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Sigma Phi

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Enduring Bonds

Hobart Aviator
page 5

Convention Renewal
page 8

Enduring Bonds
pages 12-13

Traction in Geneva

by Jim Anderton, G'62

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When fall semester began in Geneva, there were 26 brothers as well as 4 new sophomore pledges affiliated with the house. Our Sigma Phi Place at 624 South Main Street is home to 13 brothers this semester and a minimum of 17 will be living there in the spring. The house can hold a maximum of 19. We have entered into a one year lease with HWS that expires on June 30, 2025. During this period, HWS is reimbursing us, dollar for dollar, for the room charges it levies on the brothers who live in the house. The fall reimbursement was slightly over \$56,000. With

more brothers living in the house, the spring reimbursement should be greater. From these reimbursed moneys, we pay all of the house's operating expenses, including taxes, mortgage principal and interest payments.

The brothers on-campus today anticipate 10 new freshmen pledges in the spring. With 40 brothers, Sigma Phi will be the largest fraternity at Hobart. The average GPA of the present 26 brothers is 3.2 and 50% of them are varsity athletes. This is a wonderful group of Sigs that we can all be proud of. They care mightily about the house and are taking great care of it. An early October weekend celebrated the arrival of parents on the campus. The brothers hosted approximately 200 parents, brothers, and students in a very successful party on Saturday evening, complete with a big band. All were impressed with the condition of the house.

On October 22, the Delta's actives hosted a program open to all students, faculty, and staff of the Colleges. The speaker, author Ed Hajim, discussed his most recent book, "The Four Ps": a plate

for young people to plan for a life, not just a living. Hajim's Four Ps are: Passions, Principles, Partners, and Plans. HoH Jack Meagher, G'22, served as host of the program and interviewed Ed.

Over the weekend of September 26-28, 5 Delta actives attended the Annual Convention of Sigma Phi on the campus of Union College. Chris Jones, G'79, Alumni President of the Delta, G'79, and myself took part on behalf of our alumni.

**You will be pleased
to know that the Delta has
been selected to host the
Annual Convention for 2025.
We've penciled in the weekend
of September 25-28.**

The Union weekend taught me that conventions are wonderful events, and our plan at the Western Lion is to make the Society's 2025 gathering one of the best!

There is a lot going on at the Delta and within the Sigma Phi Society. I am more proud than ever to be a part of it.





Carolina in my Mind

by Jim Decker, T'11 jdecker92@gmail.com

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, no longer has a physical Sigma Phi presence. The undergraduate chapter dissolved in 2019. The duplex my 2011 class rented long since passed to non-fraternal tenants and our chapter house in later years was sold before dreams of a Sig-centric renovation could be realized. The spiritual presence, however, is strong, both in Chapel Hill and wherever else the brothers of the Alpha of North Carolina gather.

We enjoy annual alumni reunion weekends. Often, they are held around football or basketball games where brothers can come into town, enjoy a meal at a restaurant we could not have afforded on college budgets (!), tailgate, and peruse Franklin Street haunts, old and new. Wandering birds as far away as Atlanta, New York, and California have good reasons to head to Chapel Hill and gather with brothers local to the Research Triangle. The nights and days are long and full of brotherly love.

While these reunion weekends allow many brothers to come back and make new Carolina memories, some of my favorite experiences have come from the ability to connect with a Carolina Sig (or two or three) no matter *where* I am. I have been able to extend business trips in many cities through the generosity of a brother with a spare couch (or perhaps a small futon in a cramped San Francisco apartment...). Boring work trips to Charlotte become exciting when I grab

dinner and catch up with a brother. The Tar Heel basketball team's schedule has presented excuses to plan trips to cities like Atlanta or Las Vegas, giving a few adventurous Sigs opportunities to explore somewhere new. (*Of course, as responsible young men, we did nothing in Vegas other than watch basketball...*) My abode of New York is also home to numerous Sigs and a favorite spot for visitors, allowing many of us to get together regularly.

No matter the location, whenever I'm with my fellow Tar Heel brothers the camaraderie is evident. As undergraduates without a true chapter house to provide a physical reminder of the Sigma Phi spirit, we learned how to create that spirit through our interactions. Getting together with other Sigs, whether a brother I haven't seen in years or one I see weekly, always brings much mirth. Importantly, it invariably also brings to mind the feelings that initially drew us all to join the Alpha of North Carolina. To borrow shamelessly from singer/songwriter James Taylor, at those reunions - formal or casual - I'm always and effortlessly "*gone to Carolina in my mind.*"



Sig Veterinarian Writes “Nero’s Law”

by Mike Imirie, M’69 mimirie@aol.com

Until recently, police dogs in Massachusetts injured in the line of duty were forbidden by law from being medically treated at a crime scene. A gruesome police action in April of 2018 would cause that to change.....slowly.

That April, during what was supposed to be a routine attempt in Marston Mills (Cape Cod) to serve a warrant, shots were fired, an officer was killed, and his police dog, Nero, was grievously injured, with a bullet to the neck. The dog was refused care or transport by EMTs on the scene, however, and had to be driven in the back of a squad car to receive the veterinary treatment which ultimately saved his life.

Area veterinarian Kevin Smith, V’98, was motivated to take action to promote important legal change.



Kevin Smith, V’96

Earlier that year, Kevin had been approached by the local SWAT team to begin to provide veterinary field training to medics who would accompany SWAT units so that those medics could treat injured police canines, as well. Smith was accordingly aware of the need for such field interventions when the Marston Mills incident took place. His existing local involvement as well as his overarching passion for animal care caused him to see red....and to jump in.

Kevin began writing a law allowing medical aid being made available to injured police dogs at crime scenes. With zero legal experience but a lifelong heart for animal care, he spent countless hours reading Massachusetts General Laws. Kevin knew he had to familiarize himself with laws touching on both human and veterinary medicine. During this labor, he received ongoing and invaluable mentorship from a very knowledgeable SWAT officer from Alabama who was both a K9 advocate and a party familiar with existing K-9 friendly legislation in a few other states.

The process of writing the law was arduous. Iteration after improved iteration, it took Kevin about nine months to create. Afterwards, the process of finding a legislative sponsor could begin. Kevin arranged with a local statehouse legislator




Celebrating signing this legislation into law at the Massachusetts State House in 2022.

to sponsor what came to be called “Nero’s Law”, but that legislator was unable to move the bill to passage before his time in office ran out. The political advocacy process had to start all over again. Kevin worked with another legislator named Steven Yiarhos. (Yiarhos, a former police officer from Yarmouth, had in fact been spurred to run for office based on the Marston Mills events of April 2018.)

Yiarhos worked hard to build support, and the proposal for Nero’s Law was widely endorsed by area citizens. A petition supporting the bill received 3000 signatures from the public. Moreover, it was co-signed by over 100 elected Massachusetts officials! It became law in February, 2022, upon being signed into law by Governor Charles Baker, Jr. From that date, EMT personnel in Massachusetts have been permitted to treat K-9 dogs on the scene and to transport injured police dogs in ambulances and emergency vehicles as necessary.

And the good which comes from this law is being felt elsewhere. Other states have followed in enacting legislation similar to Nero’s Law. When asked if similar efforts have gained traction in other states, Kevin smiles as he recalls: “Florida copied and pasted our bill and got it approved in under 6 months!”

