

the cayugan

new york alpha chapter of phi delta theta

The Summer of Construction: Retaining Wall Project Imminent

Reflecting on the 2009-2010 academic year, I have to say it was quite a good year for New York Alpha. Over the course of the year, 14 upstanding young men have taken the Phikeia oath and joined our great brotherhood. The chapter presently has 51 active members. The next year is going to be an absolutely critical one from a recruitment standpoint, with an exceptionally large senior class of 20 men graduating this May. If you are aware of rising Cornellians who the chapter should be made aware of, please feel free to drop me or the recruitment chairmen an e-mail so that the brotherhood can proactively engage them early in the fall semester!

Since the last issue of *The Cayugan*, we've completed a few projects as well as some important maintenance tasks. At the tail end of the fall term, we completed the network and internet technology updates, and the brotherhood has been enjoying the greatly improved usability of the chapter's computing facilities. Also, thanks to the NYAEFI, the library is being furnished with



new tables and chairs, which should be in place by the end of the semester. I anticipate we'll see some positive results in the academic ranking of New York Alpha among Cornell fraternities in the coming semesters as a result.

In January, we managed to satisfy the City of Ithaca in renewing our annual certificate of compliance after some general maintenance activity. Part of that effort was patching some areas of the roof over the residential section of the house and replacing or repairing some windows that were in urgent need.

We've been engaged with contractors bidding the imminent retaining wall project for the backyard. We will be making the selection of a bid in early-to-mid May, with work to begin in earnest shortly after Reunion (June 10-13). This substantial undertaking will go a long way toward preserving and increasing the utility of the backyard. I am really excited that we are finally going to execute this project, which we've been talking about for the last few years! We are planning to have a ribbon-

cutting ceremony during Homecoming 2010 to celebrate its completion.

In tandem with the construction taking place on the backyard this summer, we will be doing a complete overhaul of the roof over the residential section of the house, including the two-section roof above the kitchen entryway. We will be tearing off the existing roofing, repairing the deck where needed, and installing lifetime architectural shingles. It's not the most glamorous project I can think of, but it's essential and constitutes an important long-term investment in the structure.

Finally, this summer we are replacing 24 of the windows that are in the worst condition throughout the house with Marvin All-Ultrex windows. We have decided to install double-hung windows where possible for a variety of reasons, including increased natural light, better insulation, and more practical allowance for air conditioning during summer months. I'm certain the new windows will look great and serve the brotherhood well, ensuring that 2 Ridgewood Road

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Phi Delt Enjoys a Very Successful Year

It has truly been an honor serving as president of New York Alpha this year. In 2009-2010, we have seen some of the best times in recent years for Phi Delta Theta. House pride is at an all-time high, and the results are both far-reaching and profound. As the year comes to a close, we cannot help but look back at all of our accomplishments.

This year has seen the highest recruitment numbers in two years, and the new brothers have already shown a strong dedication to the fraternity as well as a legitimate desire to contribute. Ivan Dashkov '11, Michael Simms '11, Robert Stitt '11, Thomas Baber '12, Daniel Balentine '12, Nicholas Fuga '12, Charles Rose '12, Johnny Sa '12, Jerome Thomas '12, Gregory Zecchini '12, Thomas Burton '13, Cameron McConkey '13,

Mark Malin '13, and Edward Pyszczynski '13, have each been great additions to the house, and we all look forward to seeing the successes of both their current and future efforts.

Brotherhood bonding has also been very strong this year. Recently inspired by the Winter Olympic Games, the brotherhood took a trip to the Utica Curling Club and participated in a curling match. It served as the athletic event for the spring Phikeia class, and it pitted the active brothers against the pledges. After the match, they all went out to eat at Dinosaur Bar-B-Que in Syracuse to cap off a very fun day. This event serves as only one example



The Phi Delt curlers.

of many that have taken place this year demonstrating that the brotherhood is closer than ever.

Another event that has taken the brotherhood by storm this year is the endurance

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Brotherhood Grows Closer, Stronger

The 2009-2010 school year has so far been host to a fantastic expansion of brotherly love and friendship, thanks in part to the opportunities we have as brotherhood chairs and also to the initiative of other brothers.

The year has been packed full of large-scale events, such as the beautiful semiformal featuring a delicious three-course meal prepared by our chef, Candice, and the Valentine's Day date night that provided brothers with an opportunity to impress their dates. We worked together with our recruitment chairs to put on a sumptuous feast for Thanksgiving that brothers, potential new brothers, and guests enjoyed greatly until falling asleep from the tryptophan in the turkey. We are also in the midst of planning what is sure to be one of the greatest formals of all time, to be held at the traditional Taughanock Farms Inn on May 10.

