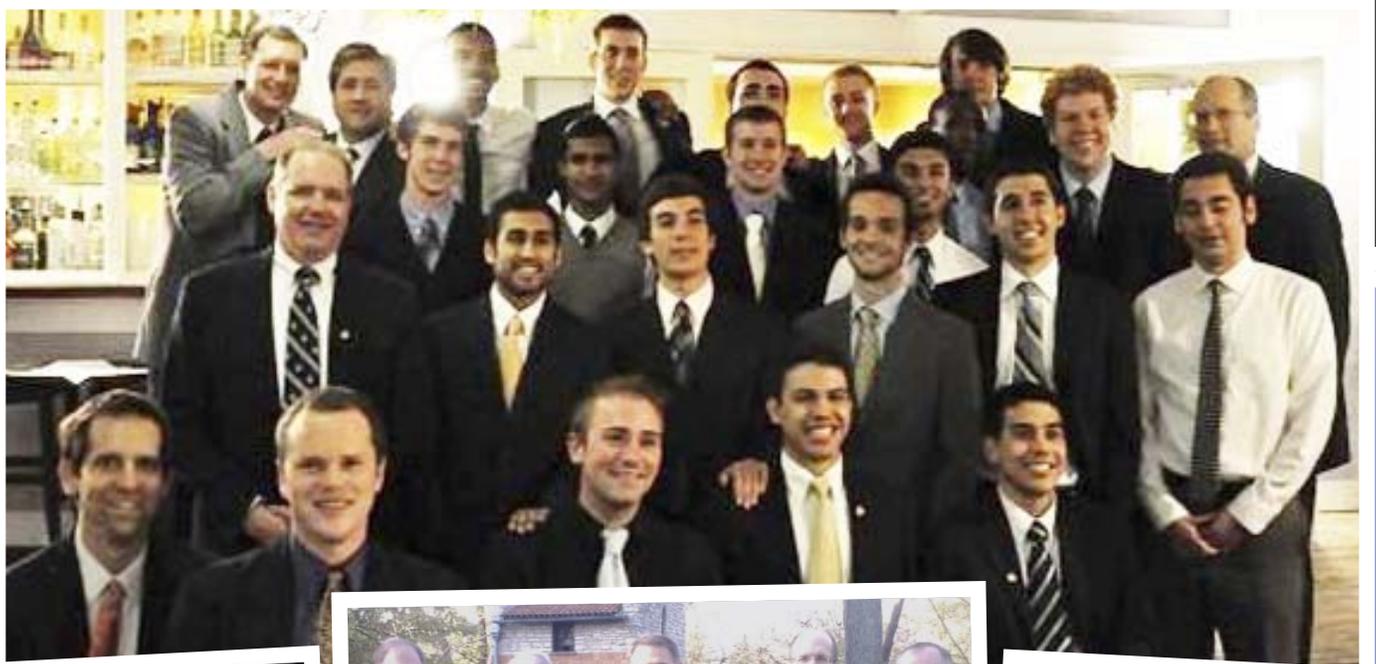


# Sigma Phi FLAME

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Faces of Sigma Phi, 2011

## The Chairman's Message: 'Starting Out; Looking Ahead'

by Vinny Cole, S'87 [jamesvcolei@gmail.com](mailto:jamesvcolei@gmail.com)

I am honored to have been elected Chairman of the Society at the 2011 Convention at Hobart, and hope that I can live up to the performance of the outgoing Chair, Marshall Solem, F'79. Marshall has worked tirelessly on behalf of the Society for decades. In addition to his service as Chairman, he's made contributions as Vice Chairman, Historian and as long-serving Trustee of the Viele. As I come up to speed on the myriad duties he has successfully performed, I am more and more impressed with his industry and commitment to the Society. On behalf of the Sigma Phi Society, Marshall, thank you for your countless efforts and your generous Sig heart.

I am joined by a new team of officers. After many years of exemplary service, Pete Harter, G'65, has retired from the Vice Chairman position. Israel Maynard, V'94, was elected his replacement. George Ketterer, F'65, will continue his tremendous and able service as Treasurer. In addition, Scott McCrae's success at development efforts and his deep experience as prime mover of the Renaissance Program make him the perfect choice to serve as the Director of the newly-created Renaissance Committee. This will allow Scott to focus on the increasing demands of implementing the Renaissance Program on a full time basis. David Munroe, I'86, will serve as Secretary of the S&A Committee, handling the traditional duties of that office. I am honored to work with such dedicated, competent, and honorable gentlemen.

Prior to Convention, I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the Fall Swing at the Alpha of Virginia. It was my first Swing in six years. In earlier years, I attended every Swing at the Virginia Alpha from 1987 to 2005. While I recognized that I was away for the best of reasons - family, work and the inevitable mid-life crisis - I really missed Sigma Phi.

Now, my children have grown and are in high school and college. I've

made partner at my law firm. Most dramatically, perhaps, what seemed a mid-life crisis has ceded to acceptance of the fact that, at 44, I really am middle aged. As I settled down and discovered that middle-age really is a great time in life (no, really!), I still felt the tug of the Society's camaraderie and caring. Like the piper's tune carried by the wind in the willows, Sigma Phi's siren song called me back home.

Swings remind me of what is best about Sigma Phi. It refuels my aspiration to practice the ideals of our Society in my daily life. I have always viewed those humble aspirants to our august order as brothers who have merely forgotten what it is like to be a member of the Sigma Phi. They suffer from an amnesia of the soul, and - through initiation - we are called to help them remember. Time away from the Society also tends to dull our recollection of the flame that burned so brightly as actives and for many years thereafter. The formative conversations which take place at Swing are special, sacred experiences that I will keep with me always. In response to the earnest questions of the young aspirants, I often find myself saying things that I most need to hear and remember. At the Virginia Alumni Oyster Roast held in Charlottesville this October, I was reminded by Victor Teran, S'11 of one of those conversations.

He told me that one of our conversations at his Swing had particularly stayed with him. I was honored but embarrassingly oblivious...and asked what it was. He said that I had asked him to close his eyes and remember the feeling of being 12 years old and having your best friend spend the night. Then, I told him that being a brother was like that feeling, only it was like having 20 of your best friends sleep over every night. I asked him to imagine what that would feel like. Finally, I suggested that he imagine that each year after he was initiated, it would keep getting better. Two months



Vinny Cole, S'87

after our conversation at Swing, there at the Oyster Roast, he looked at me kindly and sincerely and told me that I had been right. "It does keep getting better."

My goal as Chairman is to help preserve that special feeling; that unique vestige of the Spirit of Sigma Phi. Mindful of your own formative experiences as a young Sig and mindful of the satisfied stirrings of Sig membership you've enjoyed in the months and years since, I ask you to join me in this aspiration. Together I think we can march our Society towards a bright future. Why? Because, as I encouraged that impressionable neophyte, this Society really does keep getting better....with every caring Sig who continues to cherish and nurture the friendships, love, and truth that are the essence of Sigma Phi.

### *Sigma Phi*

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## From the Secretary: 'The Gods of Michigan'

by David Munroe, I'86, [david.munroe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:david.munroe@sbcglobal.net)

**T**he California chapter is the most geographically distant of all Sigma Phi chapters, yet not isolated because of it, as was feared by some when it was founded a century ago. Paradoxically, the California chapter is something of a crossroads for the members of Sigma Phi. There are so many reasons to visit the region, especially the city of San Francisco located just across the Bay from Berkeley, that a side trip to visit the Alpha of California gets included in many a graduate brother's itinerary. Our actives regularly welcome alums from all of the chapters.

The same is true of undergraduate brothers. Whether for the cultural attractions, the chance to work in the area's famed technology companies, the mild summer climate, or taking courses at UC Berkeley, it is very common for actives from other chapters to live at the California house. When I joined as a pledge in the fall of '85 there were three brothers from other chapters living in: Richard Aberle, G'74, Mike Devlin, L'80, and Laurent LeBien, S'81. Mike was studying architecture; Laurent and Richard were doing graduate work in comparative religion and rhetoric respectively. They were as much a part of the house as any California brother, and so we saw Sigma Phi from the very beginning as composed of many chapters. Variations in traditions, rush patterns, relationships to host universities - even in the lyrics of Sigma Phi songs - became part of my knowledge of Sigma Phi by the time we became brothers. Before I ever visited another chapter, I could see in my mind's eye Hobart's white columned house overlooking Seneca Lake, "Serp" with its diamond-paned windows, and Lehigh's house on Sayre Hill.