A photograph of two men standing on a tarmac in front of a white TransMedic Phenom 300E business jet. The man on the left is wearing a colorful, short-sleeved button-down shirt and blue jeans. The man on the right is wearing a dark blue military-style uniform with a cap. The jet has "PHENOM 300E" and "AT THE MEDICAL CENTER" written on its side. The background shows a clear blue sky with some clouds and a hangar.

Bill Ermolovich, G'74, in uniform at right in front of a TransMedic Phenom 300 business jet. Pledge brother Jamie Nagle, G'74, is at left.

Love of Flying Propels Career for Sig Aviator

by Bill Ermolovich, G'74 wermolovich@aol.com

I graduated from Hobart in 1976 but waited almost a year to enter Naval Aviation. In the meantime, I worked as a ski instructor at nearby Bristol Mountain and - having already earned my pilot's license - I flew sky divers until the following May. During that post-grad year, I managed to visit the Sigma Phi Place in Geneva nearly every week.

I was admitted to Officer Candidate School and Navy flight training in 1977. After earning my wings, I became a flight instructor in the T-2 Buckeye training jet before joining the fleet to fly the F-14 Tomcat for 14 years. During active-duty, I had 4 worldwide deployments in the USS John F Kennedy, CV-67. A highlight of this time was duty as an F-14 instructor and Landing Ship Officer (LSO), taking young pilots to the ship for their first day and night landings in the Tomcat! Before my overseas duty had concluded, I had logged three years' aviator time on ships, experiencing over 500 carrier landings on 12 different aircraft carriers.

Later, I served at Air Station Miramar in San Diego as a Tomcat

flight instructor. That's where the movie *Top Gun* was filmed. Would you believe I ended up in several scenes both as an extra and a pilot?

After over 10 years of active naval aviation duty, I was hired by Delta Air Lines. While a Delta pilot, I continued my service for another 10 years in the Navy Reserves at Dallas, Texas, flying the F-14 Tomcat.

I flew for Delta for 30 years and was experienced piloting B727, B737, B757, B767 and L-1011 airliners. Most of the flying involved North Atlantic, Pacific and Middle East operations to Europe, Asia, India, Russia, China, Japan, and the Middle East.

In addition to flying, I worked in various flight operations and flight safety positions during my 30-year airline career. Other aviation responsibilities? Safety manager, accident investigator and subject matter expert on Russian flight operations. As Delta's Russia subject matter expert (SME), I attended safety conferences and operational events, often in Moscow itself.

After retiring from my commercial airline career, I flew a Boeing Business Jet / 737N for a Sultan in Dubai. After nine months in Dubai, I went to Singapore on contract to the Prime Minister of Cambodia. (Our Boeing Business Jet had extra fuel tanks with enough range to make it from London to Beijing!)

In July of 2020, it was a distinct honor for me to earn the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award - recognizing 50+ years of consecutive safe flying operations - presented by the Department of Transportation's FAA.

After over six years flying large private jets in the Middle East and Asia, I was happy to return to America in January of this year. I am now flying transplant organs for TransMedics here in the US. It's great to fly the firm's Embraer Phenom 300E jets but - more important - I love the thought that my lifelong passion for flying is helpful to those in desperate need of new hearts, lungs and livers.

Convention in Schenectady

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

In some ways, all Sig conventions are similar. Active and alumni stakeholders make travel and lodging arrangements. Employing travel connections often involving early morning or late night hours, Sigs make their way to the host destination. Convention-goers anticipate personal reunions, educational symposiums, formal meetings, informal enjoyment, the annual Hicks Oratory, a taste of late night ritual and a formal banquet to cap the weekend. Via these familiar and engaging circumstances, all conventions celebrate the Thrice Illustrious.

For 2024, such a Sig celebration took place at Union College over the weekend

of September 27-29. All of the customary convention amenities were provided. The banquet was a particular highlight. Held in Union's historic, circa-1814 Old Chapel gathering room, it was an elegant, table-clothed venue in which well-dressed, well-mannered brothers and their ladies gathered and enjoyed. Sig singing rang out with Peter Smith, U'67, serving dually as accomplished toastmaster and tickler of the ivories! A poignant moment on the evening agenda involved formally recognizing the 5 Sig Sisters in the audience by name, accompanied by the Vermont chapter leading a respectful singing of 'Pax et Oscula' (the Sig Sister song).

Another highlight?

Presentation of the Society's David S. Brown Service Award to Bob Shages, U'69. Bob has contributed to the Alpha and the Society at large in countless ways over many years. Steve Shultz, U'68, who originally submitted the nominating petition, led the evening's heartwarming tribute.

Convention-goers also had an opportunity to spend time in the centerpiece of the Union College campus: the 16-sided, circa-1875 Nott Memorial. Many view the 'the Nott' as the finest Victorian Gothic academic structure on any US campus. It is a striking, one-of-a-kind building, both within and without. I was thrilled to visit again, and beyond grateful that Union's actives were able to reserve this National Historic Landmark as the stunning venue for our annual Hicks Oratorical Contest.

A particularly genteel moment was provided by Saturday's post-banquet cocktail hour at Kagan House, the Sigma Phi annex at 10 Union Avenue. The relaxed, contemplative quality of brothers' conversations made for excellent Sig sharing, and enjoying such conversation in a comfortable living room illuminated by the heirloom William Gibson Gilmour stained Tiffany glass (see cover image) added uniquely to our sense of place.



Bob Shages, U'69 (left) is presented with the David S. Brown Service Award by Steve Schultz, U'68.

In addition to traditional convention activities, the 2024 event offered a very esoteric benefit. It was a distinct pleasure to be on the campus of Union College, extant since 1795 and the birthplace of our Society some 32 years later. For Sigs, there can be a real sense of 'origins' on this campus. In particular, it was almost giddy to understand that North College, the dormitory in which our founders lived and gave birth to Sigma Phi, was but a stone's throw from our meeting rooms.... and that it serves the students of Union College still! It was likewise a pleasure - a veritable 'walk down (Sig) Memory Lane' - to make my way from campus south towards downtown Schenectady, locate Yates Street, and try to approximate where #5 - the Pepperbox, the Society's original Sigma Phi Place - might actually have stood, back in the day. (While it's possible to locate #1 and #9 on today's Yates Street, no #5 presently exists....)

For reasons of both ample hospitality and abundant history, the Society's 2024 convention was a full featured and very engaging fraternal weekend. Our Union hosts were welcoming, prepared and tireless...and the Spirit of Sigma Phi was everywhere on display.



CONVENTION NUGGETS

by Bob Daly, U'68 bodbaly77@gmail.com

When I think about having taken part in Convention '24 in Schenectady, these things in particular stood out for me:

The Staying Power of our Society

For all of the challenges faced over the years, we're still here and still moving forward.

The Vitality of Kagan Alumni House

The Alpha of New York has done itself proud in defining the role of this fraternal annex very near campus at 10 Union Avenue and using it to distinguish Sigma Phi at Union.

The Contribution of the Hicks Oratorical Program

This started by chance years ago. It has generated valuable thinking about Sigma Phi and provided a standing outlet to express those thoughts.

The Recovery of the Delta of New York

That is really a "wow." In an era of seeming fraternity missteps and failures, the Western Lion's return is a great success story!

CONVENTION '24:

Introspection & Renewal

by Sam Schneider, U'90 sschn24@gmail.com

As I drove past the autumn-speckled trees of the Berkshires en route from my Massachusetts home to Union College, memories of brothers in the house from when I was there flooded back.

