

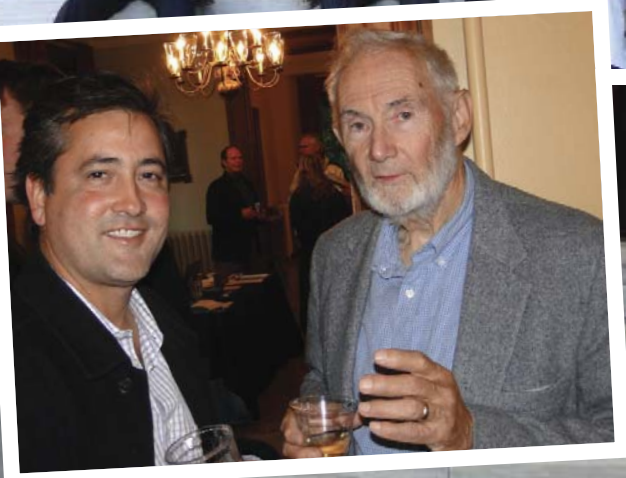


Sigma Phi

# FLAME

NUMBER 116 • DECEMBER 2010

SIGMA PHI



Convention 2010 in Vermont, pages 8-11.

## The Chairman's Message: 'Priorities'

by Marshall Solem, F'79 [marshall.solem@zsassociates.com](mailto:marshall.solem@zsassociates.com)

**O**ur ever-vigilant editor has been on my case for a few weeks to get this written. I'm a bit embarrassed, in fact, to confess that my article was the last to make it to his desk in support of this *Flame*. No way for the Chairman to comport himself, for crying out loud!

There's a reason, of course. (There are *always* reasons in my life. Yours, too?) I am blessed to work for a company that continues to grow through these difficult economic times. Our cautious strategy regarding hiring while growing has put a lot of pressure on everyone at the firm, from top to bottom.

While my 'busyness' is the truth, it's an Al Gore kind of truth: inconvenient, as my wife reminded me on a recent Saturday when she asked me when (if?) I was going to quit working and join the rest of the family for the activities we'd planned. Ultimately, I delivered 'the best of both worlds' by finishing this message at my two girls' swim meet, which provided me and my laptop adequate time between events to put on the finishing flourish.

As I reflect on my conflicted but perhaps common saga, it seems like a microcosm of at least one of the challenges Sigma Phi faces both nationally and locally – our alumni volunteers are so busy with demanding daily lives that Sigma Phi often gets put on the back burner.

So, how do we change this? If I knew the right answer, of course, I wouldn't be getting nearly as many terse e-mails from our editor! I do have a few thoughts on the matters, however.

I'm certain a big part of the solution is rearranging our priorities and elevating Sigma Phi on our respective priority lists. But, making such a change is far easier said than done. Elevating one thing on the list necessarily requires that another

thing be lowered: not an easy trade-off to make. To do so requires some introspection about why we're involved in certain activities and organizations.

For me, the experience of being involved in Sigma Phi is rich. (*One of Webster's definitions for 'rich' is deep, intense, and delivering pleasurable qualities.*) I thoroughly enjoy my interaction with Sigs across generations. I learn something new from my brothers all the time, and the variety of our dialogues and shared perspectives is always fresh and rewarding. I get charged up and energized being back on campus visiting our chapters. Is there anything more fun and exhilarating than being back on campus on a fall Saturday? Perhaps it's a feeling of recapturing some of our youth, delusional as that fleeting feeling may be! On a deeper and a far more authentic level, I know that my involvement – just like yours – helps perpetuate an organization which builds character and offers so many growth opportunities for young men. Those efforts contribute, I believe, to a one-of-a-kind men's organization which has certainly stood the test of time.


The other thing I've realized is that the more often I'm actively engaged with Sigma Phi, the clearer these benefits become. So, perhaps the best way to elevate Sigma Phi on our priority list is to stay involved (even if



Marshall Solem, F'79

in a small way) on a more frequent basis – so the realization of these benefits stays front-and-center in our minds.

As we enter the season of giving in 2010 – and with absolutely no regard for dollars or for dues – I recommend giving just a little bit more ... to the Thrice Illustrious. The difference our personal efforts can make in our chapters and/or in the larger Society is dramatic. There's no such thing as too much alumni care, input and involvement ... on any Sig campus or in any leadership group. Best of all, it's a two-way gift, with a great return for each and every giver.

Precisely because our 'busyness' is both inescapable and inconvenient in these demanding times, the response we make to Sigma Phi is that much more important ... and rewarding. 

**Sigma Phi**

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## From the Secretary: 'What's Your Story?'

by Scott McCrae, V'82 [scottmccrae@comcast.net](mailto:scottmccrae@comcast.net)

**M**y wife bought me a belated birthday present recently. It was a Bonsai tree and I was delighted to receive it. The beautiful little tree came with a second present which was a book teaching how to take care of it. I have since read much of the book and realize that these beautiful little trees require a lot of care and work to keep them alive and healthy. I was thinking how much these trees are like our active Sigma Phi chapters. Instead of pruning and watering, our chapters require insurance, maintenance and active participation from alumni.

Mike Imirie, M'69, and I had a chance to play the role of the "caretakers" a month ago while facilitating a recruiting program as part of the National Convention's Undergraduate Workshop. That Friday afternoon, we engaged the actives on how to recruit in today's college environment. One of the best ways to recruit is to be able to relate your personal story as to why you became a Sig in a salient way. With a little editing, one can put together a pretty convincing argument for the merits of the Society. The best part about this exercise, though, was listening to the undergraduates tell their stories. It wasn't just the content of their stories but the excitement with which they told them. It was obviously a life-changing event for many of

them. Dare I say all?

About halfway through the story telling I was asked, "What's your story?" So I told them how I was invited as a sophomore to the house for a coat and tie dinner by Ward Cunningham IV, V'81, a friend from freshman year. Without telling me he was Greek, Ward conned me into getting dressed up for a dinner at the place that he currently lived. I walked over to 420 College Street and – when I saw the Sigma Phi house – I froze. I didn't know Ward was in a fraternity and I was intimidated by the majesty of the Sig house. I was getting ready to turn around and "beat feet it" back to the dorm when I heard a friendly voice calling to me from the Sig house lawn. Ward was washing his car (a late '70s Grand Prix called "The Mint Mobile") and motioned for me to come on over. Trapped!

He brought me inside to introduce me to his friends and I have to say I did not expect what I saw. First, the house was beautiful with the smells of bounteous repast emanating from the lower regions. Secondly, there were several 70 year old men mixing with the brotherhood. Ward quickly introduced me to Chet Eaton, V'30, and Bob Pond, V'40, and I was quickly made to feel at home. You all know the story from here.

It is amazing how pivotal that



Scott McCrae, V'82

moment was in my life. If I had decided to beat a hasty retreat when I first recognized Ward's home as a fraternity, who knows how my life might have changed? My point in making this statement is for us all to think about our stories and how one little event could have caused us to take a very different path. In the recruitment workshop, I shared this with the undergraduates. In very short order, they got this truth: that recruiting well takes a commitment to make sure we don't miss out on the guy who could be your best friend forever ... or your best man ... or the business partner with whom you launch the next Google.

Recruitment really is and has always been the heart and soul of our beloved Society. I believe it is incumbent on all of us to support

and encourage our chapters to hone these skills. It takes a little care on our parts but, as illustrated above, the personal upside and membership rewards are tremendous.

Just like having a Bonsai tree, a little care taking and support can yield a beautiful thing. Now ... just what did I do with my pruning shears, anyway? 

### KUDOS & THANKS ...

... to the following Sigs for their articles, information or encouragement supporting this issue of the *Flame*: Todd Campau, M'88, Jeff Chandler, H'08, Tex Currie, I'72, James Dong, I'09, Ax Hayssen, V'09, Gregor Nelson, I'76, Dan Neumann, F'71, Robert Orr, V'67, David Pauls, M'65, John Rawley, V'05 & Jack Romaine, L'90. Special thanks must go to Rick Bingham, V'87, for sharing his stellar photos of Convention '10!

