

A man wearing a dark t-shirt, shorts, a baseball cap, and sunglasses stands on a large, light-colored rock formation. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. Behind him, a vast cityscape stretches out to the coast, with buildings and streets visible. The ocean is a deep blue, with white waves crashing against the shore. The sky is clear and bright.

# CAYUGAN

PHI DELTA THETA | NEW YORK ALPHA

## The Bonds of Brotherhood

Jon Bellante '06





# THE BONDS OF BROTHERHOOD

## Jon Bellante '06

FROM THE CAYUGAN EDITOR

ANDREW BRIDSON '11



Andrew Bridson '11

This edition of our CAYUGAN newsletter is dedicated to **Jon Bellante '06**, in recognition of his outstanding (and continued!) service to the fraternity. Jon left an impact

on the house as an undergraduate, but his presence was felt long after he graduated. The many of us who knew him as an active alumnus and eventually president of the housing corporation can say that he truly embodied the spirit of brotherhood and honored his duty to leave the chapter better than it was before. Throughout the many challenges that the chapter, the Cornell community, Greek life, and broader society faced, Jon led with a steady hand and always offered sound guidance. It is through this stability that the house that we all love has endured. There is no way to adequately capture the impact that his leadership has had, but it is reflected in every aspect of the chapter. Thank you, Jon, for your years of service and we all look forward to your continuing engagement in new capacities.

I would be severely undercutting the fraternity's role by saying it has played a major role in my life. I met most of my lifelong friends via Phi Delta Theta, I developed my leadership confidence by serving on the chapter's executive board, and I even got my first internship via a connection through the fraternity. The man I am today was clearly molded based on my experience at 2 Ridgewood Road. These experiences are the reasons that I have remained involved in the chapter for 15 years after my graduation. It's been important for me to give back to an organization that played such an important role in my life.



Jon Bellante '06

As I look back, I am so proud of what this fraternity has become. When I joined in the spring of 2002, the chapter was still fresh, coming back to campus after the refounding in 2000. We were still finding our footing in the Cornell scene, and that came to life in recruitment; I was one of only four in my pledge class. While that was, without a doubt, an atypical pledging experience, I knew the brotherhood I was joining was strong.

Since that time, the brotherhood has become even stronger. We have varsity athletes, campus organizations leaders, trustees, IFC exec board members, and an academic ranking that continues to remain strong! By serving as housing corp. president, I've been able to develop friendships with many, many of these brothers. It always generates an interesting reaction when I introduce a younger Phi to my other friends by saying, "I know him through Phi Delt," despite the fact that he might have been a student five or 10 years after me.

While connecting with the undergrads has always been the most rewarding part of serving as housing corp. president, we've accomplished a lot with the functional side of the job. We've renovated most aspects of the house over the last 10 years, including a new retaining wall, new roof, updated bathrooms, new Great Hall and bedroom furniture, a top-of-the-line fitness center, new boilers and heating systems, and the list goes on and on.

The chapter is truly in great shape. It brings me joy to think about everything we have been able to accomplish as a brotherhood through hard work, generosity, and creativity.

Thanks, everybody, for your support and brotherhood over the last 10 years. It means the world



VISIT OUR WEBSITE

- ▶ Give to the Chapter
- ▶ Find Contact Information

Scan QR code using your Smart Phone to go directly to the site!



[www.PhiDeltaThetaCornell.org](http://www.PhiDeltaThetaCornell.org)

## FROM THE HOUSING CORPORATION PRESIDENT **DAN DWORAKOWSKI '14**

As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of our beautiful chapter house this year, it is only fitting that we also celebrate the tenure of **Jon Bellante**, who, as one of, if not the longest-tenured housing corp. president in our chapter's history, has made sure that our house is not only still standing, but thriving, for the last one-tenth of its lifespan.

