



new york alpha news

NY Alpha Alumni Association • Cornell University

Don't Miss It!

Reunion is just two months away, June 7–10 (see schedule below). It's a great time of year in Ithaca, and we're making plans for events at Hillcrest to make it memorable. We encourage all of you to stay engaged and support the work of NY Alpha!

Each year we offer a little more incentive to increase participation during the long weekend. Over the last five years, we have had more participation each year. This June, we are expecting another great turnout.

- Friday, June 8:** 1:00 p.m. until dark
Open house / family day / Q&A
- Saturday, June 9:** doors open at noon
Board meeting: 2:00 p.m.
Reception: 4:00 p.m.

This year's highlight will be the grand opening of our new deck. This alone should be reason enough to attend. In reflecting on my time at Hillcrest, I hosted many memorable events on the deck as many chairman. A few freshman tasks come to mind. This fabulous space still offers the best lake view at Cornell.

It doesn't have to be your reunion year for you to visit Hillcrest on this June weekend! Several members of the NY Alpha board have formed an ΣAE "Continuous Reunion Club." We come back every year because we have so much fun! In fact, you can have more fun in non-reunion years because there are fewer class-based social obligations—large events that are enjoyable but are not anything like being back at Hillcrest with a group of brothers. That's an incomparable experience that unites us across generations.

Please join us! If I can be of any assistance in your planning, please contact me.

Ron Skalko '73
rls73@comcast.net

Victim or Player?



The 2018 year has been a tough one for New York Alpha so far. In January, we learned that the application to form a new colony had not been approved. In February, we learned that ΣAM would be housed temporarily at Hillcrest. In March, *The Cornell Daily Sun* ran a "Guest Room" column calling on the Cornell administration to ban Greek life for good. (A response calling instead for reform was published the next day.) In any case, we haven't had a great first quarter. Reactions I have heard from alumni to all of this range from anger to dismay to resignation.

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"There are several reasons to be optimistic."

We have done our best to keep you abreast of these developments, but let me provide some additional facts that may help you see the whole picture. I have had conversations with the co-chair of the Growth Committee, the director of the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life and the vice president of Student and Campus Life to try to understand the rationale behind their recent decisions.

First, let's deal with the decision to house ΣAM at Hillcrest. The university is building a new student housing project on North Campus. The current ΣAM house (which, like Hillcrest, is university owned) is in the footprint of that project and will be demolished. With the two decisions coming so close together, it is easy to speculate that the rejection of our application was driven by the need for temporary housing for ΣAM. I posed this question directly and was told unequivocally that the two

decisions were independent. The use of Hillcrest for ΣAM was not considered an option until after the Growth Committee reached its decision. We are working on a letter agreement to cover the period of occupancy and have been assured that a) the arrangement will be temporary, b) ΣAE has the option to occupy Hillcrest when a new colony is established, and c) we will have access to the house for our Reunion Weekend receptions.

Next I want to share what I learned about the decision to reject our application. I had several conversations trying to understand where the application fell short and why it was rejected. A number of positives were noted. The application made by ΣAE National

was described as thorough and professionally presented. The changes made by National, such as the elimination of pledging, were viewed favorably. The strength of our alumni association was recognized as a real plus. While there are, as always, a few areas we could strengthen, no real deficiencies in the application were noted.

So, why were we turned down? It comes down to reputation and attitudes. Nationally, ΣAE's reputation has been tarnished by a series of newsworthy incidents over the last several years. Locally, the memory of the death of George Desdunes dominates our image. (continued on page three)





What's Next? Persevere...Support...and Mobilize!

I know many of us are not happy because of the two low blows we suffered recently, but we must stick together and make things happen. For those of you who are thinking that holding back support from the Hillcrest ΣAE Development Fund will somehow be a hardship for Cornell, let me suggest that it will not. *The impact on Cornell is minimal. But it will certainly be a hardship for NY Alpha.*

As a constructive solution, I recommend that you continue to give as you have before. No one would be more inclined to give up now or decrease their support of our cause than *those of us who are working hard every day* to keep things moving and to get things back to normal with a chapter in place. If you are unable to help us with that, I suggest that a gift in greenbacks is still in vogue. You are welcome to give your time, but I suspect that money is an easier and more practical route for many of you.