They were not the last brothers from other chapters we shared the house with by a long shot. Curtis Bartosik, C'85, taught us the Epsilon's beloved song "Steam." Ross Decker, M'89, taught us about life at 907

Lincoln, including his chapter's practice of having a head-of-house rather than a president, and that some officers with specific areas of responsibility were called "gods" (i.e., the "Plant God," the "Food God"). I do not know if Michigan still has its gods today, but that bit of trivia has stuck with me.

We learned from Hamilton Sigs of the weekly cocktail parties in the house (back when Hamilton still had its house), the "H" room and the Long Room, the importance of T.S. Eliot's "The Wasteland", and the Beta's long, pervasive influence in the history of the College. One Beta Sig even paid for a replacement of our vintage pool table's felt, which had previously always been green, with felt in Hamilton blue. It has since been recovered again, but I can report to that brother if he is reading this that it is still Hamilton blue. (Long live the Beta!)

Union, Vermont, and Wisconsin were also represented in the California house at various times (So far, no brothers from UNC that I know of, but that will no doubt change some time soon).

California Sigs also have lived at the other chapters. One day the summer after we were initiated, I took a call on the house phone from a brother from Cornell. He questioned me closely about a hypothetical situation in which a Cornell brother asked to live in our house for the summer. I assured him that we considered the California house to belong to all brothers and we often had non-Californians living in. It turned out that the Cornell brothers were deliberating on whether to allow my pledge brother. Rick Travers, I'86, to live at the Epsilon for a few weeks. (After the phone call, they decided he could.) Dave Elias, I'92, lived at the Beta for a time during a year off. More recently, Scott Earnest, I'05, has been a presence at the Alpha of Wisconsin.

Alumni from other chapters also play a strong role in the Alpha of California. Carl Mehlhop, M'46,



David Munroe, I'86

moved to the Bay Area after graduating and was soon declared an honorary California Sig. His involvement with the California chapter continues to this day. Lehigh brothers Steve Heerema, L'81, and Jay Harper, L'77, were frequent visitors while I was an active. Vermont luminaries Chet Eaton, V'30, and Bart Eaton, V'63, made a memorable visit for California's initiation in the '90s, thus adding both to our list of revered elders: senior Sigs we felt privileged to have met. Never forget the brother.

Where is this listing of cross-chapter interaction going? To assert the importance to us all of every chapter surviving and prospering, that the differing customs, personalities, and eccentricities of each chapter represent one of the most glorious things about Sigma Phi, and so is the fact that there are the close ties between the chapters. This last characteristic is by no means common. When I have mentioned this to members of other fraternities I have gotten surprised reactions, and have been told it is not the case with them. That Sig chapters have remained close over a history spanning almost two centuries is remarkable, and is to be treasured and perpetuated.



# Reflections from the Lake: Convention 2011

by Timothy Starr, G'05 [timothy.g.starr@gmail.com](mailto:timothy.g.starr@gmail.com)

It was my great honor to have extended the invitation to join the Delta on the shores of Seneca Lake for the 180th convention of the Sigma Phi Society. For 171 years, our beloved chapter has made its den in the small town of Geneva, New York, nestled in a part of the world renown for its lake trout and record snowfall. We may not have a big football team to root for like some of our sister chapters, and the entire campus of Hobart College is about the size of single dorm at some other schools, but what we lack in size we make up for in heart and tradition.

Now as any Delta brother will tell you, the history of our illustrious chapter is not nearly as pristine as the view of Seneca Lake from 624's balcony. Quite frankly, the Delta has toiled and struggled since her birth in 1840, with the flame becoming very dim at certain points. Were it not for the hearts of the many brothers over the years who have resurrected our beloved chapter in Geneva, we would surely not have been able to host such a joyous occasion September 16-18.

For the past 10 years, the Delta has undergone a restructuring and rebirth unlike any in our history. I am proud to say that the 2011 convention was a great success, and - on behalf of the Delta - I thank all who made the long trek to our beautiful home at 624 South Main Street.

I believe the most important part of the weekend was Friday's undergraduate workshop, which takes place concurrent with the S&A and Foundation meetings. Year after year, convention workshops provide formal opportunities for the Society's undergraduate leaders - 3 per chapter - to gather to discuss the issues they face. There's always a formal curriculum - the 2011 topic was all about rush (Determining & Using Sigma Phi's 'Brand') - and there's always great opportunity for our actives to learn from each other.

When the business of the Society was concluded, the celebrating best known to Sigs began. There was a dinner at the Sigma Phi Place on Friday evening, the time-honored Hicks Oratorical Contest on Friday night, a

golf outing on Saturday, and - of course! - a convention banquet on Saturday night. Many thanks must go out to Mark Geary, G'79, who provided catering for the weekend that was exceptional. Also many snaps are due Chris Jones, G'79, who coordinated the entire weekend and did a phenomenal job making sure the events went off without a hitch. Finally, I must report that the Delta actives threw a soiree in the Sigma Phi Place on Saturday night which was one for the ages. It hosted a wonderful live band, was well attended by our sisters from William Smith, and went well into the night and - dare I say it? - beyond the bed time of many of our more senior brethren!

I hope that all wandering birds who joined us in Geneva left with a true sense of the love and affection for Sigma Phi that Delta brothers hold in their hearts. As we march forward in the 21st century, we must continue to grow and build the bonds of our Society so that we can hand down the great tradition that is Sigma Phi to those generations of Sigs who follow.



Brothers and Wandering Birds at Convention 2011 in Geneva

# Why Convention?

by Jon Bergner, S'03 [jon.bergner@gmail.com](mailto:jon.bergner@gmail.com)

**W**hy? An oft-heard query put to me throughout the month of September every time I mentioned that I was preparing to venture north from our nation's capital for a weekend in Geneva, New York. My reply - that I was attending my Greek-letter society's annual convention - did little to alter the quizzical expressions on the faces of my various questioners. I admit that, to the world's people, such a pursuit might seem an odd use of one's limited vacation days. Perhaps it cannot be properly explained to them. But for those who have tread the hallowed halls of the temples of the Sigma Phi, my hope is that a brief reflection on my time at Hobart this fall might help explain the "why" of convention.

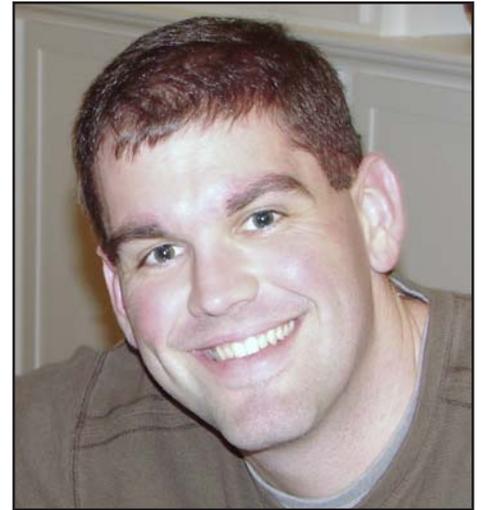
I had never been to Geneva. Let me assure you that pulling onto South Main Street for the first time and catching sight of Seneca Lake was a breathtaking experience. As I drove along and soaked in the autumn colors of up-state New York and the classic architecture of the homes and churches, I had early reason to be glad I was making this journey. I looked very much forward to connecting with my brothers in such surroundings. The Hobart College website describes its location as "an ideal setting for exploring ideas and establishing close and lasting friendships." Indeed!

Convention also offers a unique window into one of the aspects that makes our Society great and demonstrates its universal applicability: its

diversity. In a venue with representatives of every chapter, the differences in chapter cultures are never starker – and this year was no exception. Not only was this mixing of cultures great fun, it also serves as a powerful lesson to the contemplative. If the analogy can be forgiven, the Thrice Illustrious is much like a well-crafted meal in which the flavor of every course (house) is unique, the only common feature being the quality of the ingredients and the care with which they were prepared. So it is, too, with the brothers of the Sigma Phi.