I met Jon about 10 years ago, soon after he accepted this role, surely not expecting to hold it for an entire decade. As an undergraduate brother who didn't know any better, I had incorrectly thought the housing corp. president was just another authority figure to keep us from having fun. In comes Jon, sassy, snarky, and about four notches too loud, running a ruthlessly efficient walkthrough of the house, pointing out every little thing that needed fixing. But very quickly I realized that (i) Jon is sassy, snarky, and slightly too loud all the time, (ii) Jon was also looking to have fun and not keep us from it, and (iii) Jon wasn't pointing out every little thing to get us in trouble, but because he cared about not only the state of the house but also the brothers in it.

Through the years, Jon's energy toward helping the brothers never waned. Despite being a man that only had his streak of being at an airport every week broken by a global pandemic, he was always available to help. He would never handhold or simply fix the problem for us. Instead, he would teach us how to identify the solution to a problem and act on it in his unique no-time-for-"EXHAUSTING"-nonsense-because-I-have-fun-nonsense-to-do way. And when we needed him to help us with our proposed solution because we could not do any more, he would happily do so. He provided guidance while empowering us and treating us like self-governing adults which made every brother who worked with him better.



Brothers on Spring Break.

On a personal note, Jon has afforded me the ability to contribute to the house after undergrad through various leadership roles including grad advisor, CAB chairman, and even temporary fraternity chef, guiding me and empowering me through each one. We have also had plenty of those fun nonsense experiences together all over the country, from culinary adventures in Epcot to post-winery karaoke buses in Oregon, long reunion weekend nights in Ithaca, and his amazing wedding to his much better half in Sonoma. I consider him a valuable mentor and a close friend.

Now, after 10 years, I will attempt to fill the big shoes he left and succeed him as the new housing corp. president. I will attempt to continue the phenomenal example he has set and provide direction to our current and future brothers, who hopefully don't see me as just someone to get them in trouble as I saw Jon 10 years ago. And if I ever need help, I know where to get some very helpful, but very sassy advice.

Thank you, Jon

## FROM NYAEFI PRESIDENT PHIL BARTELS '71

The relationship that Jon had carefully honed each year with the undergraduate brothers was indeed and undeniably without equal—he was patient with them, but stern when he had to be, and he cut them a lot of slack when it was prudent to do so, but not so often that they would expect to receive a “free pass” each time.

At our housing corp.'s twice-yearly meetings on Saturday mornings at 10:00 a.m. during Reunion and Homecoming weekends,

when most of us had arrived to the meeting tired and bleary-eyed, in the sharpest of contrasts, Jon was the consistent winner of the blue ribbon prize for his ever-present (and shameless over-abundance of) cheeriness, energy, and enthusiasm (which I suspect was invariably fueled by gallons of pre-meeting coffee) as he dutifully led us through the financial statements and the other items on the agenda.

## FROM PETER LEE '63

Jon, you deserve a GOLD STAR for your impressive dedication and commitment to our NYA Phi Delta Theta fraternity and appreciating brotherhood. Many thanks and best wishes for continued

personal and professional successes. Grateful for all you do and for being a friend and “brother in the bond.”



## HOUSE MANAGER



Looking toward the future of the house, we are thrilled by all of the exciting renovations that have already taken place as well as those on the horizon. The installation of a brand-new fireplace in the Great Hall adds to the cozy ambiance and already grand nature of the space. Additionally, the computer room is currently being renovated and transformed into a Zoom room, equipped with the space and technology necessary to facilitate online meetings and classes. Additionally, three rooms in the house are receiving significant upgrades that will create a more comfortable and inviting atmosphere for both our graduate advisor and any visiting alumni.

This summer we are thrilled by two major renovations that are coming to the house. First, the stairs leading up from the lower parking lot to the house are undergoing a complete overhaul to create a safer path for our brothers and guests. This will not only improve the aesthetic of the house but also ensure the safety of everyone who visits. Second, after 101 years of service, the house is receiving an updated heating system, and every brother is eagerly anticipating the benefits of this much-needed upgrade. With the new heating system, we can look forward to improved warmth and comfort during the cold Ithaca winters.

As I consider the years to come, I am confident that these renovations and activities will only enhance the brotherhood experience at Phi Delta Theta. I can't wait to make more memories in the place we all like to call home.