Issue after issue, we solicit real Sig perspectives from real Sigs. Each shared viewpoint improves the quality and readability of Society communications. Each one is a genuine gift to Sig readers, coast to coast: a personal testimonial about brotherhood and this Society's continuing imprint on each of us.

Contact editor Mike Imirie, M'69 ([mimirie@aol.com](mailto:mimirie@aol.com)) to share your feedback, suggestions, photographs and – *of course!* – Sig stories.



# My Many Fraternities

by Todd Campau, M'88 [toddndallas@hotmail.com](mailto:toddndallas@hotmail.com)

**D**ictionary.com provides some interesting definitions of the word fraternity, including: a group of persons associated by or as if by ties of brotherhood and any group or class of persons having common interests, etc. I guess both pertain to me, each special and significant in its own way. I never really thought about it, but couldn't the concept of fraternity pertain to everyone, whether or not you joined a fraternity? Brothers of the Thrice Illustrious are fortunate to have experienced the ups and downs of our Society-initiated friendships during our collegiate years. The Society will continue to grow and add members to our Brotherhood who share a common bond. Yet, it's my view that the unenlightened can also experience similar bonds of "fraternity." Please allow me to explain.

I recently returned from my second deployment to Afghanistan. Wow! What an enriching, frustrating, mind-opening, maddening, humorous, fulfilling experience. I served as a team leader for a five-person team of intelligence collectors. We met with and obtained, cajoled, persuaded, purchased, threatened, coaxed (insert verb of choice) information from local Afghans. We took that information about criminal activities and insurgents to the Infantry guys who in turn raided the hideouts and snatched up the criminals and all their evidence. My team worked hand in hand with many other organizations to affect a positive change in our area – positive for the Afghans and for the Coalition Forces. We became a "fraternity" of sorts, inspiring soon-to-be lifelong associations and reunions.

We returned to the States mid August 2010 and soon afterward went our separate ways – similar to college graduation. It would be easy to remember the memories and be content with that but our bonds remain strong. One of my team members will visit me this weekend. Emmy, aka 'Sister Mary Danger,' is one of my fraternity "brothers" with whom I shared many uneasy nights, exhilarating successes,

numerous mortar attacks and the ups and downs of a deployment. She and I will meet up with Tony, who's driving from Dallas to Austin to hang out. Why? Because our shared military experiences are bonds of fraternity and we will maintain them. Could you say our deployment was similar to the four-year "deployment" we undergo at Vermont, Hobart, Michigan, UNC and others? Well, kinda ... We didn't have weekly beer bashes or the Naked Mile each February and couldn't drop by the Diag to toss the Frisbee, but we ate chow together, suffered the unhygienic stench of Afghans together and silently worried about each other when one of us was on a mission off base.

My first deployment to Afghanistan was a very heady experience, occurring in November of 2001, soon after the invasion. The United States justly went after the Taliban and UBL (Ooo-ble, as we call him) in retaliation for the September 11th attacks. Our small cadre of military specialists morphed into a close knit group of guys after experiencing the hardships of war. Yeah, we became a fraternity of sorts through our common experiences and suffering. No one had been drafted in the Army, just as no Brother was forced to join our Society. We chose to go willingly, to experience life together. And some of us have willingly chosen to maintain the bonds of friendship which grew from our shared experiences.

I've come to view our Sigma Phi through the same lens as my non-collegiate fraternities. It's like a tree. It needs a good foundation and continuous nurturing to grow. Sometimes, the tree can sit unattended for months or years and thrive, but sometimes it needs a little TLC. I stay in touch with pledge brothers like Joe Cebina (Beenah), Steve Miller, Greg Kerwin and guys from others classes like Ed Campaniello (Duardo the Baker), Bob Garcia, and Matt Saleski (Slim Sexy) thanks to Facebook. Who doesn't connect with Mike Imirie? If you don't, man, you should. Mike might've graduated before you were born but that guy is cool: a constant



Todd Campau, M'88

steady hand offering friendship and guidance to which I've turned well beyond my days at Michigan. He's like all of our alumni – a brother for life and one with whom maintaining the bonds of brotherhood is easy.

For me, the main take-away from all this writing is this: our Society is very much like the fraternities of friendship each of us will build at different points in our lives. When touched periodically, it both maintains the bonds of brotherhood and enriches our lives yet again. The visit by Mary Danger and Tony will both help me relive some of the 'crazy' we dealt with while overseas and afford us the chance to be connected in one another's lives. Reconnecting is something which brings me fulfillment on many levels.

Brothers, I challenge you to maintain and grow the various "fraternities" you've experienced in your lifetimes. Sigma Phi has been an integral part of my life since fall 1987 when I first met the lifelong friends with whom I'd study, party, go *(continued on page 5)*

# Lehigh Days


by Jack Romaine, L'90 [SigmaPhiLehigh@gmail.com](mailto:SigmaPhiLehigh@gmail.com)



*Lehigh Sigs gathered for Jack Romaine's 2003 wedding. The bridegroom is wearing the boutonniere!*

It's a cold Saturday morning in October in Bethlehem. The phone rang this morning and got me out of bed at 10 A.M. or so. I know how you're reacting. "What are you doing in bed that late?", you're asking. "Don't you have responsibilities?" Well, I was up at 4 A.M. last night with a good idea for work and off I went for a couple hours to try and turn the crazy thoughts in my head into something usable. The worries of work and the world are different than I imagined when I graduated from Lehigh all those years ago. My office is located on the fringe of Lehigh's Mountaintop campus and I often find myself reflecting on my time at Lehigh, and particularly on the good times and good friends at the Sigma Phi Place.

Which brings me back to the phone call. It was former National Secretary Mike Imirie, M'69! I knew Mike when I was an active in Bethlehem. He was one of the Sigs

(from page 4) camping, attend weddings, visit periodically, and share life's challenges and joys. Some of those brothers were my peers. Some came before me and some came after. In all cases, the common thread of this Society knits our lives together. And our Society is my warm overcoat in the winter and my umbrella in the rain to which I turn periodically when I need some nurturing. 

who had graduated and had jobs and lives but still took the time to visit and care about the actives. And it wasn't just Mike; there were lots of Sigs both young and old who would drop in at the house. Do you remember the first time you met Chet Eaton, V'30? Or Bob Pond, V'40? So when Mike asked if I would write something for the *Flame*, it was hard to turn down.

My theme here is simple. I miss our house at Lehigh.

Well, OK, maybe not so much the house itself as what that structure represented. A meeting place. A compass point. A way back to something special. It was a place that Sigs who had left the active fold and ventured out into the real world could come back to at any time and see friends both old and new. It was a gathering place that, week after week and semester after semester, renewed Sig spirit.


When there was a Swing or the Lehigh-Lafayette game or even Greek Week in the Spring, the house was packed with alumni. Whole classes of Sigs a couple years out of school would escape their everyday lives and show up! Wandering birds would venture in from far and wide. Those were great times!

The house has been gone for years now, turned into a haven for Gamma Phi Beta. We Lehigh Sigs have drifted apart as a result. We still get together for Lehigh-Lafayette every two years when the game is here in Bethlehem.

Mark Rothenberg, L'86, has done a great job keeping the Sigs in NYC organized with First Friday events. But it's really not the same. I think the last time a majority of the L'90s were together was at my wedding back in 2003.

I became Lehigh's Alumni Corporation President and S&A Delegate last year. In those roles, I'd like to find ways to rejuvenate and reorganize Lehigh Sigs again. Over the next year, we need to rebuild our communication links so we can better stay in touch and plan more events. It needs to be easier for Alpha of PA Sigs of all eras to get together and be in touch with old friends. I hope you feel like I do; I hope you're hungry to reconnect.

