

new york alpha news

NY Alpha Alumni Association • Cornell University

NY Alpha Concludes Agreement with Cornell and ΣAM, Looks to Future



As noted in the last issue of the *NY Alpha News*, Cornell is developing a large student housing project on North Campus, which will require the demolition of the house formerly occupied by Sigma Alpha Mu (ΣAM). The university elected to use Hillcrest to house ΣAM temporarily while a new permanent home is being found. Both the ΣAM house and Hillcrest are owned by the university.

completing the activities noted above will help bolster that claim. This, along with strong support from you, our alumni, and ΣAE National, leaves me with a strong sense of optimism that we can succeed in our quest to regain recognition and establish a strong chapter on the Hill.

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

This summer Cornell, ΣAM, and New York Alpha concluded an agreement covering temporary occupancy of Hillcrest by ΣAM. The key provisions of the agreement are:

- The term is two years (2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years).
- ΣAM will maintain the house to the same standards as NY Alpha has.
- ΣAE will occupy Hillcrest after successful recolonization.
- The NY Alpha Alumni Association will have access to Hillcrest Friday and Saturday of Reunion Weekend for alumni events.

While this is not the outcome any of us would have preferred, the agreement is a reasonable accommodation of each party's interests, and we are committed to making it work. (See Ryan Lombardi's letter to me, at right.)

With that behind us, we now look to the future. We will be permitted to apply for recolonization again in the fall of 2020. We believe we have strong support from ΣAE National to apply at the soonest opportunity. In the meantime, we are concentrating on activities that will strengthen our application next time. ΣAE National has been proactively addressing the issues affecting not only ΣAE but the Greek system nationwide (see related article on page 3). These actions are producing results, and National has a growing body of evidence demonstrating positive outcomes. Ron Skalko '73 is developing a fund to honor the memory of George Desdunes '13 by investing in programs that apply the lessons learned from his passing. Dave Martin '94 has taken on the task of defining a robust chapter-advising model for a new colony. Mike Slusar '86 and his team continue to seek out and document best practices to be applied in a new colony.

I have positive relationships at multiple levels in the Cornell administration. I meet with these folks whenever I am on campus, and my message is: "We want to be part of the solution." Successfully



Cornell University

July 6, 2018

Augustus Y. Noojin III, President
New York Alpha Alumni Association
Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity

Dear Gus:

I write to thank you for your cooperation with the recent transitions involving 122 McGraw Place (Hillcrest). As you know, Cornell's planned expansion of residential housing on north campus created a pressing need for the temporary relocation of Sigma Alpha Mu Fraternity. We will work diligently to find Sigma Alpha Mu a permanent new home so that Hillcrest will be available in anticipation of Sigma Alpha Epsilon returning to the hill.

I recognize and appreciate the history of Hillcrest and its meaningful connection to your alumni. Please know that the collaborative manner in which we have been able to work on this accommodation will be noted in future considerations.

On a more personal note, I have deeply enjoyed getting to know you and your sincere, thoughtful and committed approach to the future of Sigma Alpha Epsilon. Please also extend my thanks to Hal Sieling and Ron Skalko for their support and engagement.

I look forward to our continued conversations about the future. Sending all my best wishes to you and your family for a peaceful summer.

Sincerely,

Ryan Lombardi
Vice President for Student & Campus Life

A VISION FOR EXCELLENCE.... Stand With Us!

I'm happy to report that we had a successful fundraising year in fiscal 2017-18, raising \$76,000. We would like to thank our first-time donors, our continuous donors, and all donors who increased their gift amount this year. Your support this year allowed us to replace the much-needed second-floor deck at Hillcrest. Thanks to consistent support of the Hillcrest ΣAE Development Fund, we have invested over \$1.5 million in improvements to Hillcrest in the last seven years. This is one key element supporting our proposal to recolonize.

If you haven't been to Hillcrest recently, you would be surprised at how much of an impact these gifts have had on the house. The new lake view lounge is an asset that brings the view from the first floor to your eyes as soon as you walk through the front door. The new windows are at once an esthetic and practical improvement—one that was sorely needed for years. Finally, the new deck confirms even to skeptics that Hillcrest has the best lake view in town.

