

Sigma Pi Alumni Announcement

Volume I



July 2009



RHO FINDS NEW HOME

Alumni who pledged prior to the Fall of 2002 all fondly remember the old Clark Avenue house which housed Rho Chapter through many decades of fellowship and fraternal spirit. Having resided in a number of locations surrounding campus for the past several years, Rho Chapter has finally found a new home large enough for the growing brotherhood for the next several years. The new Chapter fraternity house is located at 3414 Hillsborough Street, near the intersection of Gorman Avenue and Hillsborough Street. Though the house has seen many different fraternity occupants throughout the years, it now plays home to anywhere from 18-21 undergraduates and boasts the living and storage space the Chapter has desperately needed. The Chapter signed a 39 month lease in March of 2009 to occupy the house until the end of the Spring semester in May of 2012.

The new, larger house has finally given Rho a Chapter room large enough to handle the growing brotherhood during weekly meetings and provides an atmosphere which encourages fraternal activities. Already the Chapter has hosted numerous activities, including a crawfish boil. The Chapter encourages all Alumni to stop by and visit the new house, which bears resemblance to Clark Avenue. For directions to the house please contact Tommy Rodwell, Alumni/Active Liaison, at tommy@midascommercial.com or 919-604-7078. We look forward to seeing you all at our Homecoming event this year, if not before. More information on Homecoming to follow.

Brothers of Sigma Pi,

Please allow us the opportunity to bring you up to speed on a couple of very important topics; the re-formation of the Alumni Association & the current housing situation of the Active Brotherhood.

First, the re-formation of the Alumni Association. For the last 10+ years, our alumni association has for all rights, been inactive. However, beginning in February 2009, that has all changed. At our annual meeting, a number of folks decided that it was time for the alumni to do what good alumni do, get involved. Seven gentlemen volunteered to serve as inaugural members of the restructured association. They are Charlie Gardner, Grady Sykes, Jack Daniels, Dan Ingram, Tommy Rodwell, Chris Albers, & Brent Brewbaker. In this group, and in addition to holding an office of the association, each member has taken on a focus area and is committed to leading an effort in building a foundation that our alumni association can be built on for years to come. These men are serving staggered 3-yr terms, meaning that we have a lengthy commitment from each that will certainly see substantial progress in the not-so-distant future.

Secondly, the current housing situation and a brief history on how we got where we are. Back in 1995 it became painfully clear that the fraternity was going to have to relocate. The Clark Ave house was seconds away from being condemned (if anyone told the city), so a few involved alumni spearheaded a purchase of a lot on Greek Way (area where other new/nice Greek houses are located). The purchase price of this land was \$150k. To make this happen, and for the bank to give us a loan, we had to sell the Clark Ave house. We got it appraised, the value was also \$150k, and the church next door was the first person thru the door to offer on it. Being that we needed to remain in the house until our new land (and house) could be constructed & the fact that the church had to raise the money, they allowed us to stay in the house indefinitely until both parties were ready to move forward. Their promissory note was enough for the bank to lend the association the money. Over the next few years, we had a few fund raisers, etc., raised some money, paid down the lot, but due to a huge drop in active numbers, we were never able to pull the trigger on building the new house. Forward to 2002, the church was ready to exercise their option to buy the house. We told them that we no longer wanted to sell to them, they took us to court, church vs. frat, guess who won! We were forced out at the end of that semester. The dwindling active brotherhood went into rental properties and the alumni association, in essence, became defunct. The alumni association restructured the loan into an interest only, and made payments until September 2007, when the well ran dry. We still owed \$42K on the property, but by this point, the property was worth approximately \$300k. The bank alerted us that the property would be foreclosed on in 2 months if we did not do something. So, a small group of about 20 alumni met, discussed solutions, advertised via email & the Rhoar, and got 16 investors to purchase 20 shares at \$2500 each. This generated \$50K in cash, allowed the alumni to pay off the loan, and set up a deal that paid the investors 3-years of interest, not paid until the end of the period. The agreement was that the property would immediately be put for sale, but if it had not sold in 3 years, that it would be auctioned off. The investors would be paid out of the proceeds.

Now, however, times are different, in so many ways.

First, the “different” in a good way. The active brotherhood is strong, both in numbers and in quality of individuals. The actives, as a whole, are for the most part responsible, relatively studious, and are truly focused in making Sigma Pi the best fraternity on NCSU’s campus. Their members are leaders in student government and in IFC. The actives have just recently leased a large older fraternity house in an absolutely wonderful location and are set for 3 years.