This June will be the first time you will have the opportunity to see the new deck if you come to Reunion. We've included photos below, and there are several others

on our website. As promised, this beautiful new deck will make enjoying the view from Hillcrest even better than before. Thanks to all of you who made this possible.

Next on the agenda is the renovation of the chapter room area. This is being designed as a rec room, a place for brothers to "get away from it all." Included in the project are new flooring, walls, ceilings, lighting, and temperature control. Initially we would

Over the next several months, we will be deciding which of many projects to tackle are most needed for our eventual return to Hillcrest. None is of the scope of the Great Hall renovation, new windows, room reconfiguration, deck, or rec room, but all were in the scope of what we promised to alumni, and we need to continue the work.

We need to stand together to get the things done to get us over the application hurdle. For sure this is no easy task in our current state, but we are still working on it, and I hope you will mobilize with us. There is enough to

do for all of us. If you don't have time, then please give money. You all know that's necessary! *Holding back on your giving to Hillcrest will not get the job done. Failure to give to NYA at this point only hurts us.*

If everyone does a little (time or money), we will eventually get where we want to be. If everyone does a lot, we will get there sooner.

Phi Alpha,
Hal Sieling '62
halsieling@aol.com
Brotherhood is for life!

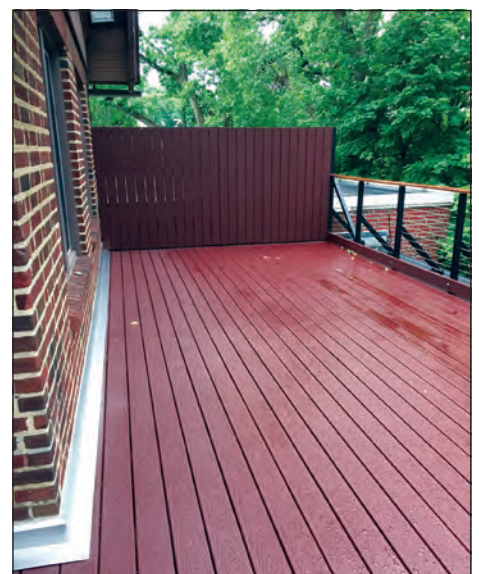
"Failure to give to NYA at this point only hurts us."

not be installing any of the games, TVs, furniture, etc., that will eventually fill the space. Those would be selected at a later time.

In addition, Cornell will be renovating the kitchen this summer using guidelines the facility team put together over the last few years. This project will include reinstallation of the kitchen equipment, a good cleaning, new lighting, some paint, and in some instances replacing old equipment with new. In addition, the dish room will be totally renovated from top to bottom. This whole project will be done at no cost to NY Alpha.



Remember this?



Victim or Player?

(continued from page one)

Furthermore, a series of incidents at Cornell over the last few semesters has fueled the anti-Greek sentiment on campus. This was on full display in the March 12 opinion piece in the *Sun* (which you can read online—but be sure to read the piece that was published the next day as well). Under these circumstances, even a perfect application probably could not have succeeded. I was told as much by my contacts.

Given all this, many of you have asked, “Should we expect things to be any different two years from now?” It’s a fair question, and my answer is, “Yes, at least in areas we control.” As noted in a previous communication, your New York Alpha board adopted the mantra “We’re not going away” because there are several reasons to be optimistic.

First, we have a national organization that strongly supports our return and has a growing body of hard evidence that the changes made are producing the desired outcomes. Second, we have an active group of alumni who have stepped up to difficult circumstances time and again. A subgroup of your board continues to work on “best practices,” and we expect to make a robust presentation of this work in the next application. We are also working on some ideas to highlight the lessons learned from George’s passing. Finally, we have productive contacts at multiple levels in the Cornell administration and hope to gain their support for the next application.