Please share your ideas for 'renewing the ties that bind.' Do we need a newsletter? A larger website (consult [www.sigmaphi.com](http://www.sigmaphi.com) for our interim site). An updated e-mail distribution list? How can you help with any of those forms of Sig outreach? (You know how it is in volunteer organizations ...) Please share your ideas, Brothers. We're a remarkable band of brothers with roots going all the way back to 1887, just 22 years after Lehigh was founded by Asa Packer. We owe it to ourselves to remain connected and proud!

I hope to be in touch with you soon and see you soon thereafter! (Phone: 917-601-7244) 

# 'What Is the Sigma Phi?'

by James Dong, F'09 [jamesdd9302@yahoo.com](mailto:jamesdd9302@yahoo.com)

**T**his is the question we are asked as pledges. *Again.* And again. And again. Yet as pledges, standing there before the gazes of the brothers – some mirthful, some bored, others condescending, others encouraging – we just don't get it. It's no wonder every answer is met with resounding hisses. A brotherhood. Ssssss. A secret society. Ssssss. A death cult? Ssssss. A fraternity! SSSSSS! And when the nouns fail, we try our hands at adjectives. Sigma Phi is infinitely tall and profoundly deep; it is beyond the ken of this world. Sssss ... and who talks like that, anyhow?

When we finally swing into brotherhood, the question recedes to the back of our minds. It only surfaces again when we, as actives, nod sagely to the next group of pledges hearing it for the first time. I disagree with this approach; it's far too lackluster for such an important question. So I challenge my brothers to ask themselves anew: What is the Sigma Phi?

If this question were so easy, then surely we'd all come up with something similar. But I doubt this is the case, and the myriad possible answers reinforces my belief that this is not so simple – not even for brothers.

My first thought was that the Sigma Phi is a community with a strong and everlasting bond. But my conclusion is naturally molded by my experience with the Alpha of California. Who knows what a brother of another chapter might say? So I set a goal in my mind to visit all 10 active chapters before the age of 25 (i.e., before I start to forget how it feels to be in college), and get just a little insight into the nature of the Sigma Phi from their perspectives.

As a pledge, I had already visited Cornell on an unrelated conference, and had the fortune of staying with the Epsilon. The house at 1 Forest Park Lane is a mansion, yet upon walking in, I felt strongly at home. I was equally astounded that no one really treated me like a pledge! Instead, everyone invited me into discussions about California, Sigma Phi, and the like. Over the next few nights, full of dinners and parties, I remembered thinking that, truly, *our Society is one rich with prestige and*

*influence.*

This year, I was excited to travel as an initiated brother to Vermont for the annual convention. After a chilly evening walk up College Street, the house greeted me with its tall and imposing columns. This design fittingly matches the pride the brothers within have for the Society. Many new friends eagerly shared the interwoven history between the chapter and the university, pointing out the important names on plaques mounted throughout the house. As they spoke, their passion and admiration showed brightly through. Wow, I thought, *Sigma Phi runs deep and Sigma Phi is loved.*

Vermont is so close to upstate New York that, in the immediate aftermath of Convention 2010, I took a two week road trip through the four active chapters there. My next stop was Hamilton, the chapter I was most intrigued with when I left California. Long have I heard stories about the Beta, where – with no house, no discernible paraphernalia, and only a few whispers among the student body – Sigma Phi is fully underground. Yet it is a testament to the dedication of the actives that they have found ways to perform our most sacred rituals and ceremonies to the complete unawares of the general campus. So then, I mused, *Sigma Phi really is a secret society.*

In stark contrast to this image are the portrayals of Sigma Phi at Union and Hobart, where, I was happy to learn, our Society is deemed the best fraternity on campus. At Union, I enjoyed my first chance to meet a group of pledges from a different chapter and to actively participate in their first few events. I am most impressed by the pledges. They are deeply loyal from day one and many stop by the Society's assigned housing daily to study the Catalogue and discuss the finer details of our history. A string of thoughts hit me: *Sigma Phi is a great fraternity, it is the oldest fraternity, and its members are quite proud.*

My first reaction upon pulling up to the Western Lion's Lair was that the Delta's house looks a lot like Vermont's, with the same regal columns framing




James Dong, F'09

the front façade. I quickly realized, however, that Hobart is very distinctive, with its own set of colors and a boldly innovative pledging process. Clearly, *Sigma Phi is unique*, and – for the record – it's also quite the party.

Clearly, my experiences at each chapter have been limited. Already, however, my odyssey has brought to mind many diverse phrases and words to answer my original question. Yet rather than being exclusive, those descriptors build upon each other.

Some of my conclusions surely overlap with those I had formed as a pledge. So what's different? Why the lack of hisses now? As a pledge with a pressing need to understand, I was too busy trying to 'package' the Society with a singular definition. It didn't occur to me that Sigma Phi is simultaneously different things to different people in different chapters and across different generations. As a brother, I now have the experience and wisdom to realize that every answer to the question of 'what is the Sigma Phi' can only be a partial one. No single word – no noun, no adjective – is robust or adequate enough to capture the multidimensional essence of our illustrious Society.

The best way we have of getting closer to a viable definition is to delve more deeply into the Sigma Phi. For me, this means visiting all the chapters at least once and trying to arrange a time for drinks or dinner with a local Sig whenever I travel. (Luckily, our brothers are quite pervasive!) Such meetings remind me repeatedly that, despite our differences, we are unified by one golden chain. And, through our challenges, our rivalries and our Sig adventures, we continue to strengthen this remarkable, enduring bond. 

# 100 Years Later, Viele Legacy Continues

*Francis Viele passed away in 1944, but he is constantly present in all of our chapters.*

**F**rancis S. Viele, G 1885, was a successful businessman who never lost sight of how much Sigma Phi meant to him. The bequest of his wife in 1948 fulfilled his intent to create the Viele Scholarship Trust for Sigma Phi. With this bequest, Francis Viele has a lasting impact on all our young Brothers. Through this stirring generosity and forward thinking approach to philanthropy, hundreds of young Sig men have been offered opportunities to challenge themselves and grow as leaders.

While the Vieles' generous gift will enhance the leadership development and scholarship of our student Brothers for many years, Sigma Phi continues to have greater programming needs than the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation can fund. Francis Viele believed that Sigma Phi could make our Brothers better citizens by providing unique opportunities to encourage excellence in all endeavors. Just imagine the impact you can have on Sigma Phi and future generations by making a planned gift.

Brothers who include the Sigma Phi Educational Foundation as a beneficiary in their estate plan through their will, insurance policy, trust, or other deferred gift are recognized in the Foundation's Founders Circle. For information on making a planned gift, contact:

Scott McCrae  
General Secretary, Sigma Phi Society  
smccrae@together.net • 802-658-1951

"... (grants) be given to Sigma Phi students ... who have shown an outstanding aptitude for college work and good citizenship."

*Francis S. Viele  
Scholarship Trust*

## Cal Fence Need Brings Out Artistic and Musical Best

The Alpha of California hosted a benefit concert featuring legendary Sig house band, Short Notice on 16 October to raise money for construction of a new wooden fence for the chapter's back yard. Aesthetics, privacy and liability issues drove this facility's need, estimated to cost about \$16,000. Gregor Nelson, I'76, and Christina Nelson, ISS'82, donated a beautiful 11-by-17-inch poster (shown here) to commemorate the day and further encourage generous donations to the Alpha's "ReFence Fund."

In an unique artistic series dating back to 1978, this is the twelfth poster Gregor has designed for Short Notice. Produced in a limited edition of just forty color giclée prints, a few are still available for a contribution of \$100 or more to the cause. For more information, contact Bill "Tex" Currie, I'72, at [williamcurrie@comcast.net](mailto:williamcurrie@comcast.net).



