

Psidelights

Restructuring
Update

Psi Chapter • Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity • The Pennsylvania State University • State College, Pa. • October 2000 • Vol. I, No. 14

An Important Message from our New Corporation President, Otto Grupp '51

Dear Fellow Phi Kaps,

The information that follows is known to many of you, however for others it may be the first time you have been notified of the drastic set of circumstances that precipitated the direction we had to follow to guarantee that our beloved Psi Chapter will survive at Penn State for future generations of Skull brothers.

I want to assure you that the past members of the Corporation Board, plus additional volunteers, agonized long and hard over the events that occurred during the past three years that resulted in the final decision to suspend Psi Chapter for three years, and to direct our efforts to the recolonization process in the year 2003. On a national level this is not the first time a similar set of circumstances has occurred for Phi Kappa Sigma, or for other fraternities both at Penn State and nationally. A case study would be the Phi Kappa Sigma Alpha chapter at the University of Pennsylvania as recently as 1994. After a three-year hiatus of renting their chapter house to a sorority, and with the help of our National office, the Alpha house recolonized with a full complement of pledges/brothers. Today they are an active and energetic part of the IFC at Penn.

I am pleased to accept the position of president of the newly reorganized Corporate Board. As the saying goes, "We are experiencing a temporary inconvenience for the purpose of a permanent improvement." I hope all of you receiving this issue of *Psidelights* will not despair, but accept this new direction with an open and confident mindset for the future.

Please let me know if you will help us during the next critical three-year period. Our success will only be achieved with your support.

Home address: 108 W. Gillam Avenue, Langhorne, PA 19047

Office: 215-741-5433; 800-875-5433

E-mail: OHGEEIII@aol.com

In closing, many of the names mentioned in this issue of *Psidelights*, as well as many more of our predecessors, have devoted much time and effort to our successful heritage. I want to thank each of you, and single out Sean Lacey '78 for special kudos, on a job well done.

Fraternally yours,

Otto Grupp III '51

Phi Kap 2000: A Year of Restructuring

This year, Psi Chapter is restructuring to better serve our alumni in the future. This restructuring is a three-step process.

- 1) We have rented the House to another fraternity for a three-year period. **We ask all our alumni to refrain from visiting the house during this period except for special occasions such as our "Housecoming" on November 18.**
- 2) We have reorganized the Corporation Board.
- 3) We have established an Alumni Association.

These steps have been taken to assure the survival of Phi Kap at Penn State and to better position ourselves for the challenges of the new millennium.

Renting the Chapter House

Beginning with the fall 2000 semester, we are renting the Chapter House to Kappa Alpha fraternity for a three-year period.

This decision was made due to the low number of brothers living in the House over the last several years, the poor condition of the House, and via an agreement with the IFC. This arrangement with KA is a very positive step. It financially benefits the Corporation and allows us to make the needed repairs and renovations to the House, while maintaining ownership of the House. At the same time, it allows us to focus on future recruiting of undergraduates and on your alumni needs.

Homecoming

Due to the restructuring and the leasing agreement with KA, we will not be hosting any activities during Penn State's Homecoming Weekend (October 20-23), instead... please join us for

"Housecoming" - November 18 at the House.

The Alumni Association will be hosting drinks and a catered dinner at the House on Saturday, November 18, at 8 p.m., following the Michigan State game.

Cost of the evening is \$25 per brother, or \$50 per couple or family.

**You must RSVP to Michael Rycheck by November 4
(718-625-6436; mrycheck@aol.com).**

Checks should be payable to Phi Kappa Sigma and sent to Chris Genovese, 95 Olive Drive, Lynbrook, NY 11563, **no later than November 4.**

Reorganizing the Corporation Board

We are pleased to announce the new Corporation Board:

Otto Grupp '51
President

Michael Rychek '87
Vice President
Chris Genovese '87
Treasurer

Eric Friberg '91
Board Member
Tom Hebel '77
Board Member
Lance Kandler '88
Board Member
David Kayle '00
Board Member
Sean Lacey '78
Board Member

We want to thank the following for their past efforts on the Corporation Board:

Dan Dygart '88
Lou Matlou '88
Kevin Olsavsky '86
John Stuntebeck '94
Linc Taylor '93

A special thanks to Sean Lacey '78 who has served as president for the last 10 years. During Sean's tenure, the new fire sprinkler system was installed, six of the sleeping rooms were renovated, as well as providing overall guidance to the Board and the chapter house. Sean will continue to serve as a board member. Also a special thanks to Kevin Olsavsky who has done a great job in working with National on our behalf. Kevin is now joining our Alumni Association.