The brotherhood has also been brought closer together through smaller, more informal events and programs. Brotherhood bowling nights have been an example of these casual events where the brothers get together to hang out and enjoy each other's company in a public setting. Other organized athletic events have given the brothers a chance to be competitive with one another and to win great prizes in a show of their manly strength and fortitude. This friendly competition has encouraged the brothers to strive for greater heights in their physical and mental condi-

tioning. We have also gotten brothers to play squash, further cementing their brotherly bond through sports, and intend on encouraging rampant horseshoes playing in the front yard when the Ithaca weather finally becomes bearable.

We also set up a Netflix account for the house so that brothers could come together and view movies on occasion. This has turned into a resounding success, with multiple brothers instituting movie nights of different themes during the week. The initiative we have had the opportunity to take in our position has become infectious, and other brothers have begun to institute and plan their own events.

Suffice it to say that this year has shown amazing growth in brotherhood among the members of the fraternity. We are closer than we ever have been before, and any disagreements are quickly settled. We strive every day to improve the fraternity life and the happiness of the general brotherhood. We require no other thanks than seeing the joy in the eyes of brothers such as Tom Petek '10 when he has enjoyed an event we organized. We look forward to a great end of the year, and to the lifelong bonds we have solidified with our beloved brothers.

Yours in the Bond,
Matt Carrier '11, 1838
Mike McGuire '11, 1836

Philanthropy is the Name of the Game

Despite a slow start at the outset of the school year, New York Alpha has been making excellent progress toward its goal of greater philanthropic involvement. Just before Christmas, our chapter helped reach out to those in need in Tompkins County. For the Elves Program, which is organized through Cornell University, brothers and friends of the chapter helped purchase necessities and presents for underprivileged children. Sisters from Alpha Chi Omega's Zeta Phi Chapter were kind enough to join us to help wrap and decorate the gifts before donating them. By buying everything from clothes to winterwear and Matchbox cars to stuffed animals, the chapter was able to help grant three children's holiday wishes.

From February 27-28, the brothers of Phi Delta Theta participated in the university-wide Relay for Life. The relay is designed to help raise awareness of the threat of different kinds of cancer and to collect funds to aid in the research that is being done to treat them. Well over half the brotherhood contributed their time and effort to the cause, and as a result, we were able to donate more than \$400 to

this noble cause.

Looking ahead, on May 2, 2010, a team of brothers from New York Alpha is going to participate in the "Tough Mudder" endurance race. The race helps support the Wounded Warrior charity, but through our national fraternity's Iron Phi initiative, we will use any additional contributions and sponsorships we receive to donate to the ALS Association. The ALS Association is our national fraternity's officially affiliated charity, which helps fund awareness of and research into a cure for Lou Gehrig's Disease (ALS).

Additionally, we are going to organize our second beach volleyball tournament on Cornell's North Campus. As we did last year, brothers and other Cornellians will participate in a simple outdoor volleyball tournament, with all proceeds raised through donations and food sales going to the ALS Association. Last year's event was a great success, and we are hoping to have even greater participation this spring.

Yours in the Bond,
Jason Bierig '10, 1825

Reflecting Back on Five Years

It was August 2005 when I began my college career at Cornell. Coming from Arizona, Cornell's campus was a new world for me, and I was thrown into it headfirst and alone. Working an off-campus job and taking on an engineering workload was less than conducive to making friends and taking advantage of the resources Cornell had to offer. And in the funny way life seems to operate, I was introduced to the organization that has sculpted who I am as a college man and will continue to affect how I live my life, long after my days at Cornell are done.

Joining Phi Delta Theta was the most unexpected and the best single decision I made while at Cornell. I was skeptical of the Greek system; I saw fraternities only for their stereotypes and vowed to never waste my time or money by joining one. However, I was able to interact with the brothers of Phi Delta Theta all of fall semester through invitations to events, going to Syracuse to watch basketball, and eating dinner at the house. Even though I missed rush week, once I received a bid upon my return, I made the decision to begin the journey to become a Phi.