From sacred rituals to meals and cocktail parties, the fun we had together was powerful and occasionally overly enthusiastic. The variety of personalities bound by our collective ties was a special part of my college years. It was here that I learned to accept others for who they are, recognize and appreciate their strengths, and think less of flaws.

On the way to Schenectady, my phone buzzed with text messages about meeting up with other alumni brothers with whom I had been in touch. Since Davidson Dorm is now home to the Alpha's actives and one of the places where convention events were to be held, it was a part of our plans. Nonetheless, every

time that dorm was mentioned in texts, I cringed. The loss of the Sigma Phi Place on 1 Library Lane still stings, as it was the backdrop for my Sig life - *my home* - at Union. That being said, I find myself slowly adapting to the space at Davidson. Familiar historical pieces hang on the walls and our wall-sized mural (now encased in glass) adds history to this dorm-like fraternity house. Composites on display from years since I've left actually picture our beloved, long-tenured cook, Doc Gill. *(I laughed when I remembered that this inclusive photo practice didn't take place during my campus years due to Doc's steadfast refusal to have her picture taken!)*

On Saturday, Randall Beach, U '91 hosted convention-goers at his distillery in nearby Glenville. Our tasting at Murray's Fools Distillery not only exhibited the delicious spirits his distillery makes but included history of his great great grandfather - W.H.H. 'Adirondack'

Murray - a 19th century American clergyman and author who was instrumental in popularizing the Adirondacks, and whose story inspired Randall. Thank you, Randall Beach!

The cocktails that preceded Saturday's banquet and the banquet itself were filled with reminiscing about a special brother who was very important to our chapter and to the greater Sigma Phi Society: Leonard Michael Kagan, U'67. We all need mentorship in life: from the youngest Sig to the oldest. Len not only had a talent for inspiring us with words, but his deeds demonstrated a devotion to us active brothers at the time that was unparalleled. We often talk about how he would remember everyone's nicknames and employ them as he greeted brothers when he'd arrive on campus. Len's dedication to connect with us then and with generations of Union actives in the years that followed



The former Sigma Phi Place at One Library Lane on Union's campus.



CONVENTION '24:

Undergrad Perspective

by Sage Korfine, C'24 sagek5302@gmail.com

was both obvious and meaningful.

It's only now hitting me that I've become one of the senior brothers of our order. I had a moment at the conclusion of Len's funeral last December when I realized that I and my fellow alumni brethren need to step up our participation if we are to prosper the great society of Sigma Phi. This is something that I intend to do in the months and years ahead and I implore others to do the same.

The other brother whose spirit was with me this convention weekend was the late Chet Eaton, V '30. I remember Chet telling me when I was an undergrad that, while being a brother of the Sigma Phi didn't guarantee success, it led us toward it in several ways. One of the ways was managing life as a pledge with the stressors that came with learning Sigma Phi history and being tested on that knowledge under difficult circumstances. Chet believed that this prepared us for the stress of the working world that we'd soon encounter. The resilience that Sigma Phi teaches is crucial for older adolescents today in an age where this group often shies away from both vulnerability and making mistakes. We all need reminders that we can do hard things! Chet's wisdom had an impact on me, giving me confidence to handle pressure situations. Now that I'm on the other side, that confidence positions me to help other brothers

What comes next in our Sig journey? Who will be there? I left convention weekend renewed and inspired by those who came before me to find ways to increase my involvement and bring others with me. My realization wasn't unique. In fact, this is the task of each alumni brother at every chapter.

I look forward to taking it on.



Sage Korfine, C'24

Attending this year's Sigma Phi Society National Convention in Schenectady was a great experience for me, providing not only a deeper connection to the fraternity but also an opportunity to engage with members from chapters across the country. This gathering at the Alpha of New York was a reminder of the bonds we share as Sigs and the values we uphold, regardless of which campus we call home. Meeting brothers from different chapters caused me to see the diversity of experiences within Sigma Phi while recognizing our shared commitment to Friendship, Love, and Truth.

One of the most thought-provoking discussions we had was a symposium section entitled 'the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence.' This topic feels increasingly relevant as AI becomes more integrated into every aspect of life, including education, business, and even our personal interactions. Led by a Union College educator, the conversation focused on the importance of thinking through potential current and future problems associated with AI in a logical, thoughtful, and moral way. As Sigs, we are called to think critically about the societal impacts of our actions, and AI use is no exception. We discussed how AI could be used responsibly to improve society and the risks it poses if left unchecked, such as biases in decision-making, privacy violations, and the potential to exacerbate social inequalities.

Another important session was on risk management, a critical aspect of running a fraternity. I learned that, while each chapter may have its own culture and traditions, we all face similar challenges in ensuring the safety and well-being of our brothers and guests. An open dialogue between chapters allowed us to exchange best practices and learn from each other's experiences. I left the convention with a renewed sense of responsibility to not only follow but also actively promote the policies that keep Sigma Phi a respected and safe organization. The importance of transparency, communication, and consistent education within chapters was highlighted as key components of effective risk management.

At the heart of all these discussions were the core values of Sigma Phi: Friendship; Love; and Truth. These principles distinguish us as an organization and remind us of our purpose as Sigs. Very practically and very personally, I found that friendship - that deep bond between brothers - was palpable throughout the convention. Meeting brothers from different chapters reaffirmed that, no matter where we hail from, Sigs share a unique connection. In particular, I connected with Matt Forys, S'23, and Kavon Samadani, S'20, around all matters collegiate and all matters Sigma Phi. I invited them to join me later that weekend for Homecoming at my chapter in Ithaca. Those intrepid brothers made the drive west from Schenectady! This visit and connection underscored for me the sentiment that, while Sigs come from different places and are used to different things, we are all more alike than we are different. For me, the 2024 National Convention was an invaluable membership experience. It reminded me of the strength of our fraternity, the importance of upholding our values in a rapidly-changing world, and the responsibility each of us carries to ensure that Sigma Phi continues to be a beacon of excellence for future generations.

CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS:

What Actives Said...



Jed Ober, U'22: "This was my first convention, and I am happy to say that it will certainly not be my last. I am excited to remain in touch with all of the wonderful Sig actives and alumni I met over that October weekend and to see our Society grow over the coming years." oberj@union.edu

Sam Schnaars, I'23: "I think what evolved my membership last weekend was a realization of our foundation. It is so beautiful that our near two hundred year old society was purposely built on concepts as simple as Friendship, Love, and Truth. There was a moment in the banquet hall where I felt magical reverberations of that values choice; in the same college as it was formed so long ago! I thought that it was quite beautiful: ~100 men in a ballroom speaking on friendship. It really helped me acknowledge the importance of that tenet of ours." samschnaars@berkeley.edu

Vihan Patil, F'22: "I didn't believe how surreal convention dynamics are was till I saw for myself. The fact that we have less than 200 actives across the country at different schools yet how - at the root - we are so similar. Everyone knows everyone's call signs: what the Epsilon, the Alpha or the Delta of New York is. Somehow, as soon as I got there, it was as if I picked up where I left off! It was also amazing to see how the spirit of Sigma Phi was still as active across

the various age groups as the day those senior Sigs were initiated. I look forward to strengthening these bonds with brothers from other chapters." vpatil6@wisc.edu

Andrew Popa, G'23: "One Sigly impression I received from Schenectady was that of togetherness. Even though it was my first convention and first occasion meeting brothers from other chapters, I felt connected and rooted: a sensation I don't know if I expected. This not only displays the power that connects Sigs but also generates excitement for what is to come next year at the Delta." apopa3026@gmail.com