# Convention Reflections

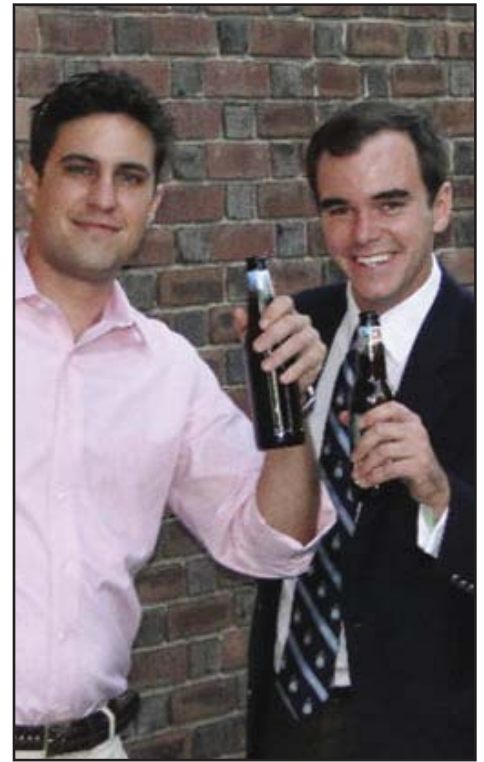
by John Rawley, V'05 [johnrawley@gmail.com](mailto:johnrawley@gmail.com)

**Y**ou know, a few days ago I was asking myself ‘Why am I doing this?’ and now ... wow, man.” I was enjoying a cocktail with Narayan Campbell, V'03, the Friday evening of Convention on one of the small porches off the front of the Alpha of Vermont. Together with several other Vermont actives and alumni on the Convention Planning Committee, Narayan and I had spent the past three weeks making significant professional and personal sacrifices supporting the 2010 Convention. It had been a much more involved undertaking than any of us had expected. Narayan laughed, locked eyes with me and smiled. I smiled back. No words were exchanged for a few moments. Each of us knew what the Planning Committee had gone through to make the cocktail party taking place inside possible: to make the weekend possible. It was an awesome feeling to have pulled it off. Narayan knew the feeling; in that moment, we shared it. It was one of the most poignant bonding experiences I'd felt in a long time.

Twenty-four hours earlier, on the eve of the first day of Convention, I had officially lost it under the stress of several small talks that had to be pulled off by morning. In fact, they were only minor things, but I knew they would make the Alpha look either sharp and organized or like a bunch of convention amateurs depending on how well they were done. I was hustling to knock them off that Thursday when, stepping out of my car into my apartment's parking lot in the pouring rain, the driver's side door on my 1993 Volvo Classic 240 Wagon decided after 17 years of opening and closing it had had enough – and remained permanently open! “No! No! No!” I screamed, repeatedly slamming the door in anger. I was frustrated ... in spades. We'd spent the past five months prepping for this weekend. Meeting rooms had been reserved, call banks organized to drum up support, convention favors funded and ordered, \$40,000 in repairs to the chapter house completed, large scale marketing efforts undertaken, brochures and

other documents printed, archival displays constructed, bartenders and security arranged, catering between four different vendors organized, a banquet planned and speakers confirmed, upwards of ten conference calls conducted, logistics mapped out ... it had been hard, incessant work. I was worried that none of it would be recognized if the minor details in front of me weren't properly handled ... and now. People pay attention to the details, I've learned. Losing a functioning driver's side door at that particular moment had, in my mind, put all of this hard work in jeopardy. I was flipping out. The aforementioned favors were sitting in the back of my car. Clearly, I could not walk away without securing the door and – holy Catch 22! – I could not tackle lingering convention details if I had to take care of my car issue. Flipping out, indeed ...

At that moment, Tim LaPrade, V'01, who was staying the weekend in the apartment next to mine belonging to George Dean Martin III, V'02, popped his head out of a window. “Is that John Rawley?! Let's party!” I was too enraged to respond and didn't look at him. “I'm busy right now, Tim.” It's uncharacteristic of me to be short with anyone; two minutes later he was standing over me with an umbrella and both of us were trying to fix the Volvo's door. Tim reassured me that everything was going to work out OK. *(He was right. I spent the rest of the weekend with a belt strapped around my leg while driving to hold the door shut!)* That interaction with Tim was important; it resonated with me for a long time. He had recognized my distress and immediately come to my aid, going so far as to offer me the use of his car for the weekend. It was sincere friendship. I was fortunate to have it – to have Tim – in my life.




Conv '10 planners Campbell and Rawley

I was fortunate to have the Sigma Phi in my life. Isn't it funny how the universe answers the questions we pose? Looking back on Convention 2010, I can now laugh at the answer I got to my tortured “Why am I doing this?” question. In unmistakable terms, the universe showed me why.

It's for Tim. It's for Narayan. It's for all of my Brothers, graduate and undergraduate, and for their friends and families who come in contact with our Society. Working to organize Convention weekend put me in a spot where my commitment was tested ... and how. In that time of trial, the interactions I've mentioned here answered my question.

I do it because I love this Society. I prize the friendships. I enjoy being near it and being involved. I am pleased to think that the work I do to ensure that the superficial expressions of it – those which were obvious at Convention and needed in other Sig circles, too – will contribute to its longevity, 183 years later.

Sigma Phi is one of the few things I believe in without question. I want it to be here for generations to come. Including even coming to grips with a balky Volvo in a rainy parking lot, I'll do anything to make sure that happens. 



## Report from the 2010 National Convention: 'The Alpha Society'

by Robert Orr, V'67    [robert.orr@robertorr.com](mailto:robert.orr@robertorr.com)

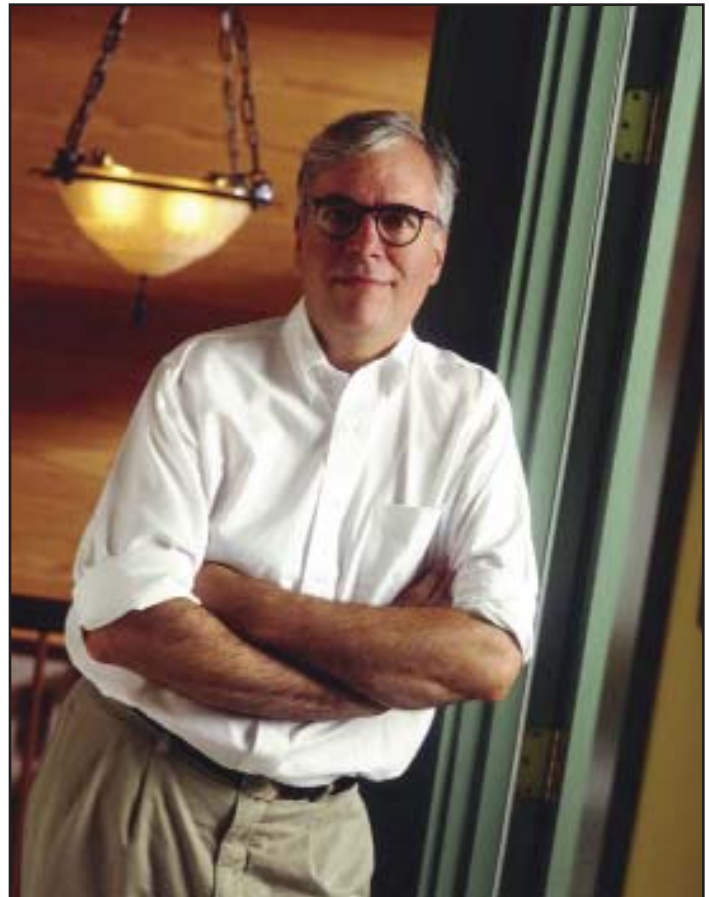
I attended the 179th National Convention at the Alpha of Vermont last month. It had been a while since I attended a Sigma Phi event; in fact not since the day I graduated from college forty years ago. The late '60s were heady times that are hard to imagine now. Peacenik students at two college campuses were cut down by firing squads like a Goya painting, and every guy hung by the thread of his lottery number (not the Powerball type but the one that queued you up for the rip-line to Vietnam, where one's fate seemed sealed by the grim body count on the nightly news). Mine was 257, a number you never forget. The gaiety of drinking songs and fraternity life melted that year. And so for many departing seniors, the irrelevancy of fraternities got stuck for the next four decades.