Finishing my current term as graduate adviser and looking ahead to my life beyond Cornell, I can reflect on what I have seen over the past five years. I have seen Phi Delta Theta grow to have more than 80 undergraduate brothers and then wane to lower numbers in the mid-40s. I have seen ascension to intramural championships, heartbreaking losses to be runner-up, and playoff berths slip out of reach. I have seen brothers come to the aid of one another for something like a family crisis suddenly coming up, a problem set that is due the next morning, or to just properly celebrate a birthday. As with life, there is the good and the bad; however, the one thing that never changed is the medium by which we were brought together and what it stands for.

I will always remember the cardinal principles that I have lived the past five years by, and I will continue to follow them after I am gone. I will remember the funny stories of the dumb things people have done, watching Cornell sports achieve greatness, and just having someone to talk to when I needed them. I will not

remember all of these things because I have a prodigious memory that allows me to store everything I want. I will remember all of these things because of the people who were there.

The friendships I have forged here will continue for the rest of my life. In time, the importance of what has happened will fade away, but the people who were there will continue to live strong in my mind. Being an intramural champion or the crazy things that happened to me on the weekend will soon lose weight in terms of how important they are in the grand scheme of life, but the people that shared the journey with me have left their mark in my life and I can never forget the people.

I am nervous about having to leave the physical house I have called home for the past three years. I am scared of having to go out into the real world and move to a place where I potentially have no acquaintances. I am saddened that the closest friends I have in my life will be much harder to see once I am gone. But as I prepare to leave, I remember that even though I leave this campus, I will always be a Phi. The Bond under which we are united is everlasting. I know I will make new friends, find a new home, and get into a routine.

But the friends I have shared so much with here will always be there, and I know I can always turn to them no matter when or where. It has been a pleasure to watch another year pass and see another group of men become brothers that I would have missed had I not stayed for my masters of engineering. It has also been an honor to impart my buds of wisdom to the younger brothers in hope of continuing the strong tradition of Phi Delta Theta. I wish I could stay and see what happens because I have a lot of hope for the potential of this organization on this campus. It has been an honor to serve as graduate adviser this year, and even though I came to Cornell in August 2005 with two sisters, I now leave it in August 2010 with two degrees and an ever-growing number of men I am proud to call my brothers.

Yours in the Bond,
Oscar J. Bernal '09, 1801
Graduate Adviser

Phi Delt Enjoys a Very Successful Year

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race known as "Tough Mudder." Developed by the British Special Forces and widely considered to be one of the most grueling endurance races ever created, Phi Delta Theta's New York Alpha Chapter expects to have at least 10-15 representatives at this year's inaugural U.S. race at Bear Creek Mountain, PA, on May 2, 2010. They will run through fire, crawl through ice and snow, and climb up and down the mountainside, all as a test of mental and physical toughness. In addition, many have pledged to raise at least \$1,000 each for Phi Delta Theta's national philanthropy, the ALS Association, showing that brothers are not only willing to push themselves to the limit, but also are willing to find a way to help others in the process, demonstrating the true meaning of what it means to be a Phi.

Despite all of the successes of 2009-2010 on the Hill, this time of year always brings with it a tinge of sadness, as we must bid farewell to our graduating seniors. Michael Beyman, Jason Bierig, Dylan Birchard, Binbin Chi, JR Cho, Kevin Coughlin, Will Goto, Ian Kreher, Barrett Lane, Chris Liu, Sam LoBosco, Taigen O, Jeff Paley, Tom Petek, Eric Ross, Brian Scott, Christopher Treyz, Paul Valle, Paul Weiner, and Bryant Williams will all be saying goodbye to their undergraduate careers at Cornell in 2010, and we thank them for everything that they have done to help make Phi Delta Theta what it is today. They will be entering graduate school, law school, medical school, and the workforce. We wish each of them the very best in all of their future endeavors, and we look forward to all of the successes they are sure to see as they enter the next chapters of their lives.

The 2009-2010 year was phenomenal, and we look forward to all of the great things that 2010-2011 is sure to bring!

Yours in the Bond,
Eddie Christian '11, 1834

REUNION 2010: JUNE 10-13

Saturday, June 12, 10:00 a.m. - House Corporation Meeting
Look for dial-in phone number at www.phideltnya.org.

Saturday, June 12, 4:00-6:00 p.m. - Open House & Reception
Both events are at the chapter house, 2 Ridgewood Rd., but feel free to stop by at any time during the weekend!



This laugh and clap as Tom Petek '10 awaits the delivery of his birthday cake at the Olive Garden.