We do have other projects ahead that we need to fund, which of course means that our fundraising need is continuous. Hal's facilities article at right presents a comprehensive accounting of projects recently completed, soon to be completed, and planned. With your continuous support, it can all be done.

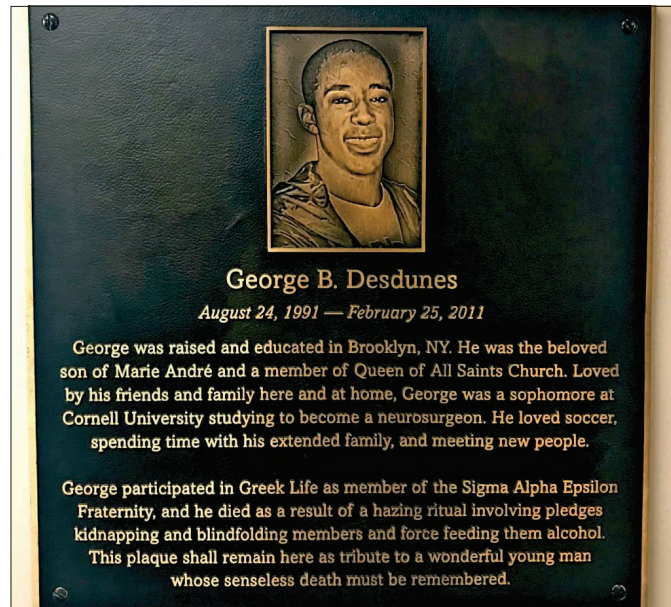
On behalf of the NY Alpha Alumni Association, I would like to thank each of you for your continued interest, support, and donations of both time and treasure. By naming the Hillcrest ΣAE Development Fund as the designee of your next Cornell Fund donation, you can do your part to support our ongoing efforts and update our cherished home. Your tax-deductible gift supports both Cornell and ΣAE and will help us create a highly competitive, first-class residential facility that will be a standout among the other options on campus. This is all part of our vision for excellence...please stand with us!

Ron Skalko '73
Fundraising Chair
rls73@comcast.net

George Desdunes Honored

On September 26, 2018, a plaque honoring the memory of George Desdunes '13 was dedicated and hung in Cornell's Office of Sorority and Fraternity Affairs.

The ceremony was attended by George's mother, Marie Andre, as well as Ryan Lombardi (vice president, student and campus life) and Kent Hubble (former dean of students).



Facilities Improvements Slow Down

Some of you are aware that we recently had an unsuccessful bidding process for the basement rec room project that was scheduled for completion this year. By unsuccessful I mean that all of the estimates were substantially higher than anticipated. The low bid was nearly \$100,000 above the estimate the team was working from, so we did not start the project. Our viewpoint, which is supported by facts, is that the contractors have moved their bids higher this year because they could get away with it. Now that the North Campus project has been given to someone out of the Ithaca area, we might expect better pricing next time. Only time will tell.

The facilities team has talked about some parts of the project that could be modified to get us nearer to our target, but no decisions have been made yet. This does not mean we will not face high bids next time but rather that there are some things we can control, such as flooring, which can be done in a less expensive but still acceptable way.

Several things were done to make sure the kitchen was operational in time for ΣAM

to move in. I'd like to report that all things the committee planned for this project were completed, but they were not. The kitchen was made operational, but the rest of the work was delayed until the Christmas break according to the latest schedule. On the bright side, all of the kitchen reassembly work will be paid for by Cornell.

A few other facilities projects have also been initiated. For example, two cottonwood trees are going to be taken down on the slope to eliminate the debris that results on the roof of the wing. The other potential problem is the damage the branches would cause if they fell onto the house. Timing and the exact plan are being developed.

Also, a radon mitigation system will be installed soon as required by positive test results.

All projects above except for the kitchen work were funded by generous donations from our New York Alpha alumni. Thank you so much for your continued support!

Hal Sieling '62
halsieling@aol.com

A special shout-out to the class of '53...

