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ON THE WEB

Alumni Web Site



www.phisigpsu.com



**Active Chapter
Twitter**

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Kappa News

www.phisigpsu.com



**Kappa Chapter
Phi Sigma Kappa at Penn State**

Fall 2022

Committed to Lifelong Learning

MARTIN BARBATO '79

A Letter from the President

Dear Brother,

I am again pleased to write to you – although a bit later than the regular Fall letter. It has been a busy Fall 2022 and I now find myself looking forward to Thanksgiving!

Homecoming was again live and virtual.

The Alumni Board held its annual tailgate, which was again hosted by Alumni Board members Ben Jarmul and David Hyland. It was great to see so many alumni and friends! We even had the opportunity to do some recruiting of new members. With a night game, the Board conducted the annual General Membership Meeting on Sunday. Alumni and Actives gathered for a brunch beforehand. The meeting was held in person and virtually, using the newly acquired webcam and projector system. In addition, the Actives presented a pre-recorded video house tour, which was very well received. You can see the video and power point presentation of the General Membership Meeting on the Website.

Kappa is strong and thriving.

For the new academic year, and for the third year in a row, the total number of Actives is up! We have 52 total Actives, 26 of which are living in the house. These are great numbers, in comparison to recent years and in the face of the challenges that fraternities continue to face nationwide.

I'm pleased to also report that the house and Kappa's finances continue in strong shape. The House looks great, thanks to the dedicated and regular efforts of Board member David Hyland, who serves as House Committee Chair, and to the very caring and involved Actives. Please see the article about Work Weekend on the website for photos and a story about a very successful effort to maintain and improve the House. The financial position is strong, which is directly due to the Board's stewardship. As I have described before, the Board adopts two separate budgets – one for housing and a second for alumni association activities. We have been successful in

running the housing P&L at a surplus, which surplus is being used to make the additional payments to principal. As a result, the mortgage debt has been reduced to about \$164,000 and we are on track to pay off the mortgage by no later than the end of 2023.

The alumni association activities budget includes all communication costs (which include the website), events hosted by the alumni, and the Scholarship Fund. The alumni association activities budget for this year is \$24,000. Your donations go directly to this budget and to these activities. For the just completed academic year, and for the third Founder's Day in a row, we gave a total of \$2,000 in scholarship money to worthy Actives. We look forward to continuing this effort. With your support, we will be able to do so.

Speaking of support, the Kappa alumni have been a great support. Kappa experienced strong donations for this past giving year (8/1/21 through 7/31/22) – a total of \$18,608. This was a 26% increase over the previous year and one of the highest over the last 15 years, when one special one-time gift is excluded! My heart-felt thanks for all of the support.

Please see the new portal

Our long-time partner, Affinity Connection, completed a major update to the website portal. The Board worked with Affinity to improve the content on the site and the user-friendliness. We would greatly appreciate your input.

We need your help to communicate with you.

The Phi Sigma Kappa alumni total about 1,053. Of these, we have current contact information (either a mailing address, an email address, or both) for 769. Of these, we have emails for 555.

It would be helpful if all alumni could provide an email address. There are just two regular mailings per year – the Fall Letter and the Spring Letter. In contrast, an email newsletter goes out monthly.

Please consider providing your email address

-Continued on Page 4

I still consider Penn State "home" even though I live 1000 miles away

In December, Penn State announced that Phi Sig Naren Gursahaney '83 had been selected by the Penn State Board of Trustees to receive the Distinguished Alumni Award, the University's highest honor presented to its alumni. In addition to this honor, Gursahaney was previously named an alumni fellow in recognition of his outstanding professional accomplishments, as well as a prolific donor to the university, establishing the The Naren and Judith Gursahaney Fund for Excellence in Mechanical Engineering along with his wife Judy.

Gursahaney talked to us about this honor, how Phi Sig impacted his life, and why he gives back. Read on!

Tell me about pledging Phi Sig. What led to that decision?

I pledged Phi Sig in the Spring of 1980, during my freshman year. There were a couple guys from my high school who were brothers there and I just felt comfortable with the environment. Everyone was down to earth and no one took themselves too seriously. It was a pretty easy to fit in, no matter what your background was. It turned out to be a great decision, as I still have several friends who I am in touch with from those days. Needless to say, social media makes it a lot easier to keep in touch with people, but I do get to see some of the old gang in person.