Of course, we were all in Geneva to conduct the official business of the Society which this year included electing the offices of the Standing & Advisory Committee. Such business can be tedious, demanding, and - yes - sometimes even downright contentious. However, the official business of each convention is important; our organization would have ceased to function long ago without structure and leadership. By attending to this business and working through the reasonable differences of brothers, I felt I was a part of putting the ideals of our Society into action.

That said, I would submit that the real business of the Hobart convention was the building of relationships with good Sigs and true that I might otherwise not have met. Let us not forget our illustrious history as the first inter-collegiate Greek letter society; the original conventions could only have been designed to strengthen the bonds of



*Jon Bergner, S'03*

brotherhood between members that were not in constant contact. To this day, the convention remains the ideal time and place – the ideal medium – for remembering what brought you through the portals in the first place.

Just after I was swung, a wise brother once told me that it was easy to let the distractions of life convince me that the beauty and power of our Society and its principles were somehow illusions: that the world would try and convince me that there was no place for antiquated notions of brotherhood and the like. He then revealed the last secret of our Society – that what we have is real. This brother then counseled me that the best way to combat 'real world' doubts was to stay involved, to return to the house, to apply our principles to my own life. It should come as no surprise that I have concluded that he was exactly right; Sigma Phi was not and is not the idle daydreams of young men. On many levels, the true value of the lessons inculcated in college cannot be fully appreciated or even fully comprehended without the perspective that only experience can bring. My many Sig experiences – to this point and certainly including Convention 2011 in Geneva - have demonstrated emphatically that Friendship, Love, and Truth are eternally important.

**That is why convention!**



*Distinguished Delta Hosts of Convention 2011*

# Hicks Oratory

by Aaron Lutkowitz, T'11 [alutko@gmail.com](mailto:alutko@gmail.com)

*(The Hicks Oratorical Contest is a unique brotherhood highlight for each convention. In this year's Hicks in Geneva, six different undergrads representing five chapters took part, regaling their Friday evening audience with poignant, personal viewpoints about this Society. This year's winner was sophomore Aaron Lutkowitz, T'11.)*



Aaron Lutkowitz, T'11

**T**or this speech, I'm going to do something a little unconventional. I'm going to tell three stories that reflect why I love Sigma Phi. I'm also not using notes in the hope that it will make my words more genuine.

The first story I wanted to tell occurred at my Swing: one of my first memories of Sigma Phi. Originally, there were 17 of us Tar Heels pledges, but 15 had been swung earlier. (Two of us had University commitments we had to honor, so our event was delayed.) It was just me and my Turkish friend left to be swung. Our later swing employed a scavenger hunt where each chapter call letter had its own object we had to find. The 'U' from Union was a ukulele, the 'T' was a truth, and so on and so forth. Most of them weren't too bad; we didn't have too much trouble until we saw the 'G' from Hobart. We had just 12 hours to find all 14 items and a g-string was prescribed for the G call letter. I vividly remember sitting in his room freaking out about how we would find a g-string between midnight and noon...or any other length of time, for that matter! So both of us immediately started calling our friends: anyone who would have even a vague knowledge of someone with a g-string. As I called my friends, I started to notice that my friend, Burak, was speaking in Turkish. "Brilliant!" I thought to myself. "Of course he'll have a few Turkish friends at UNC." But after 30 straight minutes listening to Turkish conversations, I found it unbelievable how many Turks there were at UNC! I literally knew no other Turks besides him, yet he must have known dozens! All of the conversations sounded exactly the same, too: "Turkish Turkish Turkish ... g-string! ... Turkish Turkish Turkish ... scavenger hunt!" but to no avail. After every conversation, Burak came back empty-handed. Suffice it to say those

12 hours were some of my most memorable from Sigma Phi, but it wasn't the search for the g-string that made the time memorable.

Spending 12 straight hours with my soon-to-be brother made that night unforgettable. I barely knew Burak before the scavenger hunt, and now we have something that will forever link us. That's what Sigma Phi is all about for me – meaningful friendships and brotherhoods. (By the way, I was the one to eventually find the sought after item.)

Unsurprisingly, my early memories of Sigma Phi just dealt with my chapter in Chapel Hill. We knew there were other chapters out there, but it was a pretty nebulous idea as far as we were concerned. The second story I want to tell comes from mid-August, when two Tar Heel brothers and I drove up to Charlottesville to take part in UVA's swing. We had just enjoyed 3 months off for summer, and I was kind of worried about our return. Everyone was so preoccupied with their summer that I had no idea how we'd be able to come back together and start it up again in the fall. The Charlottesville Swing changed those fearful perceptions. The three of us got to the Swing knowing absolutely no one in the UVA house. All three of us were worried about what to expect and how well we would mesh and fit in for the weekend. But the second we got into the house we were warmly welcomed. And the Serps made us feel that way all weekend long; I was absolutely amazed by that entire weekend! The men of the Alpha showed us what a real functioning chapter needs to be like. They caused us to be so excited to be a part of Sigma Phi on a national scale. The Swing was also ten times as long and

intense as ours. I talked to all of the neophytes one morning towards the end of the Swing, and they really got it. They understood what it meant to be a Sig, they were fully committed to the Society, and they inspired me to become a better and more active brother. Now that I think about it, this is much more of an experience than a story. But that experience – and those Brothers – influenced so much about the positive attitude I have towards all of Sigma Phi beyond the UNC chapter, that it was one of the best weekends of my life.

My final story is one I never wanted to tell. For me, in fact, it represents a real life tragedy. At 9:08 am on August 30, 2011, I received a phone call that my best friend from home had passed away in a freak accident. I didn't know what to do. I called my family and the friends who knew him, of course. But no one at UNC knew him, and it was really difficult for me. To be honest, this past month has been the hardest of my life. I knew I had the option to keep it inside and not tell people in Chapel Hill, but for some reason that didn't sit well. And that very morning I made the best decision I could have possibly made by sharing the bad news with all of my Sig brothers. Their response was incredible. It demonstrates why Sigma Phi has to exist. All had kind words for me; each offered support. Brothers were there to talk to me for hours on end. My *(Continued on page 7)*

## Workshop Experience – Workshop Epiphany

by Shawn Tangnavard, U'10 [tangnavs@garnet.union.edu](mailto:tangnavs@garnet.union.edu)

**A**s a younger brother of the Alpha of New York, I was honored to be asked to accompany our President, Robert Leonard Hanaburgh, U'09, and Vice President, Matthew Michael Wilk, U'09, to this year's National Convention. As a more recently initiated brother, I didn't quite know what to expect as we made our way up to Geneva, New York. As it turns out, attending this year's National Convention was one of the most worthwhile experiences of my Sigly career to date. Walking into the home of the Delta and being greeted by brothers of another chapter, for the first time, was exhilarating. The flame within the confines of my chest has never burned more brightly than it did that weekend.

On the first day, about 30 actives representing nearly every chapter met for the convention's Undergraduate Workshop. This year's topic was 'Branding Sigma Phi' and was facilitated by Mike Imirie, M'69. Mike's first request was to ask each active to introduce himself and a brother that had influenced him in some way. The multitude of responses was astounding. Team captains, presidents, notable alumni, older brothers and even younger brothers were mentioned in nothing but the highest regards. You could see the fire in the eyes of each participant as he described a brother who had influenced him deeply.

The structure of the leadership seminar found us discussing recruitment and how to increase the successes of our chapters' rush processes. We spent a portion of this conversation talking about "branding" Sigma Phi: examining (non-secret) core characteristics to see if they could be used to better advertise during rush. I'll confess that this part of the seminar caused a little bit of controversy for me. As an active of the Alpha of New York, I was trained through my pledge process to uphold and stand behind certain morals and ideals, one of them being a direct teaching that our Society "vaunteth not itself." "Vaunteth not," is something which has served the Alpha for the last 184 years. To us, that aspect has always involved maintaining certain levels of anonymity and mystery. Employing such

anonymity, we have achieved terrific levels of respect on the Union College campus. Keeping up our standard of being a "secret society" and pushing our members to truly embody the concept of "lead or die," we have done our best to uphold a reputation of being the "best men on campus."