I spent a career aimed at restoring civic life to America's cities, so thoroughly ripped apart by forces greater than any war machine, an entire generation has grown up without even knowing what a city is. In that work, I had come to recognize the role ritual and pageantry used to play back when American cities were the pride of American achievement. If the streets, blocks and architecture of American cities were the armature, ritual and pageant were the glue that held the bonds of community together within the armature. Back then, community defined who you were ... not a Facebook page.

Like an archeological expedition, I began "digging" several years back trying to unearth any vestiges of ritual and pageantry still extant to test whether they still contained their stem cell-like powers to grow community. The scattered bits I found here and there often seemed like reliquaries in museum vitrines, fascinating but long severed from any useful purpose. Then opening the invitation to the National Convention this summer made me recall the ritual and pageant of the Sigma Phi Society from my college days, and I wondered if the Convention might offer opportunity for a new "dig."

Armed with handpick, loupe and brush, I headed off to Burlington. To my surprise, very little had changed with the Society from the way I remembered it. Sure, there were new interpretations and variations on the theme, but the ritual and pageantry of my focus were pretty much the same. In fact, a swing of four new Sig Sisters on Saturday afternoon revealed ritual and pageantry that were exactly the same.

My "dig" continued into the shrouded halls of Conclave. To my surprise, an artifact I felt leaning against my chair turned out to be a framed Brother's picture from 1967, my swing year. Staring back at me from behind their glass enclosure of all those years were cameos vivid in my memory, locked in the innocence of youth. I thought, "What are the chances?" But, as I digested that thought, someone distracted my attention by handing me the



Robert Orr, V'67

penultimate Vermont Sig artifact: the *Tome*. For those Sigs from other chapters, the *Tome* is a small volume containing the signatures of all who have been initiated in Burlington. I noted with interest that its leather cover had holes worn through by centuries of thumb and finger impressions, like so many fingerprints pressed in the same places over time. The awe of my swing experience was such that I remembered the *Tome* being huge, so the diminutive Octavo size splayed so comfortably in my hands was alarming. As I leafed through its pages, a stream of signatures fanned by, including my own. That stream extended back to the original Starbird and Warner signatures, marking the founding of the Alpha of Vermont in 1845. (I still marvel that all those signatures fit so compactly in that little book!)

With 43 years separating me from my own signature, the ones from 122 years earlier seemed that much closer, making the ritual of this small book become obvious for its tight-bound community stretching across centuries. Everyone attached to those signatures shared the exact same experience as my own. My eyes rose up and took in the assembled Brothers pressed in (continued on page 10)

## Convention Confirmation

by Jeffrey Chandler, H'08 [jchandle@hamilton.edu](mailto:jchandle@hamilton.edu)

**M**aking the trip to a convention is something I'd been meaning to do for the past two years – Obligations got in the way. School obligations when I was a sophomore: last year, participation in a canoe race with two other Beta Sigs. Being a senior this year and holding the position of chapter president, I knew it was time to make the commitment to go on the road.

A few nights before this year's convention, I went for a walk to finish up the final lines of my poem for the Hicks Oratorical Contest. Reciting the lines to myself over and over in my head, I began to wonder how it would be received Friday night. Gathered there would be people I had never met before ... yet could still be called 'brothers'. This idea confused me and made me stop walking to sit down. I knew what bonded me to the brothers of the Beta, of course. That bond is what I had spent so long thinking about as I wrote my poem. What was it, though, that I would learn about brotherhood beyond Clinton? And why was I driving four hours alone on a rainy night to share this in Vermont? The questions would stay with me for the whole drive, stubbornly resisting answers.

It wasn't until Friday night as I recited the poem at the Hicks that it began to become clearer to me. As I spoke of



*Jeffrey Chandler, H'08*

Icarus, candlelight, and the tales of dead men, I watched looks of curiosity form in the audience. This was why I was speaking here. I had spent all day talking with brothers of the Sigma Phi, but I did not yet know them as my brothers. The experiences I spoke of in my oration were the elements of Sigma Phi to me. They were what I had learned from the brothers before me and what I had taken to heart to share with brothers to come. Each of us within Sigma Phi takes something different to hold on tight to. Though they all came to this Society from different places in life ... and had differing viewpoints on many aspects of our organization ... the brothers I met at Convention all felt the same passion for the bonds. They saw what friendship, love and truth had created and how those values continue to

enrich their lives.

I found myself in the company of a remarkable group of men at Convention 2010. I hope to be able to attend convention again – sooner rather than later – to learn from new brothers and reconnect with those I met at the Alpha of Vermont. In that place, I learned anew that the flame kindled in me in 2008 lives on ... and not just in me, but in each of us, my brothers.

(from page 9) the room. Although they represented a slightly smaller stretch of years and far-flung realms, the connectedness symbolized by the Vermont Tome became apparent anew. These assembled Sigs were likewise a single community through the bonds of this ritual, even if some of their signatures weren't in this particular Tome.

Ritual and pageantry continued to mark the remainder of the weekend. For me, the highlight was The Hicks Oratorical Contest, with the cleverness, wit and emotion that marked each contestant's earnest debate for the prize. Without irony, all these rituals confirmed my thesis of their role in forming the bonds of healthy community. It made me understand the Society better. I understood in a new way why it had survived where others had failed.

Archeological samples from the weekend filled my virtual exhibit chest and confirmed why the sense of community at the Sigma Phi Society is just as strong and healthy as what had attracted me to join 43 years earlier. Despite the small size of the Society, the fact that so many

graduates were in attendance at the Convention, that so many actives had traveled great distances, and that the special nature of the organization was reiterated so many times during the course of the weekend was proof of the shared bonds that arched over time and distance. Just as the ritual of signatures in the Tome connected a continuous line of shared experience over time, likewise all the other pageants and rituals of the Society formed the glue that held the bonds of community together within the armature of physical place. In fact, the more powerful agent of community now pushing 200 years – the Thrice Illustrious Sigma Phi – seemed to hold the virtual world represented by Facebook at bay. It never came up.

It's a fact of life that an alpha character will lead an assembled group. My convention experiences suggested to me – personally and vividly – that, due to its strength in community, our Sigma Phi is the Greek world's Alpha Society.

## Hicks Oratory

by Alexander 'Ax' Hayssen, V'09 [axhayssen@gmail.com](mailto:axhayssen@gmail.com)

*(The Hicks Oratorical Contest is a unique brotherhood highlight for each convention. In this year's Hicks in Burlington, nine different undergrads representing six chapters took part, regaling their large and Sigly audience on Friday evening with poignant, personal viewpoints about this Society. This year's winner was sophomore Ax Hayssen, V'09, from Stratham, Vermont.)*

**W**hen I was pledging just last fall, I was told by brothers and grads alike that the Vermont Sigma Phi house was as tall as it is deep. I marveled at the thought of there being secret levels to the house. The idea was enough for me to throw any reservations I had away, and commit myself to both the Sigma Phi and her secrets.

It has dawned on me, however, during my first year as an active that the Sigma Phi Society is far deeper, and infinitely taller, than I had thought it was during my time as a pledge.

Our Society was founded in 1827 – 183 years ago – before Michigan, Wisconsin, and California, now hosts to some of our strongest chapters – were even parts of the United States! That's before the Civil War, which pitched our nation and Sigs into the bloodiest battles our country has ever fought. During that war, the Alpha of Vermont alone saw 21 of 22 actives march off to war. Only one remained and reluctantly, based on medical unfitness for military duty. These were boys I'm speaking of, younger than most in my current chapter, myself included. Of those from our Society who served, two rose to the rank of major general and six returned from the war having earned the Medal of Honor. Of these, Daniel Butterfield, U'1846, saw his low-keyed, respectful trumpet tune adopted throughout the military. You may have heard of it: "TAPS."

Sig duty and military service – in the Civil War and all which followed – certainly represent authentic slices of this Society's rich history.