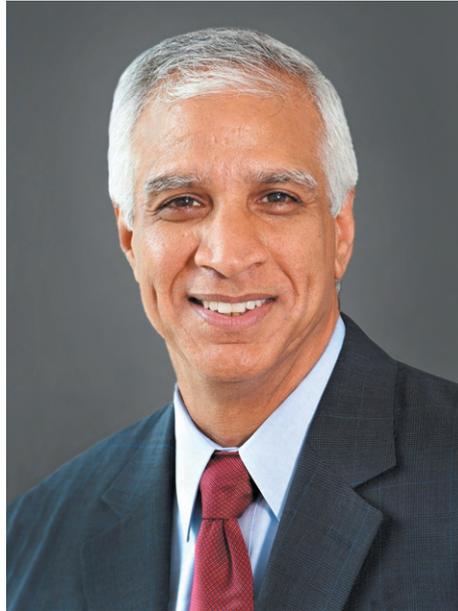
What are some of your favorite memories of the Phi Sig house?

I haven't stepped into a fraternity house in a long time, so it's tough to compare life at Phi Sig back then to how things are today. Of course, Homecoming was a big deal when I was there, and Phi Sig took its participation in Homecoming, including the parade, very seriously. I don't know if it is still in existence, but Phi Sig also launched a Superstars competition while I was there.

Most of my other memories were related to pledging, our pledge bolt (to the University of Maryland) and the many house parties and socials. And, of course, the end of term/year Hairy Gorilla parties. In order to protect the innocent (and not so innocent), I'll refrain from sharing specific memories.

Who do you keep in touch with today?

I keep in touch with several brothers via social media. The people I see the most



Naren Gursahaney '83

are Julie and **Jeff Grubb '84**, as my wife and I see them several times a year, either in Austin, Boca Raton, New Orleans or State College. Jeff and I worked together at Westinghouse after graduation, and we have remained good friends.

I have also kept in touch with **Fred DeCock '80**, as we also worked for the same company (Tyco) for a little while, and he was nice enough to reach out the last time he was in Florida. He also helped me connect with his brother, **Gary DeCock '83**, at the B1G Championship a few years ago. **Jay Succop '82** was one of the high school friends who attracted me to Phi Sig, and we continue to stay in touch. I have also had a few "chance run-ins" with some of my Phi Sig brothers ... for example, **John Schaub '82** and I met up for breakfast in Virginia after finding out via social media that we were in the same city, and **Roy Kern '83** (a pledge brother) and I ran into each other at a charity event in Pittsburgh.

Can you tell us about your life after graduation?

Life has been a whirlwind since I graduated from Penn State. I started our working for Westinghouse Electric and worked for them for about four years (in Baltimore and Israel) before going back to grad school at Darden/UVA where I got my MBA. After that, I moved to Cleveland to work for Booz Allen, where I lived for four years. During that

time, I met and married my wife, Judy. I then went to GE and over my 10-year career there, we moved all over the country/world (Connecticut, upstate New York, Wisconsin, and Japan twice) and had our two kids, Kayla and Phillip, along the way. I left GE to join Tyco in Princeton, NJ and we lived there for nine years. When Tyco decided to spin-off the business, I was leading at the time, ADT, I led the spin-off and we moved to Boca Raton, FL. I was the CEO of ADT until 2016, when we sold the company to private equity. I "retired" then, and now fill my time serving on three company boards. Fortunately, both of our kids live relatively close by in the West Palm Beach area.

What kind of lasting impact has Phi Sig had on your life?

Phi Sig was a big part of my Penn State experience, and hence played a big part in my life. My experience at Penn State not only provided me with the academic foundation that I have been able to build on, but it has also provided me with numerous lifelong friends, including some of my Phi Sig brothers. We all grew up together and had a number of bonding experiences that tie us together. I still consider Penn State "home" even though I live 1000 miles away.

Tell me a little bit about your recent Distinguished Alumni Award. Why has giving back to Penn State and Phi Sig been important in your life?

The Distinguished Alumni award is truly humbling when you think of the large population of incredibly accomplished Penn State alumni. While I am very proud of what I have accomplished since leaving Penn State, there is no question that in my case this is a team award, not an individual award.

I have been blessed with incredible opportunities, great teams and great mentors throughout my career. But, most important, I have a great team at home with my wife, Judy, and our two children, Kayla and Phillip. They have made incredible sacrifices to allow me to achieve my professional goals.