We extend an apology for our failure to include the class of 1953 in our August letter mentioning reunion classes gathered at Hillcrest in June. We're chagrined to have missed noting that our oldest returning class celebrated its 65th reunion. In attendance were **Bob Warner '53**, who led the charge, with **Peter Fuller '53** and wife Sue also in attendance.

Ron Skalko '73

ΣAE National on the Move

During the last academic year, the ΣAE National Fraternity closed about half a dozen chapters for violations of ΣAE's health and safety code. In each case, the investigation was initiated by the fraternity, and provision for return was negotiated with the respective institution. As a result of these closures and a rash of serious incidents throughout the Greek community, ΣAE declared a moratorium on events with alcohol from December 2017 to February 2018. They used this time to interact with thousands of brothers, alumni and others, seeking to understand the problem and devise solutions.

In March 2018, the fraternity announced initiatives in the areas of leadership, culture, and environment. Some of the key provisions are:

- Extending the reach of in-person educational programs
- A ban on alcohol at events during the first

seven days of each semester, during recruitment activities as well as before, during, and after final exams

- Only beer or wine (not to exceed 15% ABV) at fraternity events, including ancillary houses and events involving parents or alumni

You are encouraged to read the details at the following link: <http://www.sae.net/next-steps>.

It is noteworthy that:

- These initiatives parallel those announced by Cornell President Pollock.
- They were announced before Cornell's initiatives.
- They are more restrictive in terms of the definition of hard alcohol (15% ABV vs 30%).
- They are more expansive by including ancillary houses (e.g., Collegetown).

At the National Leadership Conference this summer, the keynote speakers were the

parents of three students who died in alcohol-related hazing incidents (none at ΣAE). It was very impactful and started some serious conversation about the problem. The delegates left with a mutual commitment to action. This presentation was the centerpiece of National's program for National Hazing Prevention Week (September 24-29).

You are encouraged to watch at least the five-minute video at the following link: <https://therecordonline.net/featured/love-mom-dad-educational-version/>.

It is very moving. These actions are further evidence that ΣAE fully acknowledges the issues affecting the Greek system nationwide—and that it is working proactively to be part of the solution.

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

ny alpha alumni news & notes

After his email account was hacked, **Cal Allen '58** changed his email address: aca.moa3637@gmail.com. He can be reached by postal mail at P.O. Box 1602, Sisters, OR 97759. Cal and wife Marsha came back for his 60th reunion in June, staying with other ΣAE brothers at **Ron Demer's** ('59). "We truly had a fine time."

Bill Standen '58 sent this original color photo (below, right) of Hillcrest taken from FIJI by the late **George Bullwinkel '58**. George was a man of many interests, including flying, photography, and Alfa Romero automobiles. He would love the current Alfa TV commercials with a voice-over of an Italian woman warning the viewer to prepare to be seduced by the Stelvio, Giuila, or Quadrifoglio models.



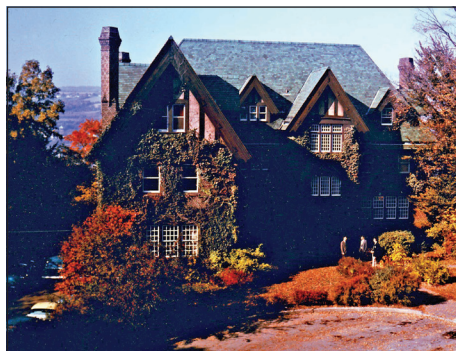
Class of '58 alumni John Denniston, Bob Reinhard, and Brian Elmer (left to right) at Reunion.

A copy of the photo was sent to National and appeared on the cover of the May 1978 *ΣAE Record*. Bill also sent a copy of that issue. The picture was also used on such chapter materials as the brochures giving to prospective brothers during rush. Bill also returned to Cornell and Hillcrest this past June for his 60th reunion. Catch up with him at billstanden126@gmail.com or 119 Penny Creek Dr., Bluffton, SC 29909.