There are others. The University of Vermont, for example, is forever indebted to our Society. The men of the Alpha have left their mark on the University. Benedict Auditorium, for example, is named for the Benedict Family, which pioneered its Sig legacy with George Greenville Benedict, V'1845 and – until 1889 – saw nine brothers or close relatives graduate. Buckham Hall was named after Matthew Henry Buckham V'1848, the longest serving President in the University of Vermont's history. Bailey Howe Library is named in honor of David Howe, V'1910. This library only exists because the two previous libraries – Billings Library and Torrey Hall, both given by and named after Sigs – were either outgrown or burned down! Finally, our campus hosts Wheeler House, named after John Brooks Wheeler, V'1845, which most appropriately houses the History Department.

This is one chapter I'm speaking of: one-twelfth of our dear Society. Some older chapters no doubt have a legacy far exceeding Vermont's! With time, the younger



Alexander 'Ax' Hayssen, V'09

ones will surely reach equal representation. What I've offered here is simple tribute to the remarkable depth and impact of the Sigma Phi Society.

In the 183 years since our Society's founding, our universities, colleges, and nation have seen incredible changes. Society history proves that we continue to weather such changes. Our founders built a framework which brought us farther and built us stronger than they could ever have imagined. Judging by the actives and brothers I've met thus far at Convention 2010, I have no qualms in saying that we are indeed an organization "just as tall as it is deep."

Illustrious Sigs are found in all walks of life. We have members who pioneered open-heart surgery and one who owns the Toronto Maple Leafs. We have two actives here in Vermont who have started a highly successful cookie delivery business. I heard recently, a Wisco grad blew through school in three years with a nuclear engineering and physics degree and is at MIT this fall. We have a CEO at Dominos, and a co-chairman at Berkshire Hathaway. We have a branch of Northwestern Mutual called Sigma PhiNancial which employs three actives and three grads. A good friend of mine is entering U.S. Navy Seals training. Another Sig friend started his first company – Career Explorations – at age sixteen. While this short speech only permits me to touch on our history, that history finds Sigs doing amazing work all over the world!

It's no accident that Sigs have tested the sands of time year after year and still remain leaders. I believe two principles, passed on from our founders and exemplified in our actives and grads, have enabled this Society to reach these heights.

First, as men of the Sigma Phi, we have character both of mind and heart. Our lives and values have not and cannot be reserved just for inside our chapters. The Society was never intended to be a boundary for our most sacred values. We strive cautiously, of course, to remain the exclusive band we have always been. But the key ideals instilled and cultivated within our walls are also visible in everything we endeavor beyond our Society. Our practice of Friendship, Love, and Truth must remain so strong and so radiant that those around *(continued on page 12)*

## Comforted By Ritual

by Mike Imirie, M'69 [mimirie@aol.com](mailto:mimirie@aol.com)

I recently saw a marketing placard in Starbucks which advised “We are comforted by our rituals.” It carried a larger-than-life photo of a steaming pumpkin latte cupped by a pair of hands. Starbucks’ meaning was clear; in life, there is a special place for those things which give us comfort.

This fall’s Burlington convention reminded me that such wisdom is no less true within Sigma Phi. The Alpha of Vermont provides a particularly good example, for she is a chapter which takes Sigma Phi tradition very much to heart. During Convention 2010, the Society’s rituals were very much in evidence.

Examples developed as early as Friday night’s late conclave, when the formal, closed doors meeting opened with the brothers standing and singing all three verses of ‘Sigma Phi Ter Inclya.’ The 90-minute program which followed was driven by a formal, prescribed agenda featuring an orderly mix of purpose and mirth. There were Brothers in the Hall from the ’50s, ’60s and ’70s to the present day, and all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the conclave experience ... and the prescribed order of events which drove it.

Another vivid reminder was found in the Sig Sistering which took place on Saturday afternoon. While this Sistering was certainly noteworthy for welcoming four new women into the circle simultaneously (!), that surprising number was only one aspect of the story. A truly poignant demonstration was made by luminaries Chris Williamson, V’79, and his wife, Ginger, VSS’95. Their emotions were clearly visible in the excellent ritual work they performed in welcoming and informing the four new candidates: indeed, as they informed *all* of us gathered in the Eaton Room that afternoon.

A third reminder? Post-Sistering refreshments were served in a formidable silver punch bowl with correspon-

ding silver goblets. Close inspection revealed that it was solid silver, not mere plate – and an authentic product of Tiffany Jewelers, to boot! Closer inspection still disclosed an inscription which explained that it was a gift from Philip Ross, V’1891, the Society’s first General Secretary, 1911-1929. That heirloom set has been used to mark special occasions at the Vermont Alpha ever since.

Travel purists will insist that being in Burlington in the fall is its own reward. While that’s surely true, Convention 2010’s rewards had more to do with it being a weekend full of Sig meaning – a “Starbucks weekend,” if you will – than it being geographically splendid. Sigs are comforted by the rituals they know when those rituals are performed faithfully, often and well. Our initiation service itself dates back to the Society’s earliest days.

The brilliant, heartfelt creation of Chester Averill, U’1828 – a member of the Alpha’s charter pledge class – it has welcomed and informed Sigs ever since. While that service is beautiful for its poetry and purpose, I believe there’s an added

satisfaction for each of us which comes from knowing that every initiated Sig at all chapters in all the years since has been welcomed and bound by those same ritual phrases.

Is it possible that Starbucks’ slogan is wiser than the coffee giant’s marketing mavens know? Sigs are comforted by our rituals, to be sure. Within the Thrice Illustrious, that comfort and our corresponding sense of membership grow with each initiation service, chapter meeting, and shared Sig song. They remind us of our ongoing, Thrice Illustrious commitment. They underscore the singular fraternal priority you and I established long ago. More vividly than any cup of pumpkin latte – no matter how divine – Sig rituals remind us of the important, personal membership choice we made back in the days before we knew anything about life’s other rituals.



(continued from page 11) us recognize and learn from it.

We live in an ever-changing world. The Society has survived war after war and one school policy change after another. We know that Greek Life can change ... and that it will. I have no doubt Sigs can meet these changes just as we have for 183 years. While being flexible regarding changing rules and regulations, we remain true to the values we’ve learned from our founders. This is what has enabled us to remain relevant ... and leaders ... throughout

our nearly two centuries of existence.

I confessed earlier that I’m an enthusiastic student of history. When I look into the window of our past, and marvel at the stature of those here today, I am both proud and confident. I am proud of the depths of our history and our members’ continuing embodiment of Sigma Phi’s most sacred values. I am confident that, because of those time-honored things, this Society will surely rise to new heights in the 21st century.





## News of INTEREST

**Ross Blaufarb, I'80**, lives in Bangkok, Thailand, where he works as a copy editor at an English-language lifestyle magazine. He'd love to hear from any brothers who visit the Land of Smiles. Contact Ross at [rosbla@earthlink.net](mailto:rosbla@earthlink.net) or [rossblaufarb@gmail.com](mailto:rossblaufarb@gmail.com).

After 20 years **Ted Bosley, I'73**, still enjoys his duties as director of The Gamble House in Pasadena, especially when the new pledge class travels 400 miles from the Alpha of California, as they did recently, to learn more about the architects of our Sig home in Berkeley. Ted happily welcomes all Sigs from near and far to the "other" Greene & Greene landmark at 4 Westmoreland Place, Pasadena, CA 91103 ([gamblehouse.org](http://gamblehouse.org)). [bosley@usc.edu](mailto:bosley@usc.edu)

After years of moving around and 12 years living in Texas, **Todd Campau, M'88**, finally signed a contract on a house. This one is in Austin, TX. "It won't be ready until spring 2011," Todd advises, "but when it is, I'll be able to host Sigs visiting the 'Live Music Capitol of the World.'" [toddndallas@hotmail.com](mailto:toddndallas@hotmail.com)

**Alec Denton, H'04**, is looking forward to graduating from Vanderbilt University Law School, where he studied appellate and class action litigation. After his December 2010 graduation, he is hoping to practice in those or related areas, and he would love to do so in the company of other legal-minded Sigs. He currently resides at 419 Village at Vanderbilt, Nashville, TN 37212, and is available at [alexander.f.denton@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:alexander.f.denton@vanderbilt.edu).

