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Alumni Website:

www.alphamupikap.org

Alpha Musings

ALPHA MU CHAPTER PI KAPPA PHI FRATERNITY
THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
www.alphamupikap.org



STATE COLLEGE, PA.
June 2021

CHAPTER UPDATE

Building Pi Kapp for the future

Brothers,

We wanted to give you all an idea of some of the work being done at the house to maintain the property. Despite the challenges that are obviously confronting everyone, we are taking this time to continue to build relationships with our undergraduates, recruit young men to Pi Kapp for the future, and improve the condition of the house as money and time allow. We continue to move forward. An example of our progress includes the installation of a new flag pole. This will not only honor our country, but also provide more prominent Chapter visibility. Renovations happening in the dining room and party room areas are other examples.

Additionally, we wanted to let you all know that the semester went as well as it could for the undergraduates, and everyone is already working hard to increase occupancy even more for the Fall of 2021. At this point, we have approximately 29 young men interested in living in the house next year. Leases have been prepared and sent out for signatures.

Onward!

Stephen DiOrio '78

Alumni President, The Pi Kappa Phi Alumni Corporation

WE ARE

Save the Date for Homecoming: October 17-23

It's time to start planning to truly reconnect with our Brothers once again, live and in person. Mark your calendar now for Penn State Homecoming 2021: October 17 - 23.

More details will be shared as soon as they are available, but it's not too early to start making your travel plans.



SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

Tom Sottile - Graduating Senior Goes The Extra Mile



Our class of 2021 is nearing graduation and getting ready to join the world's best alumni brotherhood. We recently heard from one of our

amazing seniors, **Tom Sottile**.

Tom Sottile is a senior Finance major in the Smeal College of Business who has been involved with THON on committees and

with Pi Kapp over his four years. This year, Tom had the distinct honor of being one of the THON 2021 dancers, "I always knew I wanted to dance in THON and I have been fortunate enough to be involved in THON every year during my time at Penn State," he said. "For my first THON my freshman year, I was showing my support in the stands, sophomore year I took care of two dancers through volunteering on the Dancer Relations THON committee, and last year I served as a THON chair for Pi Kapp. I am so grateful for the opportunity to dance in THON

2021, represent Pi Kapp, raise awareness for childhood cancer, and be part of something bigger than myself. Throughout the weekend, I will be dancing for Clay and our THON family while keeping in mind all the incredible people I have met through this organization."

Tom was also awarded the David D. Morgan "Extra Mile" National Program by Pi Kappa Phi. The scholarship is awarded to Pi Kappa Phi undergraduate students who are not only excelling in the classroom, but for those who go "the extra mile" in all they do.

FROM THE HOUSE

Congrats to Seniors!



Congrats to our seniors and class of 2021 for graduating this weekend. We're proud of everything you've accomplished and good luck in your next steps!
Seniors - May 12, 2021

We celebrate 116 years ago when Pi Kappa Phi was founded at the College of Charleston, SC and our own Alpha Mu chapter. Happy Founder's Day, boys!
December 10, 2020



See these photos and more on the Chapter's Instagram account. @pikapp_psu

PENN STATE SCORECARD

Pi Kapp Above All-Mens GPA

Penn State's Fraternity and Sorority Life has instituted a Greek Chapter Scorecard that shows a snapshot of key measures for each chapter in the Greek system. Congrats to our actives for maintaining a 3.5 GPA, above the all-men's average! You can find out more at studentaffairs.psu.edu.

Total members and new members: 65

Total new members: 12

Chapter Semester GPA: 3.52

New Member Class Semester GPA: 3.37

Chapter GPA compared to all-men's GPA: Above

Percent below 2.5 GPA: 1.56%

Percent between 2.5-3.0 GPA: 7.81%

Percent above 3.0 GPA: 90.63%

Don't miss out on your opportunity to see old friends. Reconnect using the online directory at www.alphamupikap.org.



94

Years of Alpha Mu Chapter



\$50,000

Annual Fund Goal



\$6,440

Raised as of June 1



47

Alumni Donors Have Given



- 3** Ways for YOU to Give:
- Make a gift online at alphamupikap.org.
 - Call our Donation Hotline at 1-800-975-6699.
 - Mail a check using the enclosed envelope and donation form.