Alumni Association Board Forming

The Alumni Board is forming and will be completed by the end of November. So far our first two board members are Kevin Olsavsky '86 and George Bodenger '79.

We are still looking for four more members to join the Alumni Association Board. We have reserved a slot for a war years' representative. **If you are interested in joining, please contact Kevin Olsavsky at kmolsavsky@aol.com, or phone him at 215-592-9611.**

What this means to the Alumni

- **IMPROVED COMMUNICATION.** With the formation of the Alumni Association, we will make it easier for you to stay in touch with fellow alumni. All alumni association members will continue to receive *Psidelights*. In addition, we have set up a Psi Chapter alumni web site at: **www.pennstate_phikap.com**. The password to access the alumni listings is: CORKY.
- **MORE ALUMNI GATHERINGS.** We plan on having future gatherings in NYC, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and State College.

Alumni Association 2000 Join your Brothers now!!!!

Join the association and: continue to receive *Psidelights*, receive the recognition of being a contributor to the bone, and receive invites to alumni association events. The cost is only \$75 per year (based on a calendar year). Your donations help support the web page, the printing and mailing of *Psidelights*, the organizing of future alumni events, and special purchases for the House, i.e.... new furniture, etc....

House Update - Renovations.....

Over the summer and during the fall semester, we have begun restoring the House. Recent renovations and clean-up include:

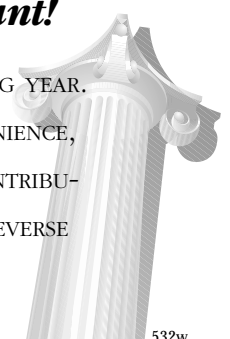
- wiring all rooms for the Ethernet
- sanding, repairing, and refinishing the hardwood floors on the first floor
- repairing and refinishing all the club room furniture, and purchasing two new leather chairs, cleaning the carpets and the curtains
- replacing all four chandeliers on the first floor
- repairing, plastering and painting all the rooms
- adding additional security lighting to the outside and new windows in the downstairs party room
- cleaning out the attic and the quag
- refurbishing the kitchen, with a new ceiling, new microwaves and fixing all the appliances
- landscaping the front yard
- repairing sleeping rooms, including replacing some wood floors
- upgrading and repairing electric and plumbing

We plan on continuing the renovations next semester, with the renovation of the bathrooms.

Your alumni dues are important!

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE 2000 GIVING YEAR.

A CONTRIBUTION FORM IS ENCLOSED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, ALONG WITH A POSTAGE-PAID ENVELOPE. A LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS THROUGH AUGUST 31 CAN BE FOUND ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THE FORM. YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE PSI CHAPTER IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.



Psidelights is published semiannually for the members and friends of Psi Chapter of Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity, 234 E. Beaver Ave., State College, PA 16801. Address changes, news items, photos and contributions are always welcome and may be sent in the enclosed envelope or mailed to **Phi Kappa Sigma Fraternity, Alumni Records Office, P.O. Box 296, State College, PA 16804-0296.**

A Letter from Outgoing President Sean Lacey '78

It's been 10 years that I have served as president of Psi Chapter's Alumni Corporation, and there have been many changes. Sadly, I must report to you that we no longer have an active undergraduate chapter at Penn State. This past summer the other members of the Board and I faced the reality that the undergraduate chapter could no longer remain open. Low membership numbers and an agreement with Penn State's Interfraternity Council made it impossible for us to sustain the chapter with its present members.

