



The Hello

ACACIA FRATERNITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS • FALL 2009



Cornerstones Program Growing

In the last issue of *The Hello* we introduced you to the new Cornerstones program embraced by the chapter. **Phil Chapman '71**, who has been leading a supplemental program of education, particularly for pledges over recent years, reports that the program and the educational materials provided to the chapter are making a significant impact.

We're particularly pleased with the chapter members' pro active manner in implementing the new Cornerstones-integrated pledge manual. The manual is proving to be instrumental in the alignment of the Cornerstones program into the new eight week pledge process. A committee on Membership Development collaborated with Patrick McGovern from Acacia National Headquarters to form the new document which will serve as the standing program going forward. The program will include a totally revised and rethought Initiation process, with a focus on meaningful and relevant experiences that will build the confidence of our incoming members.

The program is clearly providing proof that the chapter is moving beyond the "old school" model of membership and developing a more progressive and practical model for all members. The preparation of these materials and their availability through the National Fraternity is a significant advantage for the house overall, as well as

an effective recruitment tool. It helps further prove that Acacia truly cares about the overall development of its members.



Acacia's New (Temporary) Home - Fall 2010



Pictured above is the newly leased Acacia Fraternity house at 606 E. Ohio. Occupancy will begin with the fall semester 2010. Capacity is approximately 46 members and includes 14 parking spaces in the rear.

If we thought buying real estate in the Champaign Urbana area was a challenge, we found that locating and obtaining leased property is a close relative. While some new apartments, suites and other student housing remain vacant, finding acceptable property for relatively short term use is not an easy task.

Begin with your criteria and then try to find what works. Location, size, quality of facility, length of use and cost are just a few of the variables. Then recognize that contracts covering such arrangements typically cover more than 30 pages - with small type.

Of course this all assumes that you have alumni who have the interest, time and talent to research, separate, evaluate and pursue the very few properties that might be favorable opportunities. Ask them to travel 300 miles or more, round-trip, on multiple occasions to further pursue the options. Remembering of course, most of them have jobs to do as well. Anyone who has bought or leased a home also knows completing the

task usually requires many negotiations.

Acacia has been very fortunate to have **Mike Duncan '74**, who has much experience in large scale real estate ventures, interested in seeing Acacia succeed. Add to that more good fortune in having **David Thies '73**, long-time Champaign Urbana attorney, who has helped immensely by gratuitously leading us through many lease documents. Lastly, add Board president **Art Mertes '85**, who served as another legal mind on the subject. Finally, we have been fortunate to have the Corporation Board who had to give the go ahead.

When you look at the photo above of Acacia's home for fall 2010 at 606 E. Ohio, we hope you will further appreciate it knowing this background.

Plan to visit the "new", but temporary, quarters next fall. With purchase plans constantly in flux, we may not be there too long. Nevertheless, we think you and the chapter will agree that our temporary property is a good one, all things considered.

Chapter Officers Reports

Tommy Mauro '09, Philanthropy Chair



Mauro

So far this semester, our chapter has been very involved in philanthropy events on campus planned by other chapters, as well as making strides towards planning our events for later in the semester.

We have participated in Gamma Phi Golf, Alpha Chi Omega Paintball, Kappa Kappa Gamma volleyball and a campus-wide rock paper scissors tournament. Acacia will be holding a pancake breakfast for the members of nine different sororities, and the proceeds of the event will benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Our two main events for the semester include Acacia Claus and Seven Days of Service. Acacia Claus will collect money and toys for needy families. Seven Days of Service is a week-long event in which we participate in seven different community service events around the Champaign Urbana area.

David Chang '07, Head Pledge Educator

My name is David Chang and I am the current head pledge educator. My goal this semester is to take a group of strangers and

transform them into a band of tight-knit brothers. I plan on passing down Acacia traditions while implementing new ideas to make this pledgship experience tailored to the needs of the incoming initiates. Specifically, we will be launching the Cornerstones program that will highlight the skills needed to excel on a personal and professional level. Through this program, the pledge class will be required to attend events such as professional resume critiques, as well as goal setting seminars to enrich their academic careers. Moreover, they will be required to host a community-wide philanthropy event, bettering the lives of individuals in the greater Champaign Urbana area. Upon completing pledgship and initiating into Acacia, this group of promising young men will learn dedication and service to their fellow brethren.