Nick Staley, V'21: "The major thing that I took away is how much Sigma Phi means to everyone. You experience Sigma Phi at your own college with your own actives and Good Graduate Brothers but it was very special to see how cherished it is to other actives and alumni elsewhere. Although the rituals are a little different, we all read the same charge and uphold the same values. That's what makes us brothers. The brothers at the Alpha of Vermont were honored to be at this year's convention and we are so fortunate to be a part of something that is so much bigger than we could have imagined." nicholasstaley@icloud.com

Henry Caari, F'21: "Convention was one of the highlights of my time as a Sig. I appreciate everyone there

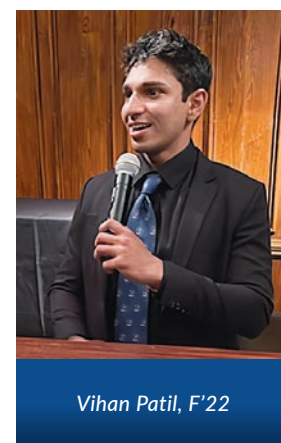
who made it as great as it was. This was the first time I have met Sigs outside of my chapter. Wisconsin is further away from the other chapters; it's not common to see Sigs from other chapters up here. To see and to make memories with Sigs from other places really changed my perspective of Sigma Phi. When Wisconsin brothers came back from previous conventions, they always advised how cool it was to meet Sigs from other chapters. But to experience it myself was truly amazing. I have a stronger motivation to come to future conventions and see other chapters around the country." cari@wisc.edu

Cooper Steven Cash Daeberick, I'23: "The convention was such an enriching experience. I've taken away some very precious and educational moments with me. First of all, the level of organization and dedication it took, specifically from the alumni and our Union hosts, was to such a professional level that it gave the whole scene a feeling of institutional momentum. I could also cite the hospitality demonstrated by participating alumni; they know what is to be expected at these conventions - brotherhood and fraternal love. And for that, I offer my gratitude to the organization and its philosophy as a whole. I am honored and privileged to be allowed to contribute." cooperdae@berkeley.edu

Winning Hicks Oration

by Vihan Patil, F'22 vpatil6@wisc.edu

(This year's Hicks Oratorical Contest featured three speakers. Those eloquent actives represented the Alpha of New York (Jed Ober, U'22), the Alpha of Vermont (Lucas Madeira, V'22), and the Alpha of Wisconsin (Vihan Patil, F'22). Alumni judges Ridgely Harrison, U'00, Sam Moore, F'70, and Kayvon Samadani, S'20, certainly had their work cut out for them as they evaluated this year's orations on the basis of content, originality, preparation and delivery. - Ed.)



Fraternities. It seems like a silly concept: groups of guys living in massive houses with their odd, secretive traditions which have continued for years on end. But I am not surprised in the slightest by how well it works.

Not long ago, I was talking to a Wisconsin freshman who came to college wanting to rush a fraternity. He was leaving our house after an event one day, when he turned around looking distressed, almost as if he was hurting. He said: *"I appreciate how welcoming you guys have been, but if I join some other place instead of you guys, I hope there are no hard feelings and that we can still be friends."* My response to that young person? *"It's really not that deep, man; you sound like every woman I talk to!"*

If you don't think you belong with the men of Sigma Phi, you probably don't and that's alright. Everyone has his story of how he found us or we found him. Two years ago, I was walking past the Sigma Phi Place in Madison with friends and one of the brothers was out front working a parking shift on a game day. He saw me eyeing the house yelled from across the street: *"You guys want to tailgate?"* I shrugged, said *"Sure!"*, and have not looked back even once.

In the two years since, Sigma Phi become the defining aspect of my college experience. It will have a lasting effect on me. My friend and our former president, Carter Norton, F'21, liked to say every organization has a workhorse, a show horse and a jackass. Boy, was I a jackass

when I got here! A whimpering form of my current self, not sure of my place in this organization. Two years later and I've now become an amalgam of some of my favorite people and a reflection of everything I admire about them.

Most people don't get what being a Sig is about. I can't blame them. In fact, I am only just starting to understand. Sigma Phi is not a place; it's a people: some of the highest quality of people I have ever met. I brag about my guys all the time. Every year we take part in a university staple called 'Humorology' where we stage a goofy musical with other fraternities and sororities to raise money for charity. And every year my guys run the show. Being a smaller sized fraternity, we don't have more than 2 or 3 participants, but that doesn't stop us from always playing vital roles as either lead actors or directors.

Tonight, I feel a sense of attachment to everyone here. It's like there's a little part of home in this very room at Union College. In learning from older Sigs, I know this feeling is shared by everyone and it makes me happy to know it doesn't dwindle or die with time. We hosted a memorial gathering for an F'51 Sig at our house recently. His wife talked to me about how much he loved the house and his brothers, I learned how pretty much every man in his family that went to Wisconsin found themselves a part of Sigma Phi, and watched as his ashes were scattered on the front lawn. It was all too touching; it put into perspective how deep the feeling of

home goes for the people of Sigma Phi.

I read through older Hicks speeches as a foundation for writing mine and I came across an oration by Sam Collins, F'18. He described the passing of another Sig at our dinner table in Madison. That brother had graduated long ago but was a frequent guest at Monday Dinners. In reading, I teared up. Maybe it was the fact that Sam's oration was well-written. More likely, it was the commonality of the feeling of being surrounded by a makeshift but authentic family that all of us find in Sigma Phi. It was the same warmth I felt when I came back to the house at 106 North Prospect Street after the summer. I realized I missed the little things about the house, like the creak of the front door, the thud of footsteps going up and down the stairs, the peace and quiet of the after-hours...or the lack thereof because of the childish arguments us guys are so skilled at having!

I realize I have no real explanation for "Why Sigma Phi?" other than I really like it here. As I enter my final undergraduate year, I know it will fly by before I can even begin to take it in. I also know that I'm incredibly fortunate to serve as President. These circumstances bring to my mind a favorite quote by author Shel Silverstein: *"There are no happy endings. Endings are the saddest part, so just give me a happy middle and a very happy start."*

I can't thank Sigma Phi enough for giving me that very happy start before I enter the rest of my life.



“The Shekhinah of Our College Days”

by Rev. Brian Justice, S'86 bjustice@collegiate-va.org



The things of the Sigma Phi Society are things of the heart. They are given *in* time and they are felt *in* time. But paradoxically, they are not *of* time. They bear within themselves those mysteries of revelation and of succession. They have something eternal within them and so transcend the very people who feel them. Among the living and the dead, they endure.

And I am learning that over and over again.

On the weekend of 5-7 July 2024, I had the great honor and privilege of officiating the wedding of one the brothers closest to me ever since my undergraduate days at the Alpha of Virginia, Brad Llewellyn S'86. And, as so many times before, many brothers of our era gathered in Charlottesville to witness and to celebrate a happy occasion.

It was a life moment. It was a Sigma Phi moment.

Though before my time, another life moment and Sigma Phi moment most assuredly took place in 1945. At the Centennial Celebration of the Alpha of Vermont, Elias Lyman V'1907 declared, “The Sigma Phi is not of the stream of time, of yesterday, today, or tomorrow. It is not subject to the decay of days

nor the hardening of age, but remains eternally fresh for each youthful heart, and eternally refreshing – the Shekhinah of our college days, and the shadow of a great rock in the weary march of life.”