Since so many people help me in my career, I have a responsibility to pay it forward. This is why we give back to Penn State, so other students can have some of the same opportunities.

-Continued on Page 4

JIM SPAHN '76

Say thanks to this time of your life with a give back — you will feel good about it



Jim Spahn '76

Jim Spahn '76 (jims7272@yahoo.com) knew that Phi Sigma Kappa was for him when his dorm roommate, **Dave Lewis**, became a brother and gave him a tour of the house. "I met many

brothers and experienced a few events," he remembers. "I really liked the bonds that seemed to exist and the warmth to me from that brotherhood."

He says that Phi Sig stood apart on campus. "It was extremely well rounded. Many different disciplines of study for variety - very good intramural sports teams, an excellent social calendar with great parties, lots of laughs, excellent sorority connections, a place to call home and experience growing up with a fun bunch of guys. What more could you want?"

He says that one memory particularly stands out. "My most favorite memory was a middle of the night trial for **Tim Siegfried**," he says. "He made the mistake of driving a brother (who had a broken leg) to a football game, and then driving home early, making the brother walk back to the house on crutches. Bad news for Tim!"

"Everyone but Tim was told to be in any

costume of their choosing and show up at 2:00 am in the living room. We had a mock trial and Tim had an assigned lawyer. There was evidence presented. The judge and jury found him guilty (surprise). Penalty – triple swirly. Fun!"

He says that another memory involved Hell Week. "We took two pledges out like 5 miles, dropped them off, and made them count the railroad ties back to a spot in town. Whatever they said was wrong, and then they had to go back and recount. When they returned, of course they had the same number. The pledge master says 'Sorry - my mistake. I read the numbers backwards. You had it right the first time.' Hilarious."

He says that Phi Sig has influenced his life long after graduation. "The greatest impact Phi Sig had on my life was how much I learned about people and what makes them tick. We all had different backgrounds, different interests and different skills. Not everyone always got along. But as a whole, we had a strong brotherhood."

"You worked it out because you all lived together experiencing life the same way. As I looked back on those years, I realized how much this prepared me for people interaction in the real world. The same people types exist everywhere. The brotherhood taught me that you can interact with anybody out there -- you just figure them out."

He says that giving back to the chapter is crucial. "I give back because I want to ensure that young Phi Sig men - who may be just like me (or not) - get to experience and enjoy this growing up period of life the same way I did."

"This is about 'Back to the Future,'" he adds. "The house always needs something, whether a planned capital or an emergency expense. Or perhaps one of our young brothers needs financial assistance. Room and board charges don't cover these costs. That's what's good for the house and the brothers."

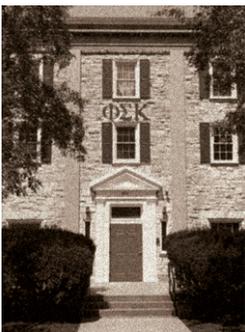
"What's in it for you? Take a few minutes right now and reminisce about your experiences. Be honest - did you not enjoy it? Don't forget about those great years. Give back something - whether one time or every year. Go visit the house. Care. You will feel very good knowing that you are helping to support and enable the same experiences you enjoyed. Say thanks to this time of your life with a give back. You will feel good about it."

He adds a final word to the brothers in the house: "Have fun, enjoy the kidding around, and study hard. The time passes quickly. Take care of the house at all times, especially when you go home for the summer. Always leave it in a condition that shows pride and leadership. This is your home."

Without Phi Sigma Kappa, I wouldn't have so many treasured memories of college days.

GENE OTT '66

Writes about his favorite memories in the house



Gene Ott '66 (genefranklin43@gmail.com) writes in to answer our alumni questions about his time in the house. Here's why he chose PSK and one of his favorite memories.

Why did you choose PSK PSU?

"Several NROTC guys were joining and we liked the brothers. I only lived in the house my sophomore year, I was the pledge coordinator. I was dorm counselor the last two years."

What is your favorite PSK PSU memory?

"My first dance with my wife, we dated throughout our PSU years. I loved my pledge class."