We can’t control the campus climate. We can choose to be victims of that reality or we can choose to be players by working on the things that will increase our chances of success next time. I choose to be a player—are you on the team?

Phi Alpha,
Gus Noojin ’69
gusnoojin3@gmail.com

An Error of Omission...



We forgot to include the information leaflet about matching gift companies in our recent (Reunion) mailing. It is enclosed with this newsletter instead, with our apologies.



Ithaca's calling: "Come back for Reunion!"

ny alpha alumni news & notes

Bob Warner '53 is making plans to attend his 65th reunion in June and is eager to hear from any classmates who are also planning to be there. “Please contact if you’ll be coming back!” he urges. “Life has been good for us. Ann and I will celebrate our 65th anniversary this summer.” Write to Bob at 9278 Coachhouse Lane, Estero, FL 33928, to fine-tune your Reunion 2018 plan.

“At age 83,” writes **Paul Zaferiou '54**, “I’m beginning to ‘gather my thoughts.’” Paul, who transferred to NYU and then Pace, remembers his roommate as **John Henry Harrington '56** and several others, including **Phil “Bud” Ackert '55** (both deceased). He muses, “I used to attend the Cornell–Columbia games (NYC) and Princeton at Princeton.” Paul makes his home at 102A Oliva Court, Novato, CA 94947.

“Sadly, I must report that my dear wife, ‘Barbie,’ passed away in January after 63+ years of marriage,” writes **Allan Blauth '58**, a retired architect. “Several brothers would probably remember her, as our first two years of bliss were spent living in Ithaca and being chaperones at ΣAE house parties!” Allan adds, “We are not going away... Phi Alpha ... don’t throw in the towel. OSFL must be convinced.” Reach him at 806 Foulkeways, Gwynedd, PA 19436, or amblauth@verizon.net.

“I live in Santa Cruz and enjoy life,” reports **Al Stout '58**, who’s planning to come back for his 60th reunion in June. Al joined Lifelong Learners, which has about 800 local members and over 50 interest groups in the area. He adds, “I am in the Philosophy Group, the New Yorker Group, the Context Group, and,

of course, the Wine Group. I remember when the hotelies used to come to dinner late on Thursday, red-faced after their wine-tasting class.” There are some other Cornell people here in California whom I know, including Lois Widom '51, who hosted a Zinck’s night gathering that I attended. “Look forward to seeing you all in June.” (436 Walnut Ave., Santa Cruz, CA 95060; alstout@gmail.com)

Jim Glenn '59 writes, “Gwen and I are blessed with good health and remain active in our Taos community.” They installed a “new toy” at their home last October: “It’s a solar array and uses New Mexico sunshine to generate oodles of electricity to send back to the Kit Carson Electric Company.” Also last year, he and Gwen published their second book about India, this one a memoir

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ny alpha alumni news & notes

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of their experiences living there many years ago. It's called *Harvesting Memories of India, An American Family's Story* and is available on Amazon. (P.O. Box 2270, Taos, NM 87571; jamesglenn@taosnet.com)



Jim Glenn '59 with his solar array.

Myra Maloney Hart '62, the wife of **Kent Hewitt '59**, threw a surprise 80th birthday for Kent and 55 conspiring family and friends at a Newport, Rhode Island, restaurant last July. Kent pursues his volunteer interests, which include birding, photography, sailing, and continuing education. Their recent travels have included Paris, a Rhine River cruise, Chile's Atacama Desert, Easter Island, Vietnam, and Cambodia. The Hewitts make their home at 98 Common St., Belmont, MA 02478. Email Kent at jkh29@cornell.edu.

On January 27, **Bill Kingston '59** threw a party for 24 people in Stamford, Connecticut, to celebrate his 80th birthday. Attending ΣAEs were (left to right in photo below) **Ron Demer '59**, **John Sargent '61**, Bill, and **Paul Grannis '60**. Missing due to other commitments were **Kent Hewitt '59** and **Everett Seyler '60**. Bill's address is 107 Washington Post Dr., Wilton, CT 06897. Email him at wkingston1@aol.com.