The things of the Sigma Phi Society can be said quite easily: Friendship, Love, and Truth. Ordinary words that evoke extraordinary things. For these are things of the heart. These precious jewels “remain eternally fresh” as they are given to the “youthful heart” of each newly initiated Brother in our chapters. But as I learn repeatedly, they are “eternally refreshing” over the course of a lifetime as we move through our alumni years. Friendship, Love, and Truth are “the Shekhinah of our college days, and the shadow of a great rock in the weary march of life.” In his address in 1945, that esteemed Brother from Vermont invoked

the Hebrew word - ‘Shekhinah’ - that is found in rabbinic literature to mark the “dwelling place” or “settling place” of divine presence. That place is the heart.

Our world evolves, our institutions shift, our communities fluctuate, our families change, our bodies age. Times passes. Along the way, we must let beloved brothers pass on with time, too. But we, the living, “never forget the Brother” and so the dead maintain their ground among us; they live on in memory, in the memory of the heart. The things of the Sigma Phi Society - Friendship, Love, and Truth - live on, too, because they dwell in and settle in the heart. They are transmitted from heart to heart across time. In this way, they are not of time. They endure. For the ardor of the heart, which penetrates mystery and preserves memory, is “not subject to the decay of days nor the hardening of age” but remains “eternally refreshing” for the young and for the old, for the living and for the dead.

As I took leave of Charlottesville and the brothers who had gathered there for the wedding in July, I thought of the things of the Sigma Phi Society - the things of the heart. The ardor of Friendship, Love, and Truth inflamed my feeling. With my heart on fire, the present and the past were joined as one. The living and the dead were present to me.

And yet again, I was refreshed for the march of life.

Vive la Sigma Phi!



In July of 2024, when ‘the jolly Sigs were stirring’ on behalf of a Brad Llewellyn, S'86



Energized in Ann Arbor

by Joe Marwil, M'98 joemarwil@gmail.com

When I reflect on my three active years at 907 Lincoln, my mind goes directly to friendship, brotherhood, and a hearty camaraderie. These might sound trite and obvious, but – frankly – they are the most enduring elements and most meaningful components of my life. Until my own marriage and family, those friendships were the glue that held my world together. The enduring friendships I made at the Sigma Phi Place in Ann Arbor were lasting, memorable, and solidified by an unbreakable bond of true brotherhood. It was no accident that my actual blood brother, Isaac, joined the house two years after I did; he felt it, too!

It's in our blood to seek after friendships like these...truthful, vibrant, exhilaratingly humorous, always rekindled in absence, and sealed with a particular handshake no Sig could mistake. There was a sense of pride being surrounded by so many fellows like me: young men trying to make their way through school, striving for achievement while setting out to make marks for themselves and perhaps leave legacies. (Legacies of glory, I hasten to add; not infamy!) I was surrounded by such brilliance. I was in the company of some of the smartest, wittiest, musical, and most capable men period. I didn't then and don't now take that for granted. The moments we spent together are etched on my mind as timeless treasures:



Joe Marwil, M'98,
and family



vivid; significant; and consequential to the trajectory of my life.

As a pledge, I learned diligence, promptness, cleanliness, kindness, and endurance. As a brother, I would come to learn passion, devotion, intention, perseverance, achievement, and gentlemanliness. As Head of House, I came to understand true responsibility. I was a steward to the house and a servant of my brothers. I learned how to display a tempered authority, to be a patient listener, to be a friend to a forlorn brother at 3am, and to be a trustworthy voice for the Alpha's cause, whatever that might be. I'm told I was a passionate leader, ready to take on the challenge of making us stand out at U of M for the right reasons...all the while enjoying doing it!

In my life today, when good things happen, I'm joyous and thankful. When bad things happen, I have the endurance to persevere because – just like my God – my brothers lifted me up from the mire. I am wholly spiritual as a result of this caring model of fatherhood from my brothers. I have a sense of pride in being a husband, a father, and a landscape architect. I take

on new challenges with the spirit of a Sig in his prime because of the lessons I learned and the friendships I took away from our unique fraternal order.

During a lineup on one particularly grueling initiation night, very early in the morning with red eyes, a raspy throat, a burning hunger, and no little nausea, I was asked (rather, a response was demanded of me) what I hoped to attain from becoming a brother in Sigma Phi. My response was simple. "I want to be a better man," I rasped.

Of course, I was basically still a boy then, but I emerged from those hallowed Michigan halls a man on fire. I was energized by a spirit of victory and confident that the many different paths my brothers and I would take would lead to success after success after success.

Two decades and more later, I believe that my early AM pledgeship ambition has been realized. In what I am able to do and in what I aspire to, this brother is a better man. And there's not a doubt in my mind that it's due to the unique and formative influence of Sigma Phi.



“You like us, right?”

Measuring Sigma Phi on Campus.

by Jack Romaine, L'90, SPEF President jeromai1@yahoo.com

If you are reading this article, Sigma Phi has touched your life in a way that has kept you engaged beyond college. As brothers, we know the value and importance of Sigma Phi. But how does the outside world perceive us?

Honestly, we probably get lumped in with all the other fraternities and the media prejudice from movies like “Animal House.” In the face of such outside impressions, what determines if we stay on campus is how our host institutions and its students view Sigma Phi. Our behavior and activities in public view on campus tell that tale.

The Sigma Phi Educational Foundation (SPEF) is the public face of Sigma Phi. Our mission is to promote academics and enhance undergraduate experience. By engaging with students and faculty, we burnish our image and demonstrate

value to those who will never have the chance to understand the depth of our brotherhood. Our activities can change perception and demonstrate positive value on campus.

Such perceived value matters greatly as Sigma Phi seeks to expand with new chapters, just as it does in efforts to recolonize chapters we have lost. When a University is expanding its Greek system, applications flood in. “Why should Sigma Phi be allowed on campus? How do we benefit from having you here?”, potential hosts ask. Our public actions - up or down - are what those hosts will measure us on.

SPEF encourages academics as well as participation in campus activities. SPEF programs help reinforce the basic academic requirements that must be met to remain active on campus. While programs like the Academic Excellence Award directly benefit active brothers in the house, they really represent the bare minimum of what colleges expect of us.

Recently, SPEF has launched both the Undergraduate Symposium and Speaker Series Programs. Both go beyond expectations and represent strategies





Does Sigma Phi have your proper email address?

Are you receiving email notices of Sig news, needs and events? Are electronic copies of the *Flame* reaching you, if you've requested such distribution? If your answer is 'no', don't fret!

Instead, please visit www.sigmaphi.org, click on the login button in the upper right corner and sign up to ensure you don't miss out on news, information and happenings around our Society.

for Sigma Phi setting itself apart on campus. How? The Speaker Series in particular benefits all students on campus. The events we sponsor are open to the entire student body. Necessary planning helps actives build relationships with both faculty members and administrators. Sigma Phi brothers are no longer faceless students tucked away somewhere on campus. Instead, they are able to build relationships with the administration while hosting events that help students, the school, and often the community.

SPEF wants to expand value-added, groundbreaking programs like this. Under consideration is creating a program for making direct gifts in the name of Sigma Phi or Sigma Phi and a sponsoring brother to colleges where we host our convention each year. And we want to do even more.