During our discussion that day, however, I learned that circumstances on other Sig campuses are very different. While the circle of mystery surrounding our Society and our handsome reputation on Union's campus work together to easily draw in rushees, other chapters need to employ very active recruiting methods much less familiar to the Alpha.

My early disagreement with the idea of giving Sigma Phi a "brand" was somewhat put to rest in learning of our standings on other campuses. Times have changed since the days of our founding at a small college in upstate New York. In order to thrive and grow, Sigma Phi must change with the times. While our founding ideals have stood the test of time, certain practices – recruiting, among them – need to adjust and improve in order to ensure our survival.

While I still feel slight discomfort with the idea of "branding" Sigma Phi, I was more than happy to know that our truly important ideals still remained the same. During the later part of our seminar, Mike reintroduced us to The Charge, which I had not heard since the night I was initiated. Hearing it in this different setting – Geneva's Trinity Episcopal Church - once again set my heart ablaze with the fires of the Thrice Illustrious!

Once we become brothers, we often tend to forget what Sigma Phi meant to us during the days when it was unconditionally drilled into our heads. While the Society's flame still burns within each brother's heart, its warmth often tends to habit. Rarely do we brothers have the opportunity to look back and say, "Oh, yeah. This is what I pledged to uphold that night." Hearing The Charge under these thoughtful circumstances reminded me of every little detail of what it means to be a Sig. It's those tiny details which this brother will never again forget.

*(Continued from page 6)* roommate, also a brother of Sigma Phi, took me to the beach right after I got back from the funeral, just to provide some needed distraction. I can't adequately describe all of the unbelievable things that my chapter did for me, and I struggle to think how I can ever pay them back for all of their help during the darkest time of my life.

Earlier today, I was thinking about the artwork in the front of our Catalogue. You know the image I'm talking about from your earliest Sig

days. It shows ancient architecture and a young man on a staircase being welcomed by a senior. During our convention workshop, we actives offered various interpretations but admitted we didn't know what it meant. We were told that no one knew precisely what the Sig artist of old intended and that it was up to the each Sigma Phi brother to determine its meaning. Well, when I was looking at it earlier today I realized what it meant to me: that artwork depicts the miracle of Sigma Phi in my life.

What, after all, was the insane likelihood that all of you in front of me today would have put in the time and effort to make Sigma Phi happen at UNC ... just in time for me to join so that I had caring, substantial people to turn to on August 30, 2011? That's what the illustration means. It shows the letters 'Sigma' and 'Phi' shining down from the heavens as a light – a beacon – for all of us. It's become just such a beacon in my life, and that's why Sigma Phi is so important to me.

# Time Flies, Life Gets in the Way, But the Sigma Phi is Never

by David Farmer, H'89 [farmer\\_ostbahn@hotmail.com](mailto:farmer_ostbahn@hotmail.com)

**E**very young Sig rejoices at the moment of the Swing. While the process teaches much about the history, philosophy, privileges, and responsibilities, the young Sig does not see the progression from being a mere mortal to being a part of something special. It is the moment of the Swing that turns the switch, enabling those particular subroutines to run.

*“The stars are bright with a silvery light and the earth is wrapped in sleep. As we march our solemn tryst to keep ... (1)”*

For established undergraduate Sigs, the process is one of fun: the opportunity and obligation to instruct and lead potential Sigs to that precise moment. That moment is also full of work, details, pressures, and – depending on the campus – potential problems for the organization. But those days always seem to end too soon!

*Our college days are swiftly flying.  
One fleeting hour, then we must part... (2)*

The newly-graduated Sig sees life through the lens of another type of neophyte; he, after all, starts out on the bottom rung of what some call “the real world.” Hours can be long, pressures can be great, and understanding often is low. At times, it resembles the hero’s journey! Fortunately, there are mentors who’ve experienced all of that and more. Older Sigs are there and can form an important part of one’s network: coaching; advising; listening & offering.

*A Sacred Friendship tis we share  
That brightens with the silvering hair  
It fails not with departing years  
But, like a spirit-guide appears  
And calleth from the heavenly spheres  
Sigma Phi! Dear Sigma Phi! (3)*



Throughout the years, Sigs drift further away....but return. The safe port of the Sigma Phi remains. Many of these Sigs remain in some capacity. Some, for example, leverage career or other successes to mentor young Sigs. Some help their individual chapters or the national organization in leadership roles. Being established provides yet another anchor for Sigma Phi’s harbor in life’s seas.

*Trav’lers on life’s troubled sea, battling wind and wave, seeking glory manfully or an honored grave ... Storms may gather o’er their path, tempests in their sky, still serene above the wrath, gleams the Sigma Phi! (4)*

But what of those in between? Those for whom life indeed does get in the way: “Swing in two months?” “Sounds good. Oh, sorry. Have to work.” “March 4th coming up?” “Oh, no! We’re having our firstborn then.” Commitments are honored, time is short, and the immediate often takes precedence over the enduring.

Time after time, life’s demands and its focuses tend to distract from the Sigma Phi. Despite these temporary barriers, the Sigma Phi persists and thrives. Conventions, Swings, March 4th celebrations are constants: events by which one can always reset one’s Sigly calendar and even commitments. Is this a reaffirmation, a gentle reminder, or is it one of life’s special ways of keeping ties and bonds strong, while allowing for all of the world’s duties? Why, yes! It is all of this and more. Sigma Phi has endured and survived countless local events, national challenges and even international crises! Its commitment to each Brother, as lived out by Brothers both present and absent, remains as strong and clear as it did as in days when the Bowies, Cromwell, and Witherspoon tapped into the most sacred of human resources and strength: the enduring bond of Friendship, Love, and Truth.

*We feel a holy affection for the brothers gathered here, who hold the sacred connection, of the Sigma Phi most dear. (5)*

There are many opportunities to remain in touch with the Sigma Phi. The web site is always there ([www.sigmaphi.org](http://www.sigmaphi.org)), social media, and even email mailing lists enable snapshots of what other Brothers might be doing. Regardless of time or place, these modern communications adaptations enable at least a fleeting connection. Ideal involvement with Sig? No. But so much better than none, under life circumstances where obligations are that great and time is that short.

## Far Away: Reflections on Time, Distance and Reunion



*Swift the happy hours are flying,  
Fading into mem'ries sweet...  
But thy love shall be undying,  
E'en as long as our hearts and pulses beat. (6)*

On my desk, next to me as I type, is a glass on which are the words, "Sigma Phi Society/ 160th Convention at the Beta/ Hamilton College/ October 12, 1991." I remember receiving that glass. I remember helping get everything ready for the convention that was taking place on our campus that fall weekend. At the convention, I remember speaking with Brothers from all phases of life, all of whom were somehow able to juggle (throttle?) their schedules to make their way to Clinton for that Sig event.

They all spoke of their college time using two very different time references: one, that it "seemed like yesterday" and two, that "it seems a long time ago." How an experience could be both simultaneously struck me at the time as a profound mystery. But I was yet to learn for myself how life gets in the way, how time flies, and how rapidly we take wing on our march through life!

*Oh why must we part, And speak the word that  
saddens? From those so true as we know you,  
Ah! Why must we part? As we extend the  
parting hand To Brothers of our chosen band,  
May health, peace, joy be ours, Although we must part (7)*

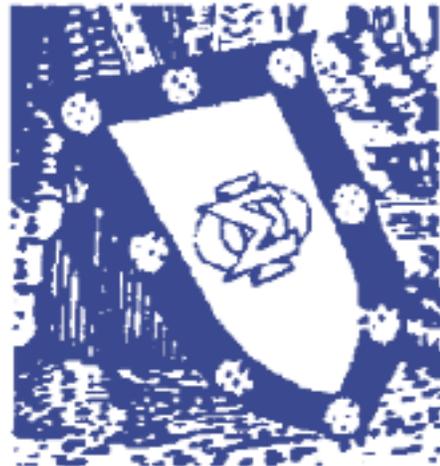
Despite the time and the miles, all of those 1991 Convention wandering birds returned with a sense of connection. Each connected his present-day life with his past, overarched via the unique and warm conduit of the Sigma Phi.