Veteran Ford executive **Karl Gigante, M'86**, is on the move again. In a sixth foreign service assignment over a 20-year career, this move will take him from Buenos Aires to Sao Paulo, where he will serve as director of commodities Purchasing for Ford South America. Previously, Karl was Director

of Purchasing for Ford Argentina. Before that, he served with Ford in a purchasing capacity in Thailand. Karl's not complaining: "While the global odyssey I'm on was never part of my plan, I've lived and traveled in parts of the world I'd never have been able to visit if I hadn't raised my hand and volunteered to go to Brazil 17 years ago!" [kgigante@ford.com](mailto:kgigante@ford.com)

Big news at the home of Sarah and **Joe Grossman, M'96**. On 20 September, Joe reported: "Sarah just gave birth to a beautiful baby daughter named Hannah Shoshana – our first child. My wife and I are both in medical school at Brown University. I'm in third year; she's in fourth. We're adding 'parenting' to the very top of our demanding 'to do' list, right now!" The Grossmans live in Providence, Rhode Island. [josephgrossman@gmail.com](mailto:josephgrossman@gmail.com)

**Ryan Johnson, M '99**, made the long-distance trek from Kabul, Afghanistan, where he works, to Chicago, IL, to attend the wedding of **Jon Sabol, M'01**, in early October. **Anthony Cece, M'94**, was also in attendance. Ryan notes, "It was one for the ages; a great time was had by all." Wearing his unfailing "host with the most" hat, Ryan adds: "Wandering birds are more than welcome to stop by and visit me any time." [ryan.johnson@sky-wall.com](mailto:ryan.johnson@sky-wall.com)

At press time, the ever resolute and robust Larry Ikard, H'94, reported: "Not sure how interesting it is to others, but I'm running my fifth NYC Marathon on Sunday 7 November. So far it seems like it's me, **Phil Smyth, H'84**, and **Jean Gruss, H86**. Do other Sigs run this race?" [likard@gmail.com](mailto:likard@gmail.com)

Isn't it Kermit the Frog who has always maintained "It's not easy being green"? **Michael Klement, M'78**, demurs. He advises with pride that his residential architectural design firm, Ann Arbor based Architectural Resource, has recently completed Michigan's 3rd USGBC LEED for Homes Platinum certified whole house residential remodel. ('Platinum' homes achieve the highest standards of third party green certification, including energy performance.) Happily, Architectural

Resource was also responsible for Michigan's 1st and 2nd such homes, and construction will begin this year on another ... with all due respect to Kermit! Michael can be reached at [mklement@architecturalresource.com](mailto:mklement@architecturalresource.com)

The Michelin Guide 2011 provided some very good reading for **Christopher Kostow, H'96**. That accomplished gentleman is the chef at St. Helena, California's The Restaurant at Meadowood, which has earned a coveted, oh-so-rare three stars from the always critical folks at Michelin! A Chicago native, Christopher says he's been cooking since the age of 14. A Hamilton College graduate with a degree in philosophy, Christopher figured that he should turn his part-time passion into a profession immediately after graduation. The rest, as they say, is history. His formula for success along the way? A sense of humor, perhaps. Asked what goes into his best dishes, the accomplished chef replied: "50% inspiration; 50% angst!" The chef receives mail at 14820 Caminito Lorren, Del Mar, CA, 92014.



*Christopher Kostow, H'96*

There is no one is fonder or more respectful of Toyota's Prius than Glens Falls, NY, dentist **Tony Romanazzi, U'76**. He's owned one for so long ... and loved the fuel efficiency so much – that he's been commissioned by a White River (VT) Toyota dealer to script and star in a video which teaches the best way to drive a Prius for maximum fuel efficiency! Congratulations may be sent in – and autographs may be requested – by reaching the always affable Dr. Romaazzi at this e-mail address: [romanquattro@gmail.com](mailto:romanquattro@gmail.com)

**Eric Sharfstein U'93**, files this Sigly report: "I'm still in NYC. After getting hit by the 'layoff monster' earlier this year, I'm searching for a job again in the communications/media relations field. While I'm at it, I'm continuing to work on meeting a nice Jewish girl. I see many Alpha of New York Sigs on a regular basis. If you find yourself in NYC, send me an e-mail at: [connect\\_eric@hotmail.com](mailto:connect_eric@hotmail.com)."

**Pete Smith, U'67**, combines 'fraternity' with 'family' in the following report: "I wanted to let you know that my daughter, Diana Smith, was married on 17 July in Johnstown, NY. In attendance, of course, were the "Unholy Three" of the Alpha of New York – **Len Kagan, U'66**, **Steve Schultz, U'68**, and myself – who have teamed up to perform every initiation ceremony at the Alpha since the passing of our beloved



**Wink Mayer, L'1910**. The attached photo was taken at the reception with our wives, all of whom are Sig Sisters. From left to right are Annie Crowell, Sig Sister and wife of Steve Shultz; Steve, Jane Smith (the mother of the

bride) and a Sig Sister, myself (the proud father of the bride), Cara Kagan, a Sig Sister and worthy wife of Len Kagan and – of course! – the inestimable Brother Kagan." [psmith85@nycap.rr.com](mailto:psmith85@nycap.rr.com)

## Society Considers New Catalogue

**T**he Standing & Advisory Committee has a plan to replace a small but important reference in the lives of Sigs.

The Sigma Phi Catalogue was last published in 1977. Small in size, you might say that this blue hardback nonetheless carries the weight ... and the history ... of Sigma Phi within. It very probably shaped your earliest view of this Society when you were an impressionable newcomer.

The S&A hopes to soon partner with Publishing Concepts (PCI) of Dallas, Texas, to create a worthy successor. This successor periodical will be a full year in the making, and will be driven by personal surveys via mail or e-mail to each locatable member.

In that event, it follows that you'll want your current contact information to be on file with the Society's national office. If you have new address particulars, visit our [www.sigmaphi.org](http://www.sigmaphi.org) website and update, posthaste!

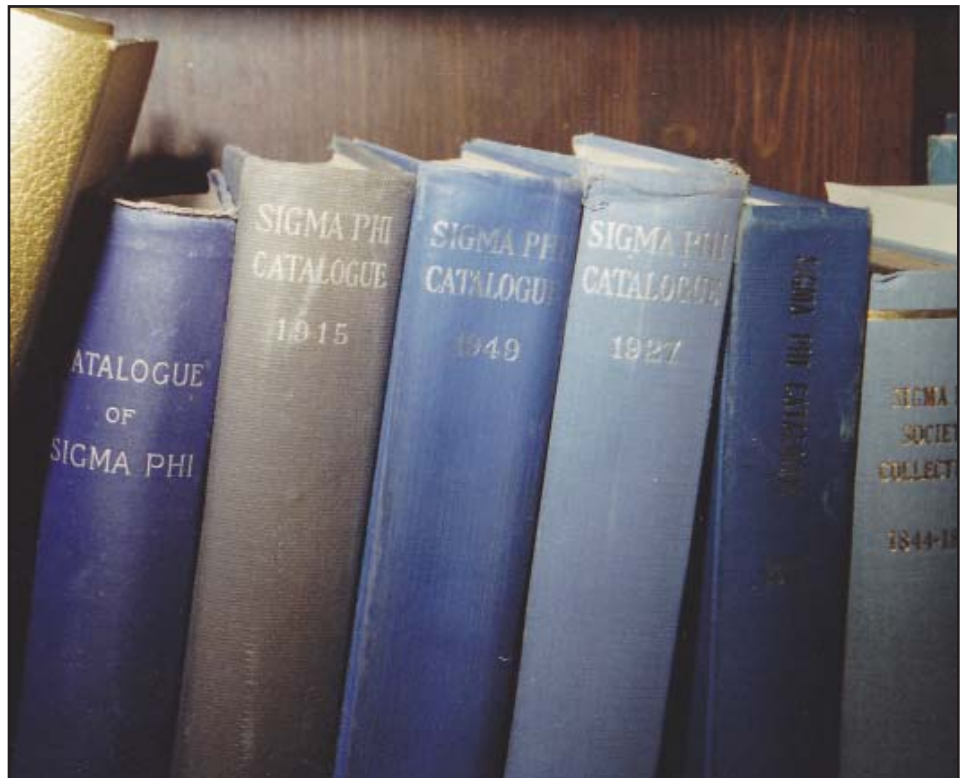
We hope that this important effort can begin shortly after the new year. Let's do all we can, Brothers, to make the new Sigma Phi Catalogue a representative successor to those of 1977, 1949, 1929, 1891 and even earlier.