Scott Staiton '08, Junior Dean Paul Warkins '09, Social Chair



Warkins

In regards to our social calendar this semester, Acacia Illinois has been actively participating in many unique social events including miniature golf, paintball, ice skating and a pool party. This has been a wonderful opportunity for our chapter to come together as a

whole, alongside the current pledge class, and get involved with members of various sororities. This semester, specifically, we have had the privilege of hosting events for the ladies of Delta Gamma, Delta Delta Delta, Gamma Phi Beta and Chi Omega. We anxiously await our future events with these women, as well as other sororities.

Patrick Driscoll '09, House Manager



Driscoll

The house this semester has been looking terrific. We have new furniture that brings great comfort to our Alumni Room. The front and side porches have both just been repainted, as well as the second and third floor hallways. Our floors have also been recently waxed and buffed in our foyer, Alumni Room and cafeteria. Alumni who came down for Homecoming expressed great pleasure in the condition of the house. The fire sprinkler system in the house was also recently updated to meet Champaign Urbana code - nearly one year ahead of the deadline. Our current housing inspections have been going much better than in the past as well. This looks to be a great year for the Acacia Fraternity at the University of Illinois.

Acacia Retreat

With the encouragement of Corporation Board president **Art Mertes '85**, along with the assistance and program leadership from Acacia National representatives Patrick McGovern and Keith Bushey, the chapter held a successful and stimulating retreat on Saturday, September 19th. It was held off campus at the Masonic Lodge in Tolono. Alumni **Phil Chapman '71** and **Mel Rapp '48** also attended.

Throughout the day, Patrick and Keith kept the members' minds on matters that make fraternities and individuals successful. A particular highlight was the invitation to the chapter to do a SWOT analysis of Acacia Fraternity at the U of I. SWOT, you may recall, stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The chapters responses resulted in a list that was so enlightening that we thought it be worthwhile to repeat the views expressed here in *The Hello*.

See the SWOT list on page 5



Left: Breakout groups discuss Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats facing the Illinois chapter (and many fraternities and sororities) throughout the country.

Right: An all house member retreat was held on Saturday, September 19 at the Masonic Lodge in Tolono, Illinois. It was led by Acacia National Fraternity leaders Patrick McGovern and Keith Bushey.



Corporation Financial Report

By Dennis Bone '02

The Corporation Board would like to take this edition of *The Hello* to send a special thank you to **Skip Heaver '01** for his time served as Treasurer of the Corporation Board. After years of serving on the Board, Skip has made the tough decision to step down to allow for more time for various commitments in both his professional and personal life. Skip's time and dedication to serve his Fraternity over the past years have been greatly appreciated.

Multiple Board members are currently combining efforts to fill the Treasurer position in Skip's absence, however, we are in need of further assistance. If you would like to give back to your Fraternity in this capacity, please contact either **Mel Rapp '49** or **Art Mertes '85**. Having a finance or accounting background is helpful, however, anyone willing to extend a helping hand would be greatly appreciated.

We are currently working on finishing up our 2009 fiscal year-end audit with Clifton Gunderson, LLP. We expect to have the audit report in hand by the end of November and, as always, would be happy to provide a copy of the report to any inquisitive alumni. Once again this year, our auditors did not note any items of significance that would suggest improper bookkeeping. The Board will continue to receive annual independent audits to ensure fiscal responsibility.



Property Acquisition Update

By Mike Duncan '74, Property Search Chairman

In recent issues of *The Hello*, we have attempted to keep you apprised of our permanent house search progress. Purchasing a new house or land site has been slower than any of us would have liked, impeded in part by some and or all of the following.