*Our Brothers remember, wherever dispersed ...  
Whose Love glows anew as the  
past is rehearsed (8)*

Twenty years and more after my own initiation, I have personally learned that this connection does strengthen with time and with life's experiences! To do so, all it needs is the opportunity to be periodically refreshed or re-introduced. Paradoxically but gladly, Sigma Phi can exist successfully within those two time references of "seems like yesterday" and "long time ago." For those references are relative to the individual. When in context of the Sigma Phi, the parallax becomes obvious; we remember the Sigma Phi "of the History", and we remember our own history within Sigma Phi. Those visions easily exist side by side. That history is shared and honored, generation after generation.

Sigma Phi exists in the present, thanks to the hard work and dedication of her officers, both undergraduate and graduate. She exists in the past because of all of us who share in the Bond. And She will prosper into the future each of us who continues to care based on the 3-part cornerstone of today's hard work, yesterday's vivid memories, and tomorrow's promises.

*Sig! Sig! Sig! The earth is singing!  
Sig! Sig! Sig! The stars reply... (9)*



*(1) JT Stearns, Alpha of Vermont: "Initiation Song" (2) FH Pease, Alpha of Vermont: "Sigma Phi Forever" (3) John Swift, Delta of New York: "Reunion Song" (4) EWB Canning, Alpha of Massachusetts: "Wandering Birds" (5) James H Wickes, Alpha of Massachusetts: "The Magic Circle" (6) Marching Song of the Alpha of Michigan (7) Henry T Spencer of the Beta of New York: "Parting Song" (8) "Vive La Sigma Phi" (9) WO Park, Epsilon of NY, "The Epsilon Marching Song"*

## You Never Forget

by Ken Verostick, L'52 [kenverostick@hotmail.com](mailto:kenverostick@hotmail.com)

**A**t my swing at Lehigh in the fall of 1952, prominent older Sigs in attendance included Nels Bond, L'22, George Childs, L'17, William Sayre, L'17, Louis Mudge, L'12, and, of course, General Secretary William C. (Wink) Mayer, L'10. It was a solemn yet joyous occasion that left lasting impressions on me. I was impressed – heck, I was thunderstruck! – that these lifelong Sigs and distinctive gentlemen would travel to Bethlehem to welcome a trembling band of neophytes into the bonds of the Thrice Illustrious.

The memories of that occasion and all the preparations, some of which were truly absurd, some of which were still vivid. In my pledge class, Dick Shaffer and I are the only ones still on this side of the dirt. We stay in touch, having seen each other at our 60th Lehigh Reunion last year.

So much for older Sigs ... Two weeks ago my wife and I went to a wedding in Greenwich, CT. The groom was the son of my wife's college roommate at Immaculata College in Pennsylvania. (Immaculata is considered the home of women's collegiate basketball, winning three consecutive AAIW national championships 1972-74.)

Anyway, the groom was a Hobart graduate. I wondered ... just wondered

... if by chance there might be a few wandering birds around and about. At the reception, I introduced myself to a chap who looked to be about the same age of the groom and asked if he was a Hobart graduate. He said 'yes' so next came the inevitable question "Were you in a fraternity?" He replied, "Yes. Phi Gam ..." Wrong house, but I felt I was getting close. "Did you know anyone from Sigma Phi?" I asked. He said, "Oh, yeah! In fact, there are some here." Serendipity!

I told him of my connection. His reaction was 'NO! Wait a minute!' He left, but soon returned with one Michael Kelly, G'00, in tow. I introduced myself and upon slipping him the grip I looked him dead in the eye and said "So long as this pulse shall beat, so shall my love remain inviolate for you, my brother." Mike absolutely beamed ... as I did. He said "Wait a minute. I'll bring over another Sig ... This will blow his mind!" So over came Douglas J. Green, G'01, wondering what the urgency was to meet a decidedly older stranger. Our ensuing handshake, of course, explained everything. To have a complete stranger – some forty years older – greet you and connect with a meaningful handshake meant so much



*Long time General Secretary Wink Mayer, L'10 and Chairman Cal Howard, S'54, in this 1966 March Fourth Banquet photo*

to Doug, just as the reverse did to me.

During the course of the evening's festivities, we were joined by yet another Sig: Tom Reed, G'02. Our jolly band then indulged in "copious beers," a Serp phrase that our long time Chairman Cal Howard, S'54, introduced me to at his initiation at Lehigh in 1954.

The two social occasions I cite took place nearly 60 years apart, yet they shared a striking common denominator. On both occasions, the thing that impressed me most deeply was the eagerness with which we wandering birds meet our opposite numbers!

A mere coincidence?

A trifling social phenomenon, driven by endorphins? I think not. Instead, you see, in Sig circles, "You never forget"

## 2011 Newsletter Awards to UNC, Hamilton, & Union

by Dan Neumann, F'71 [dca120@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dca120@sbcglobal.net)

**T**he Society conferred its 2010-2011 annual Newsletter Awards at the 2011 Convention in Geneva, New York. The co-winners of the undergraduate competition were the Alpha of North Carolina, publishers of the initial edition of The T Times, and the Beta of New York, publishers of The Beta Billet. The Pepperbox, published by the Alpha of New York, took top honors in the alumni newsletter competition. These two separate awards have long recognized both the frequency and quality of overall communications efforts by Sigma Phi's local chapters and their associated alumni. This year's award-winning newsletters are posted and available for reading on Sigma Phi's national website ([www.sigmaphi.org](http://www.sigmaphi.org)). We applaud these chapters for their efforts in communicating with their graduates to nurture the flame shared by all initiates.

Joint first place results are highly unusual, but the Society recognized the overall excellence of the Beta's publication at the same time that it applauded the Tarheel chapter for creating a newsletter so early in the chapter's life.

The Pepperbox earned Union its second consecutive national Alumni Newsletter Award and the chapter's first back-to-back awards since the recognition program began in 1990. In collaboration with the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation, the Standing & Advisory Committee encourages all chapters to communicate regularly with their members. It's one of the very best ways to 'renew the ties that bind.' All chapters are encouraged to publish, and all are invited take part in this recognition program. Chapters are accordingly asked to provide a copy of their electronic publications to Newsletter Recognition Chairman Dan Neumann, F'71 ([dca120@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dca120@sbcglobal.net)), for posting on Sigma Phi's national website and automatic entry into the competition. At the same time, chapters and alumni organizations are encouraged to send their printed publications for competition judging by placing Dan's name and address (120 Campbell Road, Trumbull, Conn. 06611) on their mailing list three times, thereby automatically providing sufficient copies to meet the judges' needs.

# Oyster Roast Revival

by Jarrod Thomas, S'05 [jat2f@virginia.edu](mailto:jat2f@virginia.edu)

**T**here's no oyster roast ... like a revived oyster roast. At the Alpha of Virginia, a nifty social experience this fall has proven that beyond all doubt. Let me explain ...

When I was an active (2005-08), some older brothers such as Pres Nowlin, S'83, and Evan Cooper, S'84, used to arrange an oyster roast every year. The event was by no means official, but some local alumni and actives gathered and had a good time at a house cocktail party before a football game. Recently, the event fell off, and I, along with Josh Owens, S'04, Coleman James, S'02, Hunter Provyn, S'99, and Phil Anastasi, S'01, decided we wanted to bring it back in a more official, more annual capacity. With help from Vinny Cole, S'87, and National Secretary Dave Munroe, I'86, we got in touch with Gilchrist and Don Beeson provided us with email addresses for every Alpha of Virginia alumni on file. We created a short Oyster Roast promo, and - using the email addresses as well as Facebook - we notified as many Serp alumni as we could.



The event basically involves getting a large number of oysters - around 400 this year - and grilling them over an open oak fire on an oyster grill we assemble out of concrete blocks and metal wire specifically for the roast. In addition to the oysters, we had platters of sandwiches, fruit, vegetables and cheese catered by local establishments as well as liquid refreshments. The

actives took charge of getting the house in top shape as well as providing music, and they did an absolutely fantastic job. Many of the brothers in attendance had not been back to the house in years. They were very impressed!