"I have been kind of 'on the shelf' this flying season with a knee issue," reports **Dick Hyde '59**, who continues his hobby of being a passenger in World War II planes on display around the country. "Some damned bone in my right knee failed to fuse with the patella 80 years ago and decided to act up this year. The problem comes and

goes but has kept me from doing a lot of the stuff I enjoy (like walking!). It put me in the hospital for a week this spring during our Florida 'vacation'—where they erroneously treated me for an infection. I would like to attend our 60th reunion (can it really be?) next June if the knee doesn't decide otherwise for me." Cheer him on at richardhyde@aol.com or 7580 Portbury Park Lane, Suwannee, GA 30024.

Hal Sieling '62 writes, "Like the rest of you, I am not happy about the state of our situation, particularly as it applies to occupancy by ΣAM. That simply puts us down another rung on the ladder of optimism. However, I am hopeful that we can learn to deal with it in a manner that is good for both ΣAE & ΣAM for the next two years." Hal makes his home at 7657 Galleon Way, Carlsbad, CA 92009; halsieling@aol.com.



Original color photo of Hillcrest taken by the late George Bullwinkel '58.

We recently heard from **Steve Klein '77**, who enjoyed a meal with **Paul Hayden '77** several months ago in Ann Arbor. "Had not seen Paul since our graduation year—40-plus years ago!" They were joined by Phi Gam alum Joe Bruce '77, whom Steve reconnected with at the 2017 Cornell Reunion. Drop Steve a note at sklein869@gmail.com or 171 S. Lincoln Blvd., Battle Creek, MI 49015.

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ny alpha alumni news & notes

Chapter Eternal



Class of '98 alumni pose for a shot on our new deck.

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Seventeen guys from the class of '98 did it up big for their 20th this year. Thanks to **Kevin Hite '98** for sending us the photo above! Pictured, from left to right, are **Jimmy King, Kyung Moon, Charles Feng, Mitch Kent** (kneeling), **Anthony Jones** (in back), **Erik Yazdani, Kevin, Jared Stern '99, Jared Michalec, Drew Smith '97, Dave Shaw '99, Bryan Cotner '97, Dave Fishman, Dave Tuttle '97, Matt Faris...**and the most important man in the shot, former Chef **Johnny Wright**. What a great photo, taken on Hillcrest's brand new deck with Cayuga Lake visible behind the trees! Not pictured were **Zach Righellis** and **Steve Klein**, who were there but arrived after the photo was taken.

Classmates **Tim Sommers '10** and **Jeremy Dussolliet '10** are enjoying great success in the music industry. Tim continues to produce and write music for such major label artists as Hailee Steinfeld, Grace VanderWaal, Marc E. Bassy, and Madison Beer. Among these was Steinfeld's platinum hit "Most Girls," a song Tim co-wrote with Jeremy. According to Wikipedia, the two are known as Kinetics & One Love, "a hip-hop group and songwriting duo from New York City. They made their commercial debut as songwriters in 2010 by penning the chorus to B.o.B's single, 'Airplanes.'" Reach them by email at tps34@cornell.edu (Tim) and jad236@cornell.edu (Jeremy).

McCormick's, a newly modernized Cornell Dining eatery at the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course, is now offering the dishes you need to congratulate yourself on making it to the 18th hole.

A pencil portrait of the new eatery's namesake, ΣAE **Jack McCormick '57**, is on the wall. Jack was a U.S. Navy LTJG, played varsity golf, was *Cornellian* editor, and was president of Quill & Dagger. He passed away in 2005, leaving a bequest to modernize Moakley House.

Jack's nickname at ΣAE was "Black Jack," a term used to describe Irish people with dark hair and dark eyes thought to be descendants of shipwrecked Spanish Armada sailors of the mid-1500s.



Join us in NYC...

Cornell vs. Columbia Football Game
Saturday, November 17 • 1:00 p.m.
Baker Field on the Columbia campus

Post-game Sy Katz '31 parade starts at 5:30 at Rockefeller Center on Fifth Avenue and ends in front of the Cornell Club, with a concert by the Big Red Band.

The Frozen Apple: Cornell vs. Harvard Hockey Game
Saturday, November 24 • 8:00 p.m.
Madison Square Garden

Tickets:
cornellbigredtickets.universitytickets.com

For more details, go to
www.sae-cornell.org/calendar.asp



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