*Yours in the Bond,*  
**Evan Kilcoyne**  
*House Manager*

## FROM THE UNDERGRADUATE CHAPTER PRESIDENT KEVIN CHENG '25



Brothers hit Miami Beach, FL, during spring break.



Kevin Cheng '25

This past year has been a year of trials and tribulations for the New York Alpha chapter of Phi Delta Theta, but I am proud to say that the brotherhood has emerged stronger and more dedicated to one another than ever before.

Last spring, one of the largest senior classes our chapter has ever had graduated, leaving younger brothers with the duty and responsibility of ensuring New York Alpha's continued success. As membership dropped from over 70 to nearly half that size in a semester, there were doubts as to whether or not our brotherhood could remain as active, tight-knit, and fraternal.

However, I am proud to say that we have since initiated two new pledge classes: Beta Chi and Beta Psi, together totaling 14 new brothers in the bond. Although we have not yet recovered to our original peak of more than 70 brothers, the brotherhood is thrilled with the quality and integrity of the young men that we have initiated. Indeed, since elections in the spring, every single one of those 14 brothers has stepped up to leadership roles for the 2023–2024 academic year.

And thanks to their initiative, the chapter has shown real progress as of late. For instance, our house—which brothers still refer to fondly as “the ship”—is cleaner than it has been in years under the guidance of our new house manager. Our steward continues to guarantee that the kitchen is well-stocked and that brothers are well-fed, and our brotherhood chair ensures that Phis have plenty of opportunities to bond with one another.

Our chapter ultimately finds itself looking toward a very bright and optimistic future. As the New York Alpha chapter of Phi Delta Theta gears up for its 151st year at Cornell University, I am confident that the brotherhood will continue to find ways to strengthen our commitment to the Bond, to one another, and to ensure that the ship is delivered to posterity even greater than it was to us.



## A MEMORABLE YEAR ON THE SHIP

The past year in New York Alpha has seen a wealth of special moments and events for the brotherhood. We have had multiple successful date nights and brotherhood events, including a couple's painting night, a pajama-themed date night with hot chocolate during the dead of winter, and a celebratory dinner after the induction of a new class of sweethearts.

The last year has especially featured many brothers taking the initiative to try new things both inside and outside the chapter. Brothers **Andrew Gmirkin '24** and **Reid Barker '24** began a Dungeons and Dragon campaign that has brought a subset of the brotherhood together each Sunday evening. As the weather warmed and the harsh Ithaca winter weather gave way to the sunny days of spring, barbecues became a weekly affair, bringing the whole brotherhood together for delicious food, yard games, and endless conversations around the backyard fire pit. This was highlighted by a Caribbean barbecue cooked by **Reece Simpson '23** and **Naveen Sharma '24**. Finally, **Alex Dempsey '24** has consistently put out incredible new designs for Phi Delt hoodies, shirts, and baseball caps, so when walking around campus you'd be hard-pressed to go too long without seeing a brother proudly donning the letters.

The brotherhood has also made the most of the incredible spaces afforded by the chapter house. After a deep cleaning by the brotherhood, the shields room has played host to a number of events including sweetheart initiation; a gentleman's night in which we played pool, poker, and chatted over a jazz soundtrack; and the weekly Dungeons and Dragons sessions. Likewise, our second-floor poker landing received a new layout and a deep clean, making it a favored spot to catch up with a fellow brother while overlooking Great Hall events such as our Super Bowl watch party, a movie night, or the typical pre-dinner "Super Smash Bros." session.

Despite only joining this fall as a member of the Beta Chi class, my fellow Beta Chis and I have gotten close with the alumni who



Spring Break 2023.

frequent the house, telling stories of past fraternity events or memorable nights with fellow Phis. The love of this house by Phis past, present, and future is tangible. As we turn our attention towards the end of the year and our final date nights, barbecues, and other brotherhood events of the term, as well as towards recruiting the newest class of Phis this autumn, we all can't help but be grateful to be a part of one of Cornell's strongest brotherhoods.