My specific role in this year's oyster roast, which took place on October 22, was largely organizational. I got my hands dirty with acquiring the concrete block and building the grill, but most of my man hours went into email and phone communications. I worked with Vinny to get the emails from Don Beeson, I organized funding for the event from our local alumni, I ordered the food and drink (except for the oysters, which Josh and Coleman brought directly from Nassawadox Creek off



*Successful oyster shucking: pressure matched with deft touch!*

the Chesapeake Bay), and I made sure the actives knew when the event was and what was expected of them.

My favorite part of the oyster roast has always been having an opportunity to spend time with so many different brothers - especially ones I've never met before - in such a relaxed and happy setting. This year provided ample opportunity for that, for about 50 Sigs and guests were on hand at 163 Rugby Road.

And there was another worthy benefit. At the Sigma Phi Place, our front porch faces a main road that students and alumni walk down on their way to football games. When our oyster roast is taking place, it really is the Alpha of Virginia at its best. You can't help feeling a little pride every time someone walks by and sees our group of guys and ladies enjoying life.

A third benefit, this one very 'real world'? Our oyster roast netted \$645 in alumni donations to be used for the active rush in the spring.

Next year I'm going to try and put out a guest book so I have more complete attendance information. And if so many folks show up at the Alpha that I have to get a new guest book for the year after that, so much the better!



*That September day, everyone was an oyster fan!*

## Renaissance Accomplishments

by Scott McCrae, V'83 Director, Renaissance Program [scottmccrae@comcast.net](mailto:scottmccrae@comcast.net)

**U**nlike articles I've penned before, this one serves up a list more than a thought. But it's a great list: a proud list. And it's well worth reading because it represents examples of how we are retooling this Society for future.

As General Secretary, I spent the lion's share of my time explaining the Renaissance program to Sigs and answering questions about its implementation. It was difficult at the beginning because there were no concrete examples to point to. I'm happy to report that that's changed! The list below illustrates some of the best and most concrete Renaissance examples since its founding at the 2009 Convention in Berkeley:

- a.. Launch of the Renaissance Program at California convention with the recruiting presentation to the Undergraduate Leadership Conference by Phired Up.
- b.. Recruiting a Sig alumnus to coordinate risk management activities through visits to each of the undergraduate chapters.
- c.. Conducting at least five risk management workshops at undergraduate chapters.
- d.. Conducting at least three goal setting workshops at undergraduate chapters .
- e.. Engaging Phired Up to pilot the most successful recruiting effort in Sigma Phi's history, taking the Alpha of North Carolina chapter from 4 members to 21 members in a one month time period.
- f.. Recruiting a significant new cadre (30) of Sig alumni to support and guide the four principle elements of the Renaissance Program at the Alpha of Vermont.

g.. Successfully staging a major rebranding event at the Alpha of Vermont, sponsoring a campus-wide speaking contest that drew the Governor of Vermont as a judge.

h.. Reinvigorating the relationship between the Sigma Phi Society and the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation by successfully enlisting SPEF's support of 75% of the Renaissance Program. This action alone produced a tripling of donations from Sigs to SPEF's relaunched Annual Campaign in 2010.

i.. Initiating a large donor development program to support Renaissance that has already resulted in the largest single donation to the national Sigma Phi Educational Foundation in its history, with a great many significant but smaller donations as well.

j.. Setting the Sigma Phi Society on a sustainable fiscal path by instituting or enlarging revenue streams, including much larger support from SPEF. Won't it be interesting to see what this list looks like 5 years from now? Won't it be propitious (to quote a certain luminary's favorite adjective) to learn how well Renaissance has prospered our Society? But until then, I need alumni of all ages to support our initiatives either by generous donations to SPEF or - no less importantly - by personally participating in the operation of your chapters.

This makes me think of the Sigly maxim that, "among so few, the influence of every one is deeply felt." That profound luminary phrase comes easily to my mind because - even now - Renaissance is being deeply felt.

*Esto Perpetua!*

## Path to Success at Lehigh: Coming Into View

by Jack Romaine 'L90 [sigmaphilehigh@gmail.com](mailto:sigmaphilehigh@gmail.com)

**B**rothers, we are working towards a recolonization at Lehigh! The University is gradually allowing fraternities to come back, but it is a competitive process. In order to be successful, there are several things we need to do. Specifically, we need to show that we 1) are a forward-thinking fraternity and not trapped in years gone by, 2) are willing to work closely with the University, 3) have support from the National, 4) have an active Lehigh alumni base to support any future chapter, and 5) are willing to do this on a non-residential basis. I believe we will rate well on all these criteria.

I am further encouraged because:

- 1) *The Renaissance program is a clear example of our view to the future and leadership from Sigma Phi;*
- 2) *I have been meeting with the University at least once per semester.*

*We are making good progress here;*

*3) In September, support from the National and other chapters for such a recolonization effort was enthusiastic at the Hobart Convention;*

*4) I've started regular emails to Lehigh Brothers (email me at [sigmaphilehigh@gmail.com](mailto:sigmaphilehigh@gmail.com) if you are not on the list). By the time you read this, the Lehigh Alumni Corp. will have had a business meeting on November 19th;*

*5) At present, three of Sigma Phi's 11 chapters are non-residential. While it's not what we prefer, we have already adapted as necessary to this model. (History tells us, by the way, that Sigma Phi was non-residential in its early days...)*

So, in the early going, I see that we're making progress. This is the early stage, however, and what I've



reported so far represents the easy stuff. In order to really put a stake in the ground, we are going to need money, time and hands-on support by area alumni. It will take a lot of effort to make our return to Sayre Hill work...and I hope you will join us in making it happen!

# Courage, Ignorance or Stupidity?

by Jim Hansen, V'80 jimh@bctonline.com

**D**ecades ago, Steve Olson, V'78, and I used to climb volcanoes and back country ski in Northern California. No avalanche training, no locator beacons, no location “hike” plan left with any one. At the time, the glorious powder seemed worth it – because we survived. Steve gave me a picture from one of those trips that still hangs by my desk that says “Courage: We take risks not to escape life...but to prevent life from escaping us.”

Our chapter houses are full of young men “preventing life from escaping them.” This is a good thing in such cases as bravely asking a beauty out on a date or surviving a particularly heavy course load. You get the picture – carpe diem! The challenge we face is when the activities are under-aged drinking, drugs, unattended candles, partying on the roof tops, dirty can-openers, and the like. You’ve seen that picture, I bet – dulcis nostalgia!

As part of the Renaissance Program, Sigma Phi has taken on a new approach to risk management. Rather than ignore the issues and just hope for the best, or preach abstinence and absurdly believe it will be so, we’re arming our actives with knowledge of the laws, the consequences of bad outcomes, and the process evaluation methodology to assess the risk of an activity and look for ways to still do the activity but in a more responsible and less risky way. “Arm them to think”, Renaissance strategy goes, “and they will make better decisions.”

While this kind of education has been happening for years at the Annual Convention, it was by definition limited to each chapter’s leadership. This year we’ve starting taking

the seminar to the individual chapter houses and presenting to the entire active chapter. What an honor it was for me to have a hand in that....and to meet the men at the Alpha of Michigan and the Alpha of Wisconsin while leading the interactive Risk Management Seminar this past September.

In both visits, I walked into a room full of wary looks suggesting “who’s this old fart here to crimp our style?” In short order, however, the ice was broken. We warmed to each other and the suspicious looks were replaced by energetic conversation about ways to “do it better, safer & smarter” punctuated by lots of laughter as we covered all the activities they thought I knew nothing about!

I was very impressed and proud to call these young men “my brothers” as they asked insightful questions to probe if ‘this way’ or ‘that way’ would keep them in compliance with the Society’s National Risk Management policy and in good graces with the risk management protocols of our insurance company.

The actives already have plenty of courage, hopefully our presentation has eliminated the risks presented by ignorance. Lets pray stupidity like the back-country hero skiing I did years ago doesn’t creep into the equation, even though young adults will be young adults.