ALUMNI UPDATES

“You can’t make this stuff up.”

Monthly zoom calls filled with Pi Kap stories, jokes, and reunion plans

For the last nine months, Pi Kapps from the late '60s to mid-80s have a standing date on the first Thursday of the month. At 7:00 p.m., a Zoom meeting starts, and one by one, brothers' faces fill the screen. Some are driving home, or finishing dinner, or sitting on their porch. **John Kieser '70** joins, then **Harry Barfoot '77**, **Jack Hickey '74**, and **Gary Bello '69**. They collectively wonder about **John Talone '74**, who just got back from a brothers' getaway in Ocean City, MD, and is late to join the meeting. “Is he hung over?” they ask facetiously. “Did anyone get arrested?” Another one sees **Rick Say '72** and gasps. “Are you drinking coffee?? You'll be up all night!”

It's been 50 +/- years since they've been at Pi Kappa Phi at Penn State and for these brothers—that means four to five decades filled with brotherhood, good times, and memorable stories.

When their annual golf outing was cancelled last fall due to COVID, **John Kieser '70** decided to schedule a Zoom call. It was such a success that the virtual meetups quickly became a monthly feature. “The participants are all brothers from about 1966 to 1980,” John says. “And typically we have about 20 brothers. I try to have a speaker who talks about a given subject and then we just talk about the good times in our lives and Alpha Mu and future get-togethers.”

He says that it's been a great opportunity to renew old friendships with the brothers who went to Penn State with them, and a great way to continue their collective adventures together.

When I talked to John, it was two days before their June Zoom, and he invited me to join. I signed on to the call five minutes early, but a handful of brothers were already there, knee deep in a story that involved a trip to Ocean City over Memorial Day weekend. **John Talone '74**, **Harry Barfoot '77**, **Rick Say '72** (Snake) and **Skip Parks '80** were in a bar, and Skip was wearing a white Penn State shirt. A group of young women came into the bar, saw Skip's shirt and called out, “WE ARE.” **Harry Barfoot '77** says that the women introduced themselves, saying that



they were new grads, on a trip to celebrate their graduation. “Penn State transcends all generations,” he says.

When John introduced me and explained that I was writing a story for Alpha Musings, I asked the brothers what I was dying to know. In a world filled with division, loneliness and disconnection, how have they kept such close, great friendships? How did Pi Kapp play a role in this connection where everyone has a nickname, and knows each other's favorite brand of beer, and remembers their hijinx from junior year? What's the secret sauce?

“Kegs and kegs and kegs,” was the first off-the-cuff reply before **Gary Bello '69** replied. “You have to put our lives in perspective with what the world was like 55 years ago,” he said. “Most of us came from lower middle class families. Most were the first in our families to go to college. Penn State was opening up a whole new world for us. We were very close.”

John Kieser '70 added, “For me, it was the friendships. Some of the best friendships of my life were generated in the house. There's nothing more special than a good friend who can relate to me about how life has been. That's a real benefit for me.”

Bill Sirocky '70 said that having all the brothers living in the house created a lifelong bond. “We did everything together.” **Don Holman '69** added that their connection as pledges taught them respect for authority and an incredible camaraderie within the pledge class. “Yeah, it was like boot camp,” added **Steve Yingling '69**. “We were melded for a common cause.”

That common cause that bonded them

years ago is still going strong. They were happy to plan the 2021 golf trip to Toftrees on August 6. “I know restrictions are lifting,” **Harry Barfoot '77** joked, “But if I'm in a foursome with **Jack Hickey '74**, I'm wearing a mask.” “I sure hope that happens,” Jack deadpanned back.

After talking more about their upcoming trip, **Gary Bello '69** talked to the group about his role as the chair of the development committee for the College of Engineering, and how Penn State alumni — the largest group of active alumni in the world — can help to preserve Penn State's ideals.

The call wrapped up, but not before a brief debate over the veracity of a claim that brothers with high GPAs used to get a celebratory steak dinner. **John Turcheck '69** (Turk) chimed in, saying that he was in charge of buying food, and it really happened. Everyone with a GPA under 3.0 had to eat liver and onions that day.