What happened? In 1990 we faced the loss of our long-time, on-site Chapter Advisor Ron Tirabassi. We struggled for several years without an advisor, and the Alumni Board had to pick up the day-to-day support of the undergraduates to maintain the fraternity. Since the early 1990s there has never been more than 30 brothers living in the house at one time. This low membership caused the undergraduate chapter to remain below the "break even" point and the Alumni Corporation has struggled financially to keep the house open and work to increase the number of members.

In 1993 we made significant fire, safety and health renovations to the chapter house to comply with Building Code enforcement. This required us to take out a mortgage of \$275,000. In the fall of 1995 and again in the fall of 1999, the Alumni Board worked with National Headquarters to assist the active chapter in rush, in an effort to increase membership. During this time period, we also initiated a fund raiser which never really got off the ground, as alumni were hesitant to make donations to what they perceived to be an undergraduate chapter not up to traditional Phi Kap standards.

In May of 1999 we were notified of allegations made by a former member against brothers living in the house at the time. While the dispute centered around a "falling out" between individuals, the charges made by the former brother against the others had to be investigated under the University's code of conduct and Phi Kappa Sigma's "no hazing" policy. After many months of work between the Alumni Board, the Interfraternity Council, and Phi Kap National it was apparent that the actions we would have to take would not leave the undergraduate chapter viable any longer. Early this summer, we reached an agreement with the IFC that we would disband the undergraduate chapter, with the right to recolonize in three years. Our fraternity was never cited for any wrongdoing or hazing.

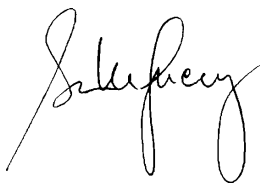
Realizing that we could not overcome the untenable position that the undergraduate members had placed on the fraternity, the Board took the steps necessary to preserve the chapter house by negotiating a three-year lease with Kappa Alpha. The money that we will be paid for renting out the house will allow us to make some repairs to the house while building our financial reserves. We will be charting a course for Phi Kap's return to Penn State, and exploring which direction to take the undergraduate chapter in the future.

With the focus of the Alumni Corporation shifting from working to keep the undergraduate chapter viable, toward rebuilding our finances and planning for the future, I am taking this opportunity to step down and take a position on the Board of Directors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have worked so hard over the years with me to keep Phi Kap afloat. It seemed that almost every year we faced a new crisis that should have closed the fraternity down, and somehow we found a way to keep it going for another year. The work of Alumni John Hellmann '77, Tom Hebel '77, Mike Rycheck '87 and Otto Grupp III '51 over the last 10 years has been invaluable to myself and all members of our fraternity. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank them.

I encourage you to support incoming President Otto Grupp and the other members of the Board as we work to keep our alumni and fraternity together, despite not having an active undergraduate chapter. We still have the memories and bonds that tie us all together as Phi Kaps, and we still own the chapter house that made it all possible.

Stellis Aqueus Durando - We are "Equal to the Stars in Endurance"

Fraternally,



Late-Breaking News

Brother Ralph Van Horne '75 invites all Psi Chapter alumni to his **Homecoming tailgate on October 21**. He will be hosting the tailgate in **section 4167 and 4168**, which is across from Curtin Road in the South Parking lot. We all thank Brother Van Horne for this invitation. You can reach brother Van Horne though his website at: www.psutailgate.com.

Say What?!?!?!?!?

Several of our State College alumni have alerted us that in a recent article on fraternities in the State College paper, it was printed that Phi Kappa Sigma had been banned from PSU for three years due to hazing. **THIS IS NOT TRUE!!**

THE FACTS ARE:

In the summer of 1999, a brother accused several individuals of hazing during the fall 1998 semester. We asked these individuals not to return to the chapter house and they were disaffiliated. We worked closely with both IFC and Phi Kap National to ensure there was no hazing during the '99/00 school year. Neither Penn State nor IFC has found Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity guilty of hazing, nor were any charges ever brought against the fraternity. We reached an agreement with the IFC that we would recolonize in three years. This gives us a clean slate and allows us to attract and recruit the type of Phi Kap who we want living in our House.