If you would like to volunteer to be a Risk Management Seminar Leader next year, please e-mail me. We train....and your help will be greatly appreciated. As a wonderful caveat, you’ll have the chance to once again connect with a Sig chapter, both as a mentor and as a serious stakeholder in the Thrice Illustrious Sigma Phi.



## Never Forget These Brothers

Thomas P. Atherton, U'52 . . . . . 5 Dec 08  
 Alfred Bernard III, S'59 . . . . . 11 Nov 05  
 Nelson L. Bond Jr., L'54 . . . . . 14 Feb 11  
 Brendan J. Boylan DDS, V'46 . . . 31 Mar 11  
 Lester W. Breiner Jr., I'47 . . . . . 1 Nov 10  
 Edward H. Ferguson MD, M'43 . . . 9 Jul 06  
 Jere Gray Jr., U'53 . . . . . 9 Aug 09  
 Fletcher Hanks, L'38 . . . . . 16 Mar 08  
 S. Grant Harris III, M'52 . . . . . 25 Apr 08  
 James D. Hazzard, C'46 . . . . . 11 Aug 11

Ellsworth F. Hemingway, F'41 . . . . 5 May 10  
 Edward N. Hinman, W'42 . . . . . 11 Apr 11  
 Frederick T. Jensen, F'49 . . . . . 13 Mar 08  
 Richard C. Kern, C'38 . . . . . 26 Nov 10  
 Treagh R. Martin, F'49 . . . . . 20 Sept 11  
 Frank J. McCarthy Jr., M'52 . . . . . 23 Sept 09  
 Hermann J. Menges Jr., H'50 . . . 26 Aug 10  
 David M. Nahrgang, M'60 . . . . . 22 Mar 11

Arthur C. Neilsen Jr., F'38 . . . . . 3 Oct 11  
 William O. Schilling, F'32 . . . . . 17 Jan 09  
 Robert C. Schulze, I'33 . . . . . 1 Dec 03  
 Donald G Stevens Jr., S'69 . . . . . 19 Mar 11  
 Charles A. Sweet Jr., I'41 . . . . . 19 Feb 09  
 Benjamin C. Symmers, S'60 . . . 14 Feb 2011  
 Peter R. Taylor, I'38 . . . . . 28 Feb 98  
 C. Mitchell Wenigmann, H'41 . . . 4 Feb 96  
 Peter B. Whitcombe, H'51 . . . . . 26 Sept 09  
 Jack C. White, MD, V'45 . . . . . 1 Jul 11





## News of INTEREST

Need to be inspired by thoughts of Sigma Phi over the long run? How about this testimonial from Cathy Allen, daughter of **Richard Allen, H'36**: "My father is 94 years old now, and still speaks with much affection about the Hamilton chapter of Sigma Phi. He and his father both became Sig there so many years ago, Dad in 1936 and Granddad in the 19-teens. Dad fell in January and broke his hip, but he's recovered pretty well ... he's indignant that the fall means he can't drive any more! In spite of having to slow down, he remains as genial as ever." Richard makes his home at 1545 Dale Street, San Diego, CA, 92102.

These glad tidings come from **Bob Barada, M'48**: "My wife and I celebrated 60 years of marriage not long ago. Patrica Beam Barada is also a Sig Sister; we were married in Ann Arbor in August of 1951." Hearty congratulations can be conveyed to Brother Bob at [pbob@horizonview.net](mailto:pbob@horizonview.net).

We have this update from **Harold Bell, V'59**: "I'm fully retired and living in White River Junction, VT. I visited Burlington not long ago and very much enjoyed stopping at 420 College Street." Harold lives at 5147 Jericho Street, WRJ, VT, 05001.

A Guinness Book of World Records milestone was reached this past June, according to relentless Sig social reporter **Jon Bellona, H'00**: "Sig Wedding!!!! - **Frederick Keppler Jones, H'00**, married fellow Hamilton College grad Mindy Gorzelany on 18 June 2011, at the Bedford Village Inn in Bedford, NH. Mindy's not a Sig Sister yet, but she certainly should be! The wedding party featured nine groomsmen, six of whom were Sigs: **Mike Difeo, H'99, Mark Devito, H'00, Neil Thompson, H'00, Frank Kelleher, H'02, Cameron Johnson, H'00 & John McKay, H'00.**"  
[frickjones@hotmail.com](mailto:frickjones@hotmail.com)

We've received this update from Chief Warrant Officer **Todd Campau, M'88**, who has spent more than 20 years in the U.S. Army and its Reserves: "I recently accepted a contract position in Afghanistan - for 1 year, with option to extend - and depart the US late in November. It will be my third tour in that country, but my first as a civilian. (Did you know there are just as many civilians working in war zones as US military personnel?) I'll be working for a defense contractor and work very similar to my previous military assignments (Intel), but most likely at a different location. Wish me luck." Send your best wishes and Best Sig Love to Todd using this e-mail address: [toddndallas@hotmail.com](mailto:toddndallas@hotmail.com)

**David W. Centner, M'84**, reports that he has been elected Chairman of the Litigation Section of the State Bar of Michigan. During the 2011-2012 term, Dave will lead this organization and its 2,200 members. Dave is a Member of Clark Hill, PLC in the firm's Grand Rapids, Michigan office.  
[DCentner@ClarkHill.com](mailto:DCentner@ClarkHill.com)

Sigma Phi's resident 'running man', **Larry Ikard, H'94**, shares this hurried update: "I'm running the NYC Marathon in a few days on November 6, expecting child #2 to arrive in December 2011, running the Boston Marathon in April 2012 and the Big Sur Marathon about 2 weeks after that." (Whew! Even transcribing news about expending this much energy leaves your editor breathless!)  
[likard@gmail.com](mailto:likard@gmail.com)

We have this story of family serendipity from **Nick Mobray, M'04**: "My wife, Karolina, and I recently had a son. Noteworthy? Born at 9 pounds after an 11 hour labor. More noteworthy? Our boy was born on the great day of March 4th What a day! We named him Mikolaj Sherman Mobray. One day, I hope, my son can walk the Diag and say he is a man of Sigma Phi. Since my initiation in 2004, I have always kept Sigma Phi in my heart. Now that my son's birthday is coincidental with this Society's founding, it will be even easier to do so!"  
[nmowbray@jerogers.com](mailto:nmowbray@jerogers.com)

Family and a 'near miss' are in the news in the Pisano household. **Bob Pisano, L'94**, reports the birth of a third child, Ford William, on March 3: one day before our annual founding celebration. He and Sig Sister wife Lisa did their very best to time the blessed arrival, but new son was simply too eager to join sibs Trip (7) and Kelsey (5)! The Pisano clan makes its home at 3 Woodbury Lane, Lawrenceville, NJ, 06648.

"For the past eleven years," advises **Barry Rosenberg, U'80**, "I've been living with my wife of 14 years, Robin, and my two children in Laurel Hollow, New York. I'm enjoying my final year in the Long Island Chapter of Young Presidents organization (YPO) which has been a fantastic learning experience over the last 15 years. I continue with my store fixture & display business as CEO of Econowow Corp & Mondo Mannequins. In my spare time, I enjoy playing golf with my kids."  
[br@econowow.com](mailto:br@econowow.com)

**Leif Salvesen, F'60**, posts this news: "Nora and I had a wonderful time visiting **Tom Marty, F'60**, and his wife, Joanne, at their beautiful lakeside home in Tomahawk, WI, this past July. The four of us all first came together at Madison's Sigma Phi Place 51 years ago ... and remain faithful friends to this day. The Thrice Illustrious bonds that unite can, indeed, last a lifetime."  
[leifrs@verizon.net](mailto:leifrs@verizon.net)

**Eric Sharfstein, U'93**, writes: "I started a great new job at Columbia University in the Office of Communications and Public Affairs. I'm covering History, Sociology, Anthropology, Religion, Psychology, Social Work and Journalism. I can be reached at: [connect\\_eric@hotmail.com](mailto:connect_eric@hotmail.com)."