Now, the “different” in a bad way. The real estate market is horrible and this would be a really bad time to sell the lot on Greek Way. However, there has to be a plan to get out from under the interest payments being made to the investors.

An active & healthy Alumni Association is the solution to all of this. An Alumni base of 250 or so Pi’s will secure the fraternity for the short term & the long term. We want YOU to get involved, whether it is volunteering, helping with projects, contributing financially, attending functions, etc., or better yet, all of these!!!!!!

In the bond,

Brent Brewbaker	Grady Sykes
Dan Ingram	Tommy Rodwell
Chris Albers	Jack Daniels
Charlie Gardner	

Board of Directors Updates

Update from Brent Brewbaker, President

I have been an officer of the Sigma Pi Alumni Association for about 10 years, serving as the Vice-President. However, a combination of there not being much to do in the absence of a house, along with an active brotherhood that seemingly was fading away, my role was virtually pointless. Occasionally there would be a small decision that the three officers would have to make, but certainly nothing consequential. For that matter, the entire Alumni Association was basically defunct. The few times there was a hint of interest, it was seemingly followed with disappointment.

However, that has changed now! The active brotherhood is flourishing in numbers, but more importantly, in quality. It is comprised of young leaders who are emphatic about making Sigma Pi one of the top fraternities at NC State. These guys are already well on their way, but with the help of strong alumni backing, the sky is the limit.

The truth of the matter is, that we already have a substantial alumni base (more than 500), we just did not know how to corral it. I interact with 40-50 Sigma Pi brothers, and have for almost 20 years, on a daily/weekly basis. Once I started meeting alumni from other generations, I realized that they were also active in groups of Sigma Pi guys. I knew that this was the time to push forward and get not only myself back truly involved, but to lead an effort to getting everyone active in this movement.

When I shared my vision with the group of folks that attended the alumni meeting back in February (which by the way was put on by and paid for by the actives), I could see the gleam in some of the guys' eyes. We elected seven officers, got significant time contribution commitments from many people, and are in the process of putting together an outstanding Alumni Association. My fellow Association directors voted me into the position of President, and I am committed to driving this effort where it needs to be.

I am requesting for YOU to get involved and help make Sigma Pi be an organization that we can all be proud of today and in years to come! Email me at ncsubrew@aol.com and let me know how you would like to be involved.

In the bond,
Brent
Pledge Class – Spring 1990

Update from Dan Ingram, Vice President

It is sometimes hard to believe 15 years have passed since I have been an active brother. Our Rho chapter has given me many reasons to be thankful. While today it's softball, tailgating and catching all the Wolfpack games with Rho alumni, I have many great memories, friends and experiences from my active years at Rho chapter.

At the recent Founder's Day event in February it was easy to see the passion of the current actives and the incredible job they have done in rebuilding Rho chapter in recent years. While I have not been actively involved in almost 10 years with the Alumni association this event led me to re-dedicate my efforts and energy to contribute to helping build a foundation for our Alumni Association for years to come.

In addition to the traditional duties of Vice President this year I will be working with Jack Daniels, Alumni Association Director, to roll out an annual alumni dues structure and later in the year we will announce a Capital Campaign to assist in our future goals. We look forward to establishing a regular communication for the Alumni and developing annual alumni activities that we can all look forward to participating in for years to come.

I look forward to renewing the brotherhood we share. It will be great to see and hear from all of you soon.

In the bond,
Dan Ingram

Update from Chris Albers, Treasurer

If you are reading this letter, I know Sigma Pi has changed your life as much as it has changed mine. It has brought me countless good times (some of which I cannot remember) and a life that has always been rich with friends that have helped me in so many ways over the years. We still gather regularly and they continue to be a huge part of my family and my life. My Dad told me a long time ago that what I have (with Sigma Pi) is rare and it should be nourished and encouraged. I agree!

You know how you remember exactly what you were doing during significant dates in history? My first official day as Treasurer of the Alumni Association was September 11, 2001. Not a good start!

Back then, the role of treasurer was more involved, but due to the recent past as described in Brent's email, it has been somewhat minimal over the past few years. We still pay taxes on our property and we took out a loan from some Alumni, but we are down to only one active bank account and have stopped all credit card contributions. We have also loaned a small amount of cash to the active brothers to help with a cash flow problem, this money is due later this year. As of the writing of this update, we hold about \$2000 in the bank. So as you can see, we need to feed the pig to build up reserves and pay back our loans. This can only be done with alumni support.

We hope to revitalize interest in the Alumni Association and enable the current brotherhood to continue their good work and keep the history and future of Sigma Pi alive. Small contributions and a commitment from all to pay annual alumni dues will give us the ability to reach our goals. By doing our part as alumni we will be able to ensure many more young men can experience what we have and increase our network of future alumni.