As Sigma Phi looks at both expansion and recolonization ahead of our 200th anniversary, the Educational Foundation is one of the Society's most valuable tools for achieving these goals. It's important

to host more and better events and to expand the programs we offer. The Educational Foundation will make a difference in the way this secret society is perceived on campus. When the president of the college hears Sigma Phi, we don't want her to think "*Uh-oh. Double secret probation.*" Instead, we want her to say, "*I've met several fine young men from Sigma Phi and they do really good things on campus.*"

As we look to the next 10, 20, and 50 years on campus, it's not enough to just *be* on campus. Instead, our Society must prove its worth in public ways. Your Sigma Phi Educational Foundation is leading this important charge. We need your help, brothers - and your investment of ideas, time, and money - to make this expanding mission a success.



SPEF

Contributions to the Educational Foundation may be made via this QR code.



Badge Price Reduction!

Hello brothers! My name is George Snyder, S'78, National Badge Administrator for the Sigma Phi Society. I run a jewelry company in Charlottesville, Virginia, which provides the Sigma Phi Badge, Sig Sister Badge, and pledge pins.

Over the last few years, following the upward cost of gold, the price of a Sig badge increased to \$385, to the point that few actives wear one. To remedy this, I have recently produced a gold plated badge containing cultured pearls at a price of \$210. Within limits, the back of the badge can be engraved with your full name, the year of the Society's founding, the year of your initiation, up to six letters representing your conclave name and six more for your professorship. Delivery takes between 7 to 9 weeks.

Group orders are encouraged. To order, mail your check and engraving instructions to:

George N. Snyder, L. C.
1941 Lewis Mountain Rd.
Charlottesville, Va. 22903



Questions? Email: snyder.gn@gmail.com
or phone 434-242-9229



The Delta of New York



Convention '25: Save The Date!

The Delta of New York is pleased to be hosting the Annual Convention of the Sigma Phi Society in the fall of 2025. It will take place over the weekend of **September 25-28**. The President of Hobart and William Smith Colleges has agreed to welcome us and the Colleges are going all out to assure they help us in every way possible. The Sigma Phi Place has recently been restored and/or renovated and the current brothers are excited to have us join them. A full calendar of events and agendas will be forwarded in future communications.

Sig Jewelry: Delight in the Details & the History

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

Sigs understand that, after they're initiated, they've earned the right to wear a special badge. The badge that's prescribed by our Society is an elegant, time-honored pearls-on-gold piece: a proud monogram of a Sigma superimposed on a Phi.



One brother has taken a special interest in Sig badges. When it came time to purchase his own, he took the road less traveled...and more distinctive. Max Owens, F'21, saved up his dollars over time in order to custom prescribe his gold badge to be set with blue sapphires in place of pearls. The choice wasn't driven by vanity. Instead, Max had two very good reasons for such a distinguished alternative.

To begin with, Max wanted his badge to stand the test of time. He knew that sapphires are comparatively hard stones; they are more durable than pearls. His plan is to wear his badge often, so long as he's properly attired. He's reluctant to think that it should be reserved for Monday night dinners in Madison or formal Sig occasions. A more durable badge will perhaps provide additional protection against whatever mishaps might come with more frequent wearing.

A more important reason for Max's choice was driven by the history of Sig badges over the years. In the earlier days of our fraternity, more ornate badges were sometimes created, often set with stones other than pearls. Some of the earliest Society badges, for example, were set with the black mineral known as jet. Other badges have been adorned with rubies.

Max has also found examples and illustrations of pre-Civil War badges carrying truly elegant scrollwork on the front. "I wanted my badge to be a piece that captures and pays homage to the deep history of our Society, and thought it was special to have a badge which would likely be one of very few in over a century to be set with sapphires. I tried to get the front-facing arches of the phi engraved in the beautiful floral pattern found on some 1860s New York badges, but the jeweler was unable to comply."

Max's unusual interest in Sig jewelry follows from the love he's always had for both the subject of history and items from yesteryear. When he was twelve, he developed interest in scouring yard sales for gold and silver jewelry to resell with his father, and he's been enjoying it ever since. Purchase after purchase, those early experiences caused knowledge about jewelry to accumulate, passion to set in, and a most unusual skill set to be developed.

In those early days, Max came to see that jewelry reselling was largely for scrap value. That was to change, however. "About four years ago, I started wondering if there was a better reseller's strategy, I realized that, in a growing number of cases, the value of

such jewelry far outweighs mere scrap metal value. During COVID I had extra time on my hands, so I reached out and formed business relationships with local antique stores. These days, items I find primarily supplement their estate jewelry inventories. Through experience, research, and talking with other dealers and middlemen like myself, I have developed a reliable knowledge base. I very much enjoy this pastime; it doesn't feel like work to me."

Max's fondness for prized jewelry and the history behind it is what drove his desire for an unusual Sig badge. He enjoys consulting online jewelry sellers for vintage Sigma Phi badges. He has found a website which is particularly helpful: Fratpin.com. He notes with amazement that vintage badges found online are universally expensive. He recently spied a 1939 Sig badge for \$325, a 17 pearl sweetheart/Sig Sister badge from 1921 for \$275, and an 1880 badge on Bay for a cool \$1000! And with the price of gold continuing to skyrocket, antique fraternal jewelry like ours will surely continue to increase in value, too.

(Interested in learning more?)

Contact Max via email:

maxowensmax@gmail.com -Ed)

SOCIETY 'MISSING'

In the July issue of the *Flame*, we shared a partial listing of Sigs with whom the Society has fallen out of touch. We asked for help in locating those brothers. Readers were generous in reaching out and replying; and some of our formerly missing men are no longer missing. That's terrific news, and we heartily thank those brothers who shared updates.

You'll find another group of missing men in this issue (below). If you have updated contact information for any of these Sigs - mailing addresses, email addresses or phone numbers - please share them with your editor (mimirie@aol.com).

Healthy organizations need to do all they can to maintain member contact. As busy and as mobile as Sigs are, this follow-up is particularly necessary. If you're able to assist with this Thrice Illustrious communications outreach, you're contributing in a big way. With your help, we'll continue with the Society's mission to "restore ties that bind" for every brother on this missing list.

CORNELL

Kiyoshi M. Murata C'63
John H. Josephson C'81
Kevin Joseph Flynn C'99
Timothy Nagel C'00
Joseph Michael Kaplan C'09

WISCONSIN

Brian F. Crisafulli F'60
Michael W. Olson F'74
Gregory Knight Smith F'89
Kevin Gregory F'99
Ryan William Bach F'10

HOBART

Einar Anderson G'73
Christopher L. Dodge G'78
Neil J. Allocco G'82
John Starr G'00
Thomas Joseph Strada G'14

HAMILTON

Roger Clayton Jones H'67
Ezra M. Kopelowitz H'85
Nicholas D. Brown H'90
Noah Samuel Bishop H'08
Dumitru Kaigorodov H'14

CALIFORNIA

Thomas Horvath I'76
Joshua Bretholtz I'92
Ian Michael Sanchez I'06
Sterling Walter Thomas I'11

LEHIGH

Arthur Schiller Jr. L'63
Kenneth R. Adams L'63
David C. Woods L'73
J. Michael Chaykowsky L'83
Ronald George Toothman L'95

MICHIGAN

Charles T. Kao M'68
Michael May M'71
Jamie C. Spence M'91
Fernando Barreto De Moura M'03
Tyler Dean Bailey M'11