"My wife, Natalie, and I had a great reunion dinner this past summer with **Willie Mahoney '51** and his wife, Phi, in Santa Barbara, California," reports **James Henry Jr. '49**. "We both have sons living in Santa Barbara." Catch up with Jim at 683 Annemore Ln., Naples, FL 34108; jimhenry@ephenry.com.

Bob Agnew '63 writes that he is still working as an analytics director at Discover. "I have seen **John Gaffney '63**, **Dick Veith '62**, and **Pete Kenec '65** during the past year. I keep up with **Fred Gross '63** and **George Medill '63**. I saw Fred about a year ago." Bob can be reached at 840 Deere Park Ct., Deerfield, IL 60015; raagnew@comcast.net.

"I recently created a company for the diagnosis and treatment of certain autoimmune diseases and analysis of the immune system based on technology developed by my brother, a professor at the Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, University of Washington Seattle," announces **Chad Robins '96**. "We raised \$5M (with help from a number of brothers!), and I hope to help a lot of people. Moved to Mercer Island on February 1, 2010, with my wife, Kristie, and our two little girls, Berkeley (4.5) and Stella (3.5)." Send congratulations to Chad at his new address: 6205 SE 27th St., Mercer Island, WA 98040; chadrobins@yahoo.com.

DECEASED

We regret to report the deaths of the following alumni:

Ralph R. Beal Jr. '38
February 15, 2010

John S. Conable '38
March 22, 2010

Chapter Focuses on Academics

The chapter is taking significant steps to facilitate improved scholarship among its members. A scholarship team system is going to be implemented beginning in fall 2010. Teams will be made up of two brothers each and will be assigned based on similarity of major and cumulative GPA so they are of comparable strength. This system aims to provide members with motivation to do better academically, so there will be various small scholarships awarded to the best teams, with the help of the NYAEFI.

The chapter's internet and computer lab have continued to be valuable resources for the brothers. Many brothers are regularly in the lab, often spending several hours a day writing papers or doing problem sets. We have

done a great deal of research in regard to the addition of new tables and chairs for the library, and the chapter will be making a decision in April on specifically which furniture to purchase. The more likely possibility is to purchase from Treeforms in Ithaca, but due to Cornell's downsizing, the chapter may be able to find a better deal by buying the furniture from the university.

It is our sincere hope that the continued improvement of both the physical study structure and the incentive opportunities for our brotherhood will allow us to return our grade point average to the top of all fraternities.

Yours in the Bond,
Tom Petek '10, 1832

Brothers Strive for All-Sports Championship

This year has been a tremendous success for Phi Delt athletics. As of the beginning of April, we are currently in second place for the all-sports competition out of 38 Cornell fraternities. We trail Sigma Alpha Epsilon by only a few points going into the final few sports of the year.

The house has had success across many different sports. We are champions in sand volleyball and won second place in indoor volleyball this fall. In addition, the soccer team's only loss was to the champions, SAE, netting us a third-place finish. Moreover, the basketball and flag football teams finished in second place of their divisions during the regular season, ensuring that the fraternity finished strong in every large

team sport.

Our success can also greatly be attributed to the individual efforts of many brothers who ensured that we participated in every possible competition. Finally, the bowling team is currently undefeated as they head into the playoffs, having not dropped a single frame during the entire regular season. With success in the upcoming softball season and a continuing effort from the entire house, Phi Delta Theta will surely be competitive for the top spot in the final stretch of the all-sports season.

Yours in the Bond,
Mike Mastakas '12, 1847

The Summer of Construction

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remains a premier residence at Cornell.

In summary, it's going to be a busy summer, to say the least. I can't wait to include some photos in the next issue of *The Cayuga*. All the while, we will enjoy a return to brotherhood occupancy during the summer months, providing increased security and keeping the place in good condition.

The next projects on the horizon are likely to be replacement of all of the wall-to-wall carpeting throughout the bedrooms and an update to the furniture in the Great Hall. I always start writing these articles, and before I know it, I've already written too much! In a down economy, I am truly awed and inspired by the continued generosity of the alumni of New York Alpha. Without your support, I assure you, I would have a lot less to write about. Thank you. If you would like to contribute, don't forget you can do so through our website at <http://www.phideltnya.org/donate.php>, or through our traditional method using the enclosed dues and gift card.

I hope I've impressed upon you that we are working hard to keep 2 Ridgewood Road among Cornell's finest fraternities, and I hope that you will stop by the house and see for yourself the next time your travels bring you near Ithaca.

Yours in the Bond,
Victor Aprea '02, 1691
Alumni Board President