In May of 2011, **J. Michael Traynor, I'52**, was presented with the American Law Institute's Distinguished Service Award. Traynor, a former Deputy Attorney General of the State of California and adjunct faculty member at UC-Berkeley, practiced law in San Francisco for most of his career and now is senior counsel at the intellectual property firm of Cobalt LLP in Berkeley. The Institute's 2011 presenta-

tion represents only the fourth time in its history that such an award has been given (NOTE: ALI was established in 1923 to promote the clarification and simplification of American common law. One of the early proponents of such an organization – one of ALI’s “incorporators,” as a matter of fact – was **Elihu Root, H’1860!**)  
[mtraynor@traynorgroup.com](mailto:mtraynor@traynorgroup.com)

**Russ Vance, M’50**, has much to shout about. “I celebrated my 80th summer in July and am still very active. I walk three miles a day, play senior softball in the summer and enjoy skiing in the winter. When it’s too cold for outdoor things, I’m almost a full time stock trader (NOT a day trader) and I wel-



come exchanging investing ideas with any member of the Thrice Illustrious!”  
[russbow98@yahoo.com](mailto:russbow98@yahoo.com).

**Ted Wynne, W’56**, recently shared these thoughtful Sig salutations: “Greetings from London. As the years pass, I become more and more proud of being a member of Sigma Phi and

at every reasonable opportunity I tell people a little of the history and remind them of illustrious Sigs, past and present. And I am always on the lookout for things which happened in 1827 or thereabouts; e.g. “aspirin” was discovered in willow bark in 1829, and there is store in London called Thomas Goode, founded in 1827, which sells fine china and crystal to the Royals and is still trading from its original premises. In many ways, it is quite amazing that Sigma Phi rolls on and thrives after so many years. There are very few entities which have survived for so long and which have such a vibrant history and positive future. Long may that continue.”  
[t.wynne@on-line-english.net](mailto:t.wynne@on-line-english.net)

## Virginia Chapter Earns Scholastic Distinction

**T**he Standing & Advisory Committee announced the results of the Society’s Scholastic Recognition program for the 2010 - 2011 school year at the recent Hobart convention. The Alpha of Virginia earned Sigma Phi’s Scholastic Achievement Award for the highest GPA among reporting chapters by posting a 3.316 GPA, narrowly edging the Alpha of Michigan’s 3.259. The Alpha of Wisconsin (3.081) and Alpha of Vermont (2.917) trailed the leaders. In recognition of its achievement, the Virginia chapter will be receiving a \$1,000 grant funded by the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation.

After a successful thirty-six year run, this recognition program went on hiatus following the 1995 Convention. Following a decision by the Standing & Advisory Committee several years ago to reinstitute the program, the Society has been working to implement workable procedures to do so and is very encouraged that the four chapters choosing to participate doubled the number of chapters involved in 2009-10.

Adding the most recent award to historical results from 1959 - 1995, this marks the third Achievement Award for Virginia, while the Wisconsin chapter has been honored with one of the two awards seventeen times.

As another step in reinvigorating the program, Jon

Bellona, H’00, has stepped forward to take an active role to interact with our chapters to gather the necessary information to administer the program and expressed his gratitude to the participating active chapter presidents and alumni for their cooperation in helping continue the program’s revival.

Additional scholastic recognition program information can be obtained by contacting Jon at [jpbellona@yahoo.com](mailto:jpbellona@yahoo.com) or Dan Neumann, F’71, the Society’s Awards Co-chairman, at [dca120@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dca120@sbcglobal.net).

Chapter	Achievement Awards	Improvement Awards	Total	Last Award
Wisconsin	8	9	17	2009-10
Hamilton	10	1	11	2009-10
Cornell	7	1	8	1985-86
Virginia	3	5	8	2010-11
California	4	3	7	1993-94
Michigan	4	2	6	1990-91
Lehigh	0	6	6	1994-95
Union	0	5	5	1985-86
Williams	3	0	3	1962-63
Hobart	0	3	3	1984-85
Vermont	0	1	1	1975-76
Totals	39	36	75	

### KUDOS & THANKS ...

... to the following Sigs for their articles, information or encouragement supporting this issue of the *Flame*: Jon Bergner, S’03, David Farmer, H’89, Jim Hansen, V’80, Scott Hekel, F’97, Aaron Lutkowitz, T’11, Scott McCrae, V’82, Dan Neumann, F’71, David Pauls, M’65, Grey Perry, C’56, Jack Romaine, L’90, Tim Starr, G’05, Shawn Tangnavard, U’10, Jarrod Thomas, S’05 & Ken Verostick, L’52.

Issue after issue, we solicit real Sig perspectives from real Sigs. Each shared viewpoint increases the newsletter’s scope and improves its readability.

Please contact editor Mike Imirie, M’69 ([mimirie@aol.com](mailto:mimirie@aol.com)) to share your feedback, suggestions, photographs and Sig stories. Flex your “stakeholder” muscles, Brothers! Share Best Sig Love in the form of the viewpoints and updates from your life.



## Sigma Phi FLAME

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS POST  
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### Nominations Open for the Elihu Root Distinguished Sigma Phi and the David Brown Service Awards

**T**he Standing and Advisory Committee is soliciting nominations for its two highest awards conferred on Sig Brothers.

The Elihu Root Distinguished Sigma Phi Award, initiated in 1989, recognizes and honors Sigma Phi alumni for lifetime achievements reflecting Sigma Phi's values and bringing credit to the Society. The award is intended to provide inspiration for all Sigs and in particular for 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, Ken Dryden, C'66, 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.

The David S. Brown Distinguished Service Award, named for long time Sig stalwart David Brown, S'70, was instituted in 1999 to recognize Sig Brothers who have



demonstrated their enduring love for our Society through their boundless energy and contributions to its brotherhood and well being. Award recipients have included Fred Bloom, C'57, Ted Bosley, I'73, Wally Gates, V'50, Pete Harter, G'65, Calhoun L.H. Howard, S'54, Mike Imirie, M'69, Jim Jenkins, S'58, Rex Jones, F'72, George Mercer, M'68, Sam Moore, F'70, Steve Moore, V'41, and Doug Tudhope, V'47.

Formal nominations are due by July 1 and welcome sooner. Any individual or group may submit, with or without the knowledge of the nominee. There is no prescribed format for submitting a nomination other than providing a comprehensive description of the candidate's contributions, ideally in publishable form. Nominations will remain confidential, revealed only to those brothers who are directly involved in the selection process.

Nominations are being accepted by Society Awards Co-chairman Dan Neumann, F'71, who may also be contacted concerning additional details at [dca120@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dca120@sbcglobal.net) or 120 Campbell Road, Trumbull, Connecticut 06611.

## Foundation News

by David Pauls, M'65 [davendavid@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davendavid@sbcglobal.net)

The Sigma Phi Educational Foundation (SPEF) had a very successful fund raising year in 2010, collecting three times the contributions it received in 2009. For 2010, SPEF reinstated an Annual Campaign for the first time in many years, sending two letters and a holiday greeting card to potential donor Sigs. Not only did the total amount donated – over \$30,000 – go up in 2010, but so did the number of Sig donors ... to over 200.

SPEF's 2010 Annual Campaign was bolstered by its major theme of supporting Sigma Phi's breakthrough Renaissance Program. Based upon a formal legal opinion that 75% of the Renaissance Program is qualified to receive tax deductible donations from SPEF, the Foundation committed to providing the highest level of funding it had ever provided to any activity in its history. The letters to loyal Sig donors from SPEF emphasized the transformational potential the Renaissance activities offer to our chapters, and

many Sigs responded with financial support. As a consequence of their generosity, SPEF was able to provide Sigma Phi Society almost \$30,000 to underwrite Renaissance activities this year, in 2011.

Even greater success is expected when the dust settles from the Foundation's 2011 Annual Campaign, which began in early September with the first of three donation solicitation letters, to be followed with a holiday greeting card. As with last year, this year's theme remains the support of Sigma Phi's Renaissance Program, focusing this year on major components of the program. Look elsewhere in this edition of *The Flame* for a report on the successes the Renaissance Program delivered to Sigma Phi chapters in 2011. As you read from that remarkable list, please remember that Foundation contributions from Sig donors just like you make these continuing Sig successes possible.

Esto!