*Yours in the Bond,*  
**Julian Cunningham '25**  
*Brotherhood Chairman*

## PHI-ED: CASEY DUTCH '24

The brotherhood has been eager to participate in intramural sports since their return. In the fall of 2021, we secured a silver medal in the 4-vs-4 sand-volleyball league due to pro-server **David Pinker**, stellar communicator **Naveen Sharma**, the experience and quickness of **Jude Martini**, and **Aidan Sisk**. We are excited to continue to exemplify the athletic greatness of Phi Delta Theta this semester by coming together to participate in bowling during the first half of the semester, and then channeling our inner **Detlef Schrempfs** to lead us to victory in 5-vs-5 basketball during the second half of the semester. Outside of intramurals, brothers have also demonstrated immense school spirit by attending a number of Big Red hockey games at the most historic and intimate rink in college hockey in Lynah

Rink, including those against Princeton, Harvard, and Colgate. There was also a great turnout for the annual Red Hot Hockey game at Madison Square Garden where current brothers enjoyed reuniting with recent graduates of the fraternity while witnessing the Big Red dismantle the Boston University Terriers by a score of 6 to 4. Lastly, some brothers attended a record-breaking performance by the Cornell basketball team when they absolutely embarrassed D-3 opponent Keuka College in the fall, and we carried that same energy into Newman Arena for the game against last-place Columbia University Lions. Go Big Red!

*Yours in the Bond,*  
**Casey Dutch '24**

# ALUMNI NEWS

**Seth Peyla '15:** I recently graduated from Northwestern Kellogg's MBA program. Upon being admitted to Kellogg a few years ago, I was told that I had received the Glen W. Fawcett Scholarship, which would cover half of my tuition and was awarded to each admission cycle to "a strong representative of Phi Delta Theta fraternity." I was so grateful to the Fawcett Fund and Phi Delt for this honor! I moved to Denver in July 2022 to begin a new chapter of life and a new role at ZOMA Capital, which is a family office/investment firm that does social impact investing. I would love to connect with Phis living in or passing through Colorado. Please contact me at 815-823-7693.

## NYAEFI UPDATE: PHIL BARTELS '71

An update regarding our chapter's 501(c)(3) education-supporting organization, the New York Alpha Education Fund, Inc. (NYAEFI), which we incorporated in 2006 and which has raised over \$300K:



- We have funded the ever-important upgrades and replacements to the house's computer system hardware and software that have been undertaken at our house since 2006 by our Ithaca-based IT firm.
- We have completely restored the library with tall new windows and tall exterior glass doors, as well as a new floor, oak library tables, armed chairs, and so forth (and the library remains packed on most weekday evenings).
- To provide the undergraduates with a first-class study environment with their computers and laptops in their rooms and in the Great Hall and library, we have installed two successive generations of state-of-the-art wireless access point (WAP) systems, with their WAPs spread throughout our 1922-built house with its impenetrable, super-thick concrete walls.
- Our officers and directors are **Peter Lee '63**, **Brad Hanpeter '80**, and **Phil Bartels '71** (thank you for your continuing support!).



## DECEASED

*We regret to report the deaths of:*

### Paul Baker '70

*May 26, 2021*

### Richard Fehn '68

*September 12, 2022*

### Norman Powell '57

*June 16, 2021*

### Walter Priester '49

*April 28, 2021*



### Note to NYAEFI DONORS

Thank you for your continued support. To ensure that donations are processed efficiently, please visit the link below

#### You Can Also Mail Checks to:

New York Alpha Education Fund, Inc.  
c/o Elevate Services - Phi Delta Theta  
3109 North Triphammer Road  
Lansing, NY 14882

[www.PhiDeltaThetaCornell.org/give-nyaeef](http://www.PhiDeltaThetaCornell.org/give-nyaeef)

**THE CAYUGAN** is published regularly by the NY Alpha Chapter of Phi Delta Theta for its friends and members. News and photos should be sent to Alumni Records Office, New York Alpha of Phi Delta Theta, PO Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14850-0876.

Please visit [www.PhiDeltaThetaCornell.org](http://www.PhiDeltaThetaCornell.org) to make an online gift.

Alumni communication services provided by **Elevate** | [programs@elevateims.com](mailto:programs@elevateims.com) | 607-533-9200 | [@elevateims](https://www.elevateims.com)