Details on the dues and how to contribute are included in this Newsletter. Thanks for your help!

In the bond,
Chris Albers
Pledge Class – Fall '88

Update from Charlie Gardner, Secretary

I have not been actively involved in Sigma Pi Alumni Affairs in over 10 years. I have decided to get re-involved for a number of reasons:

- First and foremost is that my son has become a Sigma Pi Brother at NCSU
 - My best friends are still Sigma Pis
 - The current active brotherhood has shown unbelievable improvement and initiative
- And the alumni association is undergoing a revival, which I can't resist being a part of.

When I became Secretary of the Rho Chapter Alumni Association, I very quickly realized we were missing some important "stuff". Somewhere in the moving and relocating of the Chapter residence, the alumni association lost its past meeting minutes and, most importantly, its By Laws. I checked with a number of former alumni secretaries and treasurers and still could not locate any copies. If you read this and can put your hands on a copy (or the original) of the alumni association By Laws, please let me know at 919 552 7091 or send an email any of us on the Board. In the likely event that none of you kept a copy of the By Laws, I contacted National and asked them if they could provide a model that I might use. I am currently going through that and making modifications suitable for our chapter. After the board reviews it, I may need some of you to review and suggest additions, deletions or modifications. If you're interested, let me know. Absent volunteers, I will call on some past officers for their review and input. Completing this prior to an annual meeting is my goal.

I have also begun keeping soft copies of the alumni board meeting minutes. If you'd like to see any (I will have minutes for three meetings by the time you read this).

Finally, I will try to develop a better system for retaining the association's documentation for use by future administrations. My focus will probably be on some electronic storage where possible. If you have other ideas, send them on.

In the bond,
Charlie

Update from Grady Sykes, Director

I pledged Sigma Pi in the fall of 1953 after enrolling at N C State College. This was a new experience for me in that none of my relatives had ever gone to college much less pledged a fraternity. My memories of Rho Chapter during my freshman year were good ones, even including Hell Week. During my undergraduate years I was very active in the fraternity. I became First Counselor my sophomore year, Second Counselor my junior year and Sage my senior year. The experiences and friendships at Sigma Pi meant a great deal to me and, therefore, Sigma Pi has remained in my heart throughout the years.

After graduating I tried to remain in contact with Rho Chapter by dropping by at Homecoming, Orchid Ball and other special events. But try as you will, as the years went by the visits became less and less. I did manage to keep up with Rho Chapter via the Rhoar and news in the Emerald. I recently attended a Founder's Day event in February and volunteered to serve a two-year term as a Director in the Alumni Association. I appreciate this challenge to get involved with the fraternity again.

I look forward to this opportunity as a Director to work in the area of housing. Since the fraternity moved from the house on Clark Avenue, the Alumni Association, with the help of a group of alumni, has purchased a lot near the corner of Gorman Street and Avent Ferry Road. Meanwhile the fraternity, which has grown in membership and leadership, has moved into a house on Hillsborough Street with a three-year lease. In addition a new fraternity row called Greek Village has been started. I will be working with the Board of Directors and the Alumni Association to decide on the best housing option for Rho Chapter in the future. Options include building on the purchased lot, selling the lot and building in Greek Village, selling the lot and buying/building in another area, or continuing to lease. I look forward to your input as we decide on future housing for Rho Chapter.

In the bond,
Grady

Update from Tommy Rodwell, Director

I pledged Sigma Pi in the Spring of 2002, as a member of the last class to go through the old house on Clark Avenue. The summer after my pledge semester we lost the house that was special to all of us. Perhaps it was the end of an era, but it was also a new beginning for the fraternity. Through various means our numbers were whittled down by the loss of the house and other factors, to a core group of around 10 guys, mostly new initiates. As younger guys, we didn't have a clue how to run the fraternity, being only a semester or two removed from pledging, yet we also didn't want our pledge semester to be our last in the Fraternity.

We recruited and ran the Fraternity from our apartment for about a year, until we were fortunate to discover the old AGR house on Park Avenue (behind the YMCA) which we leased and assumed as the new Fraternity house in the Fall of 2003. With a house to build on and relentless recruiting efforts, we were able to avoid Nationals coming in to re-colonize the chapter. We gained a few good sized pledge classes of very dedicated individuals, and were able to build on the effort and continue to grow the Fraternity. The Fraternity now stands at over 50 members, with large pledge classes coming in every Fall and Spring. The Chapter is moving in the right direction and has a lot of positive momentum, something only amplified by the new house.