VIRGINIA

T. Channing Moore S'61
Christopher C. McCarty S'89
R. Alec Marshall III S'90
Emmanuel D. Tesone S'96
Yipu Howie Xia S'06

UNION

Robert Miner Gillespie Jr. U'61
David Plumer Jr. U'74
Matthew Arnold U'86
Bradford Nathaniel Coyman U'01
Patrick Jonathan O'Hern U'08

VERMONT

Darren S. Berger V'79
Orlando R. Muyshondt V'87
Griffin Tryon Bodell V'06
Matthew Everett Scranton V'12
Frank Rhett Lamar V'15



We have racy news from **Drew Augustine, M'99**: "Over the summer, I ran the Dexter-Ann Arbor half marathon, which starts in Dexter and runs all the way to Main Street in Ann Arbor. It was the 50th running of that race and attracted 2200 runners. It was my first half marathon attempt, and I finished with a time of 1:42:19, good for 33rd place in the men's 40-44 group. I plan to do it again."
drew.augustine@gmail.com



Drew Augustine, M'99

This 'quill from the eagle' comes from **Eric Chartan, V'98**: "I've been living and working in Dallas since 2011. My wife's name is Rebecca and we have two children (Eli is 13 and Olivia is 9). I currently serve as the Chief Legal Officer of First Command Financial Services, a full service retail financial services firm primarily serving military families. I am also excited to be working with several Texas-based Sigs on the Texas Steering Committee to establish an Alpha of Texas at a great university."
ericchartan@gmail.com



Billy Davis, C'03

In the October 21 edition of 'Ad Age', **Billy Davis, C'03**, was named one of the periodical's "40 Under 40 Honorees" for his high energy, highly successful work with Amazon's Sports Advertising team. Davis is the Associate Head of Live Sports Sales, and is helping grow the advertising business associated with Amazon's streaming platform. Read the entire article here: <https://adage.com/Reprint-AA24110WilliamDavis>
billydavis160@gmail.com

Jon Fraser, M'08 writes: "I resigned from my investment banking job in April after 10 years to work on my barbell training business, Starting Strength Chicago. As a last hurrah before buckling down, I travelled to Japan for the first



Jon Fraser, M'08

time since my international student stint 15 years ago. I visited many cultural attractions that I missed during my studies. Some highlights were Asakusa, Kabuki-Za, Yasukuni Shrine, Gion, Nijo Castle, and Dotonbori. Singing classic Japanese songs at karaoke made me many new friends, but I'll have to visit my Japan Sigs next time around, hopefully soon!" jonafrasz@gmail.com

"I'm retiring for the second time," advises **Christopher Garcia, C'78**. "This time, I hope it takes! In 2007, I retired from the Army after 25 years of active duty,

Dave Dallas, S'79, reports that "Retirement is looking good." Dave is finishing up a transition year and cuts the cord February 1 from his law firm, Williams Mullen, after 38 years of corporate practice. Dave and Sig Sister Susan are having a Ford Transit van built out for travel camping and plan to hit the road in February. In the meantime, Dave will be headed to the Amazon with brother **Jake Savage, S'77**, on a bucket list fly-fishing adventure.
ddallas@williamsmullen.com
(Dave and Jake enjoy that particular bucket list adventure most years. It was reported in wonderful detail in the 12/23 'Flame.' - Ed)





used my GI Bill to go to seminary, and then worked as a parish priest in The Episcopal Church, serving parishes in DC, rural Virginia, and southern Maryland. After seven years in Calvert County, MD, we've moved back to northern Virginia, into the house where we raised two children, close to DCA and IAD. Time to ski, hike, travel, and enjoy life. We plan to be as active as we can for as long as we can! Happy to hear from brothers at cmg22153@gmail.com."

Three members of Michigan's 1969 initiation group and their wives were reunited at the Troy, Michigan, home of **Mike Imirie, M'69**, in August. **John Exell, M'69**, visited from his home in Ventura, CA, and was joined by **Bill Middlekauff, M'69**, and Imirie. Dinner on the deck that evening was good, and connections like the ones Sigs often share across the decades are priceless! mimirie@aol.com



(L to R) Bill Middlekauff, M'69, John Exell, M'69 & Mike Imirie, M'69

Alf Kennedy, L'83, is a dad! His boy, Francis James Kennedy, was born at Geisinger Hospital in Danville, PA, on 9/26/24 at 8:22 PM, a svelte 7 lbs 11 ozs. "My son is only 3 weeks old", advises the new dad, "but in the next 18 years I need to point him in the direction of finding



Bill Lindhout, M'47 and family

a way to recolonize Sigma Phi at Lehigh!" kalfsburg@aol.com

This centennial news was furnished by **Bill Lindhout, M'47**: "On September 22, I was overwhelmed with a 100th birthday celebration. A crowd of 60 or so showed up to enjoy a magnificent birthday cake with an image of me waving on the Swilken Bridge at St. Andrews Golf Course in Scotland. The photo was taken from my fourth visit to Scotland back in 1999, and looked mighty good on that cake! wpl@lindhout.com

Lt. Col Patrick Mahoney, USMC, U'00 recently retired from the United States Marine Corps after 20 years of service and accepted an offer to work for Microsoft in its federal sector. He resides in Northern Virginia close to Washington DC. "With military moves and deployments behind me, I'm looking to invest some time in Sigma Phi. Sigma Phi taught me so much, keeps me connected, and continues to help me meet incredible brothers. If you're an undergrad/grad contemplating military service I'd love to connect and assist." mahoneypatrick76@gmail.com

Jacob Morse, T'11, shares this news from 'the business of life': "I've branched out and started my

own law firm with one of my best lawyer buddies here in Raleigh. The firm is Morse Fritts PLLC, and we focus on catastrophic injuries and cases for the injured, harmed, or wronged from pre-suit work through trials and appeals. It's a big undertaking to say the least but we are excited and are lucky to have the support of many, many trusted mentors and friends." morsejacobm@gmail.com



Lt. Col Patrick Mahoney, USMC, U'00

From the realm of 'Stronger Than Iron, Yet Silken the Tie', we share this report from **Macklin O'Neil, F'17**. "On September 8, 2024, my Sigma Phi brothers, **Josh Stamm, F'16** and **Duncan Rochman, F'19**, and I completed Ironman Wisconsin—a 140.6-mile triathlon featuring a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike, and 26.2-mile run. Training together and supporting each other made it all possible, and I'm not sure any of us would have attempted it in the first place unless we knew we had our brothers to rely on." macklin.oneil@gmail.com



Macklin O'Neil, F'17, Josh Stamm, F'16, and Duncan Rochman, F'19 in front of Wisconsin's state capitol in Madison

Jim Oshanski, M'75, shares this update from 'points south': "MSS'78 Karla and I have made the move from Michigan to Florida for long winters but will spend our time in Cary, North Carolina in summers. Both of us had wonderful lives growing up in Michigan and went to school in Ann Arbor. We met as a result of Sigma Phi! Our daughter and her husband have relocated with our grandsons to Apex, NC, which is just

the right proximity to our new home in Cary. We invite anyone traveling to Naples in the fall-spring months or Raleigh area in the summer to send us a note so we can try to catch up." joshanski@aol.com

Mark Patterson, I'74, advises: "I'm tickled that my song "Bourbon Trail" was licensed by ABC for its hit TV show, *Criminal Minds: Evolution*. The specific episode aired June 20th on the Paramount+ network, and was seen by an estimated 11 million viewers. That song was written and recorded in 2023 and licensed to the network on a non-exclusive basis." map@dmarksmusic.com