On the first Thursday of July it will start again — the outlandish stories, jokes, and dogs barking in the background. For these Pi Kapp brothers, it's a great way to keep up with what John calls “these very old and very special friendships.” Want to join? Send your email address to **John Talone '74** at jt@taloneinsurance.com.

On the Call

John Kieser '70
John Turcheck (Turk) '69
Harry Barfoot '77
Dennis Hackett
Gary Bello '69
Mick Say '70
Rick Say ' (Snake) '72
Bill Sirocky (WSIRocky) '70
Jack Hickey '74
Steve Yingling '69
Dave Baker '74
John Turcheck
Don Holman (Nick Knack) '69
John Talone '74
Douglas Forbes '67

ALUMNI UPDATES

Pi Kappa Phi Penn State Hijinks

What were the best nicknames at Alpha Mu, and the top social event the year you graduated? We asked these—and many more—questions on a recent survey and these brothers chimed in with their memories. Read on!

George Herold '50

Memories: I joined Pi Kap (that's what we were known as then) in 1947 after spending my freshman year at Kutztown State Teachers College as a Penn State student. We freshmen were farmed out to the several teachers colleges, due to the huge influx of WW2 vets being discharged and entering college on the G.I. Bill in 1946. My older blood brother, Fred, was one of them, and he had friends already in Pi Kap, so he and I pledged to Pi Kap together.

Last time you saw a classmate: The last time I saw a fellow PiKap was just yesterday on zoom when Fred, my blood and PiKap brother, wished me happy 92nd birthday. He is 94, and in normal times we lunch together



every few weeks and often reminisce and share any news about other PiKaps (most are gone now).

Top social event: The top social event was our

senior Prom, when I asked Ann who was only 17. Much to her older sister's chagrin, Ann got permission from her parents to come to the prom (from Philly). We had a great time, and it was a step forward in our romance which eventually led to our marriage in September 1953. Sadly, she died in 1990 after 37 years of a happy marriage.

Mike Franchell '68

Nicknames: My Nickname was Mouse.

Bert Baloga '88

Nicknames: **Keith Bornmann '87** was known as Catman.

Hal Miller '61 (halmiller4005@gmail.com) wrote to report: "I am now living on Nantucket Island, MA."

FLASHBACK

Alpha Mu in 1960 - Get ready for a Blast from the Past

Check out this '60s shot; doesn't this 1960 Penn State Pi Kapp hangout look far out? Here's some 1960 trivia that'll take you right back.



Penn State Football

The Nittany Lions had a record of 7-3, beat Oregon in the Liberty Bowl 41-12, and outscored their opponents 228 to 113 on the season.

Penn State Tuition

Students paid \$830 in tuition and fees per semester as a full-time student. I'll bet that stings for you 2020s grads...

Top Movies

- *Spartacus*
- *Psycho*
- *Exodus*

Top Songs

- "Theme from A Summer Place" - Percy Faith
- "He'll Have to Go" - Jim Reeves
- "Cathy's Clown" - The Everly Brothers

If you have great photos from your glory days to share, log in to upload them to our photo gallery, or email them to alumninews@affinityconnection.com!

CHAPTER ETERNAL

Axel Swanson III '54



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of **Axel Swanson III '54** into chapter Eternal. We want to extend our deepest sympathies to Axel's family, friends, and loved ones. Thanks to Sue,

Axel's daughter, for writing this touching tribute to him: "My father passed away on

February 15, 2021 at the age of 88. He LOVED Penn State! It's where he met his wife, my mother (they were married for 69 years). He continued to follow the Penn State football program every season. After graduating from Penn State, they moved to Philadelphia, where he worked for an accounting firm. He eventually moved to the suburbs to raise their family and worked for American Olean Tile Company as their Controller. In 1979, he was

promoted to VP of Finance and Treasurer and moved to the parent company, National Gypsum in Dallas, Texas. He retired in 1988 and he and my mother, both avid golfers, travelled the world until my father lost his vision due to giant cell arteritis. My parents moved in with my husband and I two years ago so we could take care of them. A decision I would not change for the world!!"