During my time in the Chapter as an active member I served on the Executive Council for three years as the Herald. In our revamped Alumni Association, I will be serving as the Alumni/Active Liaison, tasked with keeping both the undergraduate chapter and the alumni apprised of developments and coordinating mutual events. I will assist the Chapter Director, the undergraduate EC, and the Alumni Board in moving in a cohesive and progressive manner. Being not too recently removed from my undergraduate days and still very active since then, I know all members of the Chapter well, providing a good foundation for these efforts. I hope to see/meet many of you at the events we will be planning for the Alumni and Actives with hopes of rekindling a stronger bond between us all as Brothers of Sigma Pi.

In the bond,
Tommy

Update from Jack Daniels, Director

I remember 1968, the year I came to NC State from Decatur, Georgia, as being one of our nation's most eye-opening years. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy both lost their lives to assassins' bullets that year. Neil Armstrong walked on the moon, Nixon became president, Woodstock Music and Art Fair was held in Upstate New York, Ted Kennedy & Mary Jo Kopechne plunged off a bridge on Chappaquiddick Island near Martha's Vineyard, and Mickey Mantle retired from the Yankees. Leaving high school friends behind, most going to Ga. Tech or University of Georgia, was difficult enough, as few students in those days ventured from Georgia up to North Carolina to go to college. My advisor in high school laughed when I told him I was planning to apply to NC State, and I vividly recall his comment, "you'll be lucky to go to Georgia with all of your other nee'r-do-well friends!" I proved him wrong, and carved out a new life at NC State and Rho Chapter.

I pledged during the spring semester '69, and that singular moment changed my life forever! The spring of '69 pledge class started with 14 awkward young men, and after pledge projects, pledge raids, scavenger hunts, serenading at Meredith, roll calls, save the brother, fire drills, and Hell Week, 12 of us morphed into becoming Sigma Pi brothers. It's now been 40 years and many of the men I pledged with, their wives and children, and now their children's spouses, have become and remain my wife, Marsha's, and my very best friends. Life-long buddies! It is hard to describe to the non-initiated the many positive influences Rho Chapter provided me personally that have lasted for a lifetime. For that reason, I hope to help bring the Rho Chapter Alumni Association back to an active, helpful, functional organization, so that collectively, we along with the active brothers can instill these same positive influences and friendships into many more young men, and welcome them into our special Sigma Pi bond.

I truly believe that we are in a pivotal time at Rho Chapter. The current group of fifty men active today have brought us back from the brink of extinction. You might have noticed that one can now read articles about Rho in the *Emerald*, other than just seeing forever-lost members in the Adytum on High! The active brothers are leaders on campus, compete in intramural sports, and participate in worthwhile campus and civic activities. You will be pleased to see their new digs, and what a great yard for socials!

As this is the first Alumni Newsletter, I hope that you will enjoy reading it and that it brings back happy memories of your days at Rho. We all on the Board hope that you too will decide to join the Alumni Association, support our active brothers, and again become involved with this great legacy. Our first meeting in February coincided with Founder's Day weekend, when coincidentally, Sigma Pi honored its 90,000th member, a young man from Rho. The Board has had a few Alumni Association planning meetings since, and ideas for the Alumni Association are now beginning to crystallize. Please contemplate joining the Alumni Association, and stay tuned for information on our first major alumni gathering that we anticipate will take place at the new house on Friday evening during Homecoming. Please contact me or any of the Board members with questions or ideas.

In the bond,
Jack

Alumni Dues Structure

To facilitate the successful revitalization of the Sigma Pi Alumni Association, it is necessary to re-institute the long-standing tradition of Alumni Dues. Some activities dues will be used for, among other things, include: establishing a comprehensive online Alumni Directory of members, hosting an annual Founder's Day event and hosting an annual Homecoming event. Dues are very reasonable, and are assigned on the following schedule:

General Alumni Dues (any alumnus more than 4 years removed from undergraduate): \$50.00/year

First year as Alumnus (year following graduation): \$0.00/year

Second through Fourth years as Alumnus: \$25.00/year

Alumni dues will be based on the calendar year beginning in 2010, though we welcome joining immediately!

The Alumni Association is in the process of finalizing other procedural items, including discussing lifetime memberships and other benefits of active participation. More information will follow.

We welcome all Alumni of Sigma Pi to join the Alumni Association. Membership Fees may be made payable to:

Sigma Pi Alumni Association and may be mailed to Chris Albers (Treasurer), 6800 Jean Drive, Raleigh, NC 27612