PAUL CHURCH '71

Phi Sig was the better choice for me

Paul Church '71 (piman71@gmail.com) When I was a freshman, I felt a certain legacy pressure to pledge Sigma Chi, where my dad had been a brother almost 50 years before me. However, the guys that I met at Phi Sig, including outstanding pledge master Fred Jacobs, convinced me that it was a better choice, and one that I never regretted since my pledge brothers are still among my best friends after all these years.



Do you know of a Phi Sig alum who would make a good profile subject? If so, contact our editors at alumninews@affinityconnection.com (mention "Kappa News" in the subject line).

MIKE BACHE '78

It was a great experience to deal with different people and situations

Mike Bache '78 (mike.bache2013@gmail.com) was driven to pledge to Phi Sigma Kappa because of “the friendly and brotherly feeling of the House.” All of the people associated with the chapter set them apart on campus.

One of his best memories of his time at Phi Sigma Kappa is “the whole fraternity

experience, and the continuing feelings of brotherhood.

“It was a great experience to deal with different people and situations. It does give you a different perspective on what is important.”

Bache gives back because he believes it's important to sustain the brotherhood. “I had

experienced a great opportunity to expand my horizons and it is important to provide the same opportunities to future brothers.”

He understands that if more alumni give back “it would make the propagation of the brotherhood easier and more sustainable.”

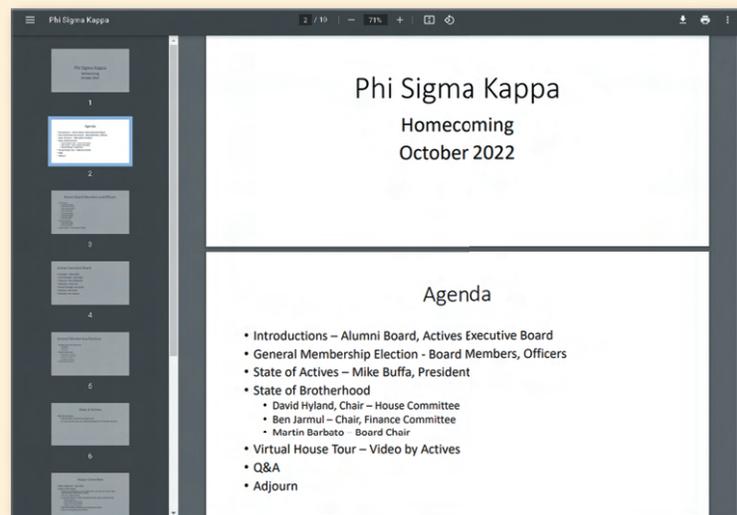
Without Phi Sigma Kappa, I wouldn't have life long friends and brothers.

HOMECOMING 2022

Phi Sigma Kappa at Penn State

Over Homecoming Weekend this year, alumni and actives joined together for some good ol' brotherhood bonding.

One important event of our weekend included a joint meeting to discuss the state of the fraternity. Head to the website via this link (www.tinyurl.com/2ubutpry) to view the presentation slides.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

–Continued from Page 1

(or updating your email address, if applicable) so that we can keep you more current on what is happening at Kappa. You can send your email address to any of us:

Martin Barbato: mfbarbato@gmail.com

Fred DeCock: fred.decock@comcast.net

Emily O'Neill: emily@affinityconnection.com

In addition, we have cell numbers for over 800 alumni! Cell numbers provide a great way to provide quick information to you via text message. Please go on the portal to authorize us to send text messages to you.

As I close out this letter, allow me to repeat a previous offer - to be available for your input. The Board is very interested in identifying and implementing steps to improve communications with alumni and to provide

activities and events for alumni. Our Alumni Communications Chair, Fred DeCock (a former Board president), is ready to hear from you. So am I. Please feel free to contact either of us.

Be well, and I hope to see you soon.

Fraternally,

Martin Barbato '79

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Fred DeCock '80

Immediate Past President

Alumni Communications Chair

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717-877-3856

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NAREN GURSAHANEY

–Continued from Page 2

We have been able to give back in a variety of ways: financially with scholarships, excellence funds and facilities; and with my time via my participation on advisory boards in the College of Engineering and as a volunteer on the current capital campaign.

Penn State is not our only beneficiary, but with both me and our daughter, Kayla (IST '16), they do receive a significant share of our annual donations. So, whether it is Penn State or some other cause, we can all make a difference in the lives of the next generation.

Check us out on the web at
www.phisigpsu.com
for all the latest
Phi Sig news!