Retired architect **Hugh Zimmers '59** writes, "My son and his wife and daughter invited us to move to Vergennes, Vermont (near Middlebury), and participate in raising their four-year-old, so we constructed a two-bedroom apartment in the back of his renovated two-story barn. We like it here and do not feel

as isolated as we were in Philadelphia." Reach Hugh at ezimmers@comcast.net or 304 S. Middlebrook Rd., Vergennes, VT 05491.

Marshal T. Case '64 reports, "As president (volunteer) of the Mennen Environmental Foundation (MEF), I spend most of my time working with staff of 15 conservation science/environmental organizations. Our collective focus is protection of habitats and new challenges with climate change that are having a dramatic negative impact on biodiversity. Restoration of coal surface mined lands is at the top of our list. Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia, is our current highest priority." Marsh's wife, Joanne, serves as MEF's vice president, working from their farm in southern Vermont. "Kayaking the coast of Maine is our fun time," he adds. (marshaltcase@gmail.com; 408 Ehrich Rd., Shaftsbury, VT 05262)

Having moved from Columbus, Ohio, to Jackson, Mississippi, in November, **Charles Hiram Spencer '68** is working full time in pediatrics at Batson Children's Hospital. "Enjoying it still," he writes. "Judy and I have a house on a lake and we (along with a dog and a cat) are enjoying life." He continues, "I support ΣAE alumni with and without an active chapter and will continue to do so. Phi Alpha! Classmates will remember I came to upstate New York from New Orleans. Now I've returned to the area to be close to my roots and family." Get back in touch at spencercharlesh1@gmail.com. His new postal address is 104 Talbot Court, Madison, MS 39110.

"My children, Willie and Rosie, are both getting ready for college," announces **William McCumiskey '70**. "They are class of 2019, both top violinists and lacrosse players." Bill is a golf professional, and he adds, "We'll be spending time visiting colleges this summer—Cornell included." Get in touch at mccumjr@yahoo.com or 85 Capital Heights Rd., Oyster Bay, NY 11771.

Mark Stephany '81 reports that he's looking to retire from his career as a hospital administrator so he can spend "plenty of time" in their condo on Lake Norman in North Carolina, where daughter Erin was expecting their first grandchild in early March. Catch up with him by email at mark.stephany@stny.rr.com. Mark's

Chapter Eternal

George E. Bullwinkel '58
October 16, 2017

Val P. Peline '56
October 31, 2017

Harold George Kunz Jr. '61
January 5, 2018

William Jamison Kerns Jr. '61
March 6, 2018

In Memoriam

When **Bill Kerns '61** passed away in March, his wife, Mary, wrote, "His ΣAE brothers meant a great deal to him. Though he was at Cornell for only two years, his experiences and the friends he made through ΣAE were formative in his life." Bill played lacrosse at Cornell and was the Big Red Bear.

Harold "Spike" Kunz '61 passed away in early January. A serious pre-med student, he certainly helped with the chapter's grade point average, yet he was also among the first to participate in any social occasion, including pre-dinner bridge, road trips, and last-minute movies in downtown Ithaca. As an alum he was active in organizing his class for reunions and came back nearly every year with his wife, Dodie, and daughter, Beth, who currently works at Cornell.

primary residence is still at 212 Lakeview Ave., Watkins Glen, NY 14891.

We're happy to pass along the news that **Nick Fash '01** recently got engaged to Alinne Majorion while trekking through Morocco on camel. An environmental consultant, he reports that he's happily living in Los Angeles, where they spend their free time cooking and hiking. (nickfash22@gmail.com; 1730 Sawtelle Blvd., PH9, Los Angeles, CA 90025)

DON'T FORGET: LOG ON TO WWW.SAE-CORNELL.ORG & UPDATE YOUR PROFILE!