Jeremy Saraie, I'16, recently gave birth to a bear: a *Sig Bear*, that it is! While assuming California's newsletter creation duties in the shadow of long-time publisher-hero Gregor Nelson, I'76, was of course daunting, Jeremy was asked to do so...and did! Created using Affinity Publisher software, it represented a diverse, upbeat and thoroughly enjoyable Alpha of California read. What's next for this 2019 grad with a degree in political science with "a small bit of graphic design experience"? Like all good bears, this one will hibernate during the winter, only to enjoy new life in hard copy form in the spring Of 2025! jeremysaraie@gmail.com

Kevin Smith, V'96, reports that a weekend in mid-October was a busy one...and a proud one, too. Smith, an enthusiastic and certified Scuba dive master, enjoyed an unusual and aquatic 'daddy-daughter' sharing opportunity by open water diving off Nantucket with his 13 year old daughter, Grace. While Kevin reached his 1000 dive milestone that weekend, he insists the real story is his daughter's, for she logged dive #79 after only three years of diving! "She loves critters," advises the proud papa, "so she is great at finding underwater critters with her

13 year old eyes. That makes its terrific for me, too." kpsv96@gmail.com



Kevin Smith, V'96, and daughter Grace

We have this update from **Nathaniel Solley, I'14**: "I'm happy to report that I graduated with my PhD in Classical Studies from the University of Pennsylvania this spring. I wrote my dissertation, entitled 'Horatian Ecopoetics' on everyone's favorite poeta Venusinus, Horace (the current pledges would do well to learn that he is the poet born in Venusia referred to in our Latin song). This academic year I am teaching a few classes as a lecturer at Penn while I look for an institution to hire me full time as a professor." nathanielsolley@gmail.com

After several years working for the Estonian Foreign Ministry as Director of US Investment & Trade, **Alvar Soosaar, S'96**, has returned to the investment world, setting up Fjond Ventures (Fjord+Fund=Fjond) with three partners. Fjond targets early stage New Nordic (5 Nordic countries+3



(continued from page 21)

Baltic countries) startups in the "dual-use" space: technology companies whose products are relevant to commercial as well as governmental (e.g. energy, health, and defense) end users. Through investment, guidance, and advice, Fjond prepares them for North American markets and investors. "This is my way of continuing to bring the two countries that I love - the United States and Estonia - together. Doing so via a venture fund supports the entire New Nordic region, while at the same time providing US customers with cutting edge technology solutions and US investors with compelling opportunities." asoosaar@gmail.com

Rick Travers, I'86, shares news of an epic house maintenance adventure: "At the California Alpha, our Active-Alumni workdays 8/24-8/25 were incredibly productive. Work ethic all around and terrific alumni participation were the reasons why. Examples? **John Andrews, I'53** cut back the dead acanthus and weeded on the side of the house. **Jerry Barclay, I'71** guided actives carefully excavating around a broken underground storm drain next to the back patio so he could patch it. **Tom Saxby, I'79** guided actives in correctly cleaning and sealing the outside of the teak French doors. **Joel Schumacher, I'80** pruned the Wisteria below the greenhouse, despite still recovering from COVID. Our actives/pledges thoroughly weeded the entire property and completely filled a 20-foot U Haul with abandoned furniture and furnishings for a dump run! Generous donations towards workday expenses were received from **Mark Patterson, I'74** and **Dell Hutchinson,**

I'71. I thank everyone who took part and salute all the good which came from those many efforts." rick@travers.net

This October post-Hurricane Helene status comes from **Doniel Winter, I'94**, who makes his home in Asheville, NC. "We survived Helene relatively unscathed. Compared to the destruction and loss in certain areas of Asheville and greater Western NC, my family was lucky to have only a couple electrical service wires pulled from the sides of our houses. It could have been infinitely more tragic. Helene struck at the very beginning of our busiest month of the year for hospitality. All of the guests of our inn canceled through the end of the year. All of the parties at our event space canceled through the middle of November. Tourism is a \$2 billion industry in Asheville and about 20% of that gets spent in October. More tragic, however, are the buildings, dwellings and

businesses located along the French Broad River that were completely destroyed. Most will never come back. The loss of life is the hardest to wrap my brain around. Many are still missing and some will probably never be found. As I write (10/16), the air by the rivers smells of death. My family and friends are safe. I feel incredibly blessed." donielwinter@gmail.com

Personal injury attorney **Alex Wolff, C'05**, shares this update; "I made my professional squash debut this past September at the RC Pro Series Doubles Tournament held in St. Louis. While it's now clear that I'm about 40 pounds past my peak, I'm told a good match was had by all. And I'm confident that I made my young opponents earn every point! Going forward, I hope to play in more tournaments." aaw314@gmail.com.



(L to R) Tom Saxby I'79, pledge Ahmed Albadrani, Elias Myers I'23 & pledge Elliot Kempf worked to make sure that the Alpha's teak doors had never looked better!

Never Forget These Brothers

News of the passing of these brothers has been received since publication of the July 2024 Sigma Phi Flame.

Edward Lucas Austin Jr. V'56.....10/26/2019
 Richard K. Barton M'561/1/2020
 Steven M. Bengis C'65.....12/13/2015
 Stephen Carter Brown G'627/9/2024
 Richard Hovey Davis V'77 2/16/2010
 Walter Jacob Foster L'5012/18/2023
 Peter W. Freeman V'66.....1/1/2020
 Thomas Howard Gillespie Jr. C'52..... 4/25/2023
 Cornelius O. Granai V'67 6/28/2020
 Donald John Hofele I'71.....10/17/2024
 Ottiwell W. Jones III I'50..... 5/23/2024
 Jules J. Labarthe Jr. C'56 3/28/2024
 Chester K. Lasell W'56..... 9/18/2021
 Jay A. Lipe S'53.....12/29/2022
 Ralph L. MacDonald Jr. W'60 7/31/2019

William J. McElhaney V'848/2/2024
 John Andrews Minor U'56 1/19/2024
 Jeffrey A. Morris U'59 6/29/2022
 Frederick Charles Mueller L'61..... 4/15/2024
 Frederick Charles Norton V'53..... 8/14/2024
 Richard J. Osius M'56..... 12/2/2023
 Anthony Edward Riva Otis V'67..... 7/13/2020
 Ronald William Pero V'59 1/24/2019
 Dart Ransley Purdy V'56..... 7/14/2024
 Kurt O. Regenberg F'54.....4/7/2024
 William A. Scoones H'547/8/2024
 Gary Scott Smith V'66.....12/23/2022
 Steven Lane Sperlik V'67 12/3/2023
 David J. Stephens V'52 1/28/2023

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Issue after issue, Sig stories, perspectives and feedback are actively solicited. Why? Every time a reader circles back with a suggestion or a written contribution, it improves Sigma Phi's next edition. Contact Editor Mike Imirie, M'69 (mimirie@aol.com) with your feedback and/or suggestions. They are always welcome, for suggestions from brothers make a real difference in magazine quality!



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by Bob Guthrie, S'86, Society Treasurer bguts123@sbcglobal.net

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You know that dues are used for Society administration, leadership training materials, event and ceremony planning, website enhancement, active chapter outreach and publication of the *Sigma Phi Flame*, among other important deliverables. Member dues add unmistakable value to our organization, making it possible for us to regularly keep alumni informed and engaged.

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