Together, let's work to create a historical record that can represent this Society well and stand the test of time.

When the time comes and that envelope from PCI makes its way to your mailbox or in-basket, your

prompt and Thrice Illustrious cooperation is earnestly solicited.

For the latest Catalogue information, contact General Secretary Scott McCrae, V'82, at this e-mail address: [cottmccrae@comcast.net](mailto:cottmccrae@comcast.net)



We have this report from **Lloyd Stamy, S'70**. "I had the splendid opportunity to take part in an exceedingly funny play called 'Twentieth Century' with The Stage Right Players of Pittsburgh in early October. Although absent from the stage now for 13 years, the allure of greasepaint and a stage kiss with a gal young enough to be my daughter was far too strong for me to resist. (By the way, after the kiss, she slaps me silly in a scene that a number of friends (?) have insisted was easily worth the price of admission!) As an added benefit, my costume found me wearing an excellent old hat – finally, an opportunity to cover my bald head!" [stamy@csmckee.com](mailto:stamy@csmckee.com)

**Sean Tice, H'03**, has been hard at work developing Brooklyn Slate Company (<http://www.chantyce.com>), a manufacturer of slate cheese boards and coasters for restaurants and gourmet shops. Since co-founding the company with his partner a year ago, the company's products have made their way into dozens of cheese and gourmet shops across 13 states, and this fall will make their national debut with the addition of Williams-Sonoma and Whole Foods. [seantice@gmail.com](mailto:seantice@gmail.com)

**Lew Towler, M'47**, has celebrated another pastoral milestone. This summer, Lew took part in his 55th class reunion at the Virginia Theological Seminary in Alexandria, Va. He writes: "In June, 1955, 60 of us (all male, women were admitted later) received our Divinity Degrees from VTS. Around the gothic arch over the chapel's altar are the words GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL. As students, we looked at these words often, anticipating when we would try to put into action those words of Jesus. On graduation day so many years ago, we looked at those words again and said to ourselves, "Now I am going to do that." Last week, nine of us – plus six wives and one son – came back to the Seminary. As we sat in the chapel and saw those words over the altar, we thought with some satisfaction: 'Been there; done that.' I was especially happy to meet the younger alums –



women and men who had graduated the past five years – and to witness the energy and enthusiasm they were bringing to their experience as pastors." [lewtowler@live.com](mailto:lewtowler@live.com)


We have this update from **Rick Wienckowski, M'70**. "Am still working at 59. No thoughts of retirement because I'm still having fun as CFO of Hills Pet Nutrition, Inc, a Colgate Palmolive subsidiary. Our company designs, makes and markets the Science Diet and Prescription Diet brands of pet nutrition products. We

have operations around the world, so I spend way too much time traveling to the Far East and central Europe. Sue and I live in Topeka, Kansas, where we've been for 15 years. We are avid golfers, although not as good as we would like to be. With Kansas' winter at the doorstep, that's not likely to change much before next spring." [rwienckowski@cox.net](mailto:rwienckowski@cox.net)

**Doniel Winter, I '94**, has a new job. He's retired from editing TV commercials in Los Angeles and moved to Asheville, North Carolina, to be the proprietor of a family business, ASIA Bed & Spa, a boutique Bed and Breakfast Spa: [www.ashevillespa.com](http://www.ashevillespa.com). Wandering Birds are always welcome. Contact Doniel directly @ 323-810-0836. Doniel Winter, 128 Hillside Street, Asheville, NC, 28801. FLT. [pearl2k@hotmail.com](mailto:pearl2k@hotmail.com)

**Grant Zubritsky, H'04**, continues to pursue his music career in Brooklyn, New York. In addition to his main band, Monuments ([www.monumentsmusic.com](http://www.monumentsmusic.com)), Grant continues to tour and play around New York with various other musicians. His website highlights all his performances and discography. [www.grzlstar.com](http://www.grzlstar.com) (site built by Sean Tice H'03). [grantzubritsky@gmail.com](mailto:grantzubritsky@gmail.com)





## Never Forget These Brothers

Alfred Bernard III, S'59 . . . . . 11 Nov 05	Richard A. Hunsdorfer, W'41 . . . . . 21 Jan 10
Robert L. Bienert, G'39	Nelson C. Hyde Jr., H'50 . . . . . 3 Sept 05
Peter N. Blumenfeld, G'85 . . . . . 17 Nov 04	William A. Keiss Jr., G'47 . . . . . 10 Jun 08
Clifton R. Brooks Sr., F'44 . . . . . 8 May 09	Oscar R. Kruesi, U'42 . . . . . 27 Jun 10
Willard H. Connor, V'32 . . . . . 30 Aug 10	William L. MacVane Jr., W'34 . . . . . 1 Aug 10
Edward D. Czaja, U'67 . . . . . 3 Jun 08	Edward L. Nyhagen, G'46 . . . . . 15 Mar 10
Robert M. Dunn Jr., W'57 . . . . . 18 Feb 10	Montgomery G. Pooley Sr., H'35 . . . . . 28 Jan 09
Lawrence F. Edgerton Jr., V'44	Ralph W. Prince MD, W'38 . . . . . 2 Dec 08
William Everdell III, W'34 . . . . . 30 Sept 10	David B. Stewart, I'40 . . . . . 1 Oct 10
Robert J. Harten, G'47	William D. VanIngen, G'50 . . . . . 29 Jul 07
Robert D. Hartshorne Jr., H'42 . . . . . 19 Feb 10	Charles D. Warner Jr., V'43 . . . . . 26 Mar 10
Franklin K. Hoyt, W'27 . . . . . 6 Jan 10	Richard C. Weiler, L'42 . . . . . 10 Aug 97
William H. Hudson, W'47 . . . . . 3 Sept 10	

## Sigma Phi FLAME

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### Nominations Open for Distinguished Sig and David Brown 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, is to recognize and honor Sigma Phi alumni for lifetime achievements that reflect Sigma Phi's values and bring 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, 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 Sigma Phi Service Award, named for longtime 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 Ted Bosley, I'73, Wally Gates, V'50, Calhoun L.H. Howard, S'54, Mike Imirie, M'69, Rex Jones, F'72, George Mercer, M'68, Sam Moore, F'70, Steve Moore, V'41, Jim Jenkins, S'58, and Doug Tudhope, V'47.

Nominations are due by July 1 and welcome sooner. Any individual or group may make them, 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 Dan Neumann F'71, the Society's Awards Co-chairman, who may also be contacted concerning additional details at [dca120@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dca120@sbcglobal.net) or 120 Campbell Road, Trumbull, Connecticut 06611.

## 2010 Dues Notice

As 2010 draws to a close, some facets of our remarkable Society remain constant.

Brotherhood. Sharing. Expanded horizons. A profound and thankful awareness for the remarkable fraternal vision given birth by Brothers Bowie, Bowie, Cromwell and Witherspoon 183 years ago. And the ongoing need for ... your personal support.

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

If you haven't yet responded to the dues letter sent earlier by Society Chairman Marshall Solem, F'79, please invest a moment now. Mail your dues check (\$50 before 2005; \$30 for those initiated after), payable to Sigma Phi Society, to Sigma Phi, P. O. Box 4633, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-4633.

*Esto!*