Initially, the 26-page Business Plan originally developed in 2007 to help guide us cited in part:

- A. Capital Campaign expected to achieve \$1.75 million in pledges or cash. (\$750,000 in cash "up front" plus \$250,000 per year for the next four years.)
 - In fact, the "up front cash" goal has been achieved and overall pledges exceed \$1,500,000. Not too bad so far.
- B. Purchase of a new house and land that would need renovation for approximately \$1,350,000.
 - Our estimates have proven to be low as we have yet to find a fraternity house for sale that would meet our needs in a location that we would accept. We have been particular and have not issued an offer on something we could not afford or that, in the view of the Board, was not the best possible location in our long term interests.
- C. When we launched our campaign, we had soft commitments for a \$350,000 bridge loan, which essentially factored our projected future pledge receipts.
 - This does not seem achievable in the present market.

The four properties now under consideration are as follows:

Property 1: \$1,500,000 just for land with added cost of removing

three houses and building a new house

Property 2: \$850,000 for land, plus remove two houses and build a new one

Property 3: \$1,100,000 (164' frontage), plus remove three houses and build

Property 4: \$2,200,000 for raw land on Daniel Street in Champaign.

Differences in the above can be accounted for in location, size, buildings currently on the land or requiring renovation, sellers' motivations or interest in selling. All of the opportunities listed above are not listed for sale by the seller, but have been identified by knocking on doors and approaching owners via courthouse documents and asking them if they would sell to us. As of today we have evaluated 31 properties.

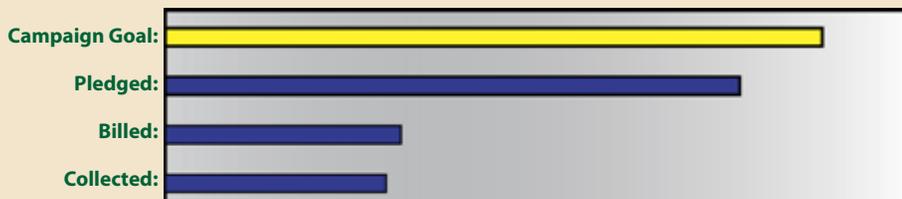
Another potential on-going possibility might be the failure of one of the current fraternities on campus whose house we might acquire. A house in this condition, however, is likely in need of substantial renovation.

Thus we face the not uncommon dilemma of finding that what we want or need is in excess of the assets we have currently available.

The bottom line is that Champaign-Urbana real estate prices remain relatively high due to the constant demand created by the students' need for housing and the University's needs overall. That demand has not eroded, though perhaps not as strong as earlier. We need to reenergize our capital campaign in order for us to complete the objective.

Some of you may have noticed other fraternities on campus being remodeled, expanded, or rebuilt. Alpha Kappa Lambda, for example, has been completely gutted to make room for an expanded and updated house. We believe we can be just as successful with the support of our alumni as they have been with the support of theirs.

The \$1.75 Million Campaign for Acacia



Donors: 218
Pledged: \$1,535,226.00
Billed: \$624,761.79
Collected: \$572,030.19

If you have not already done so, the Board encourages you to make a financial pledge to our capital campaign for a new house. You may do so by visiting www.AcaciaIllinois.com and clicking on the "Support this Campaign" tab. Pledges may be spread out over a multi-year period and paid on a monthly, quarterly, semiannual or annual basis.

Acacia Leadership Conference 2009

The bi-annual Acacia Leadership Conference (ALC) was held again this summer at the Acacia fraternity house in Bloomington, Indiana from July 29 through August 1. The Indiana chapter did an excellent job of playing “host” for the event. Those who may have been to the Indiana campus know that the Acacia house is right across the street from the campus boundary, on a fine property, thus providing an excellent site for the Leadership Conference.

The National Acacia Conclave is held on alternate years. The Acacia Fraternity Foundation meets concurrently at the time of the Leadership conference.

Attending and representing the Illinois chapter were Venerable Dean **Ryan VanEcho '08**, Rush Chairman **Steve Tapas '08** and Treasurer **Chris Lozynski '08**. In addition to participating in the program overall, the Illinois officers made a special presentation on hazing, which was a primary subject throughout the entire conference.

The ALC provides an excellent opportunity for chapters throughout the country to get together and discuss



Illinois house officers make a presentation to more than 100 attendees at the annual summer Conclave held July 29 through August 1 at the chapter house in Bloomington, IN.

experiences, as well as to learn from each other. Outside speakers are engaged where appropriate to the subject matter along

with strong leadership from our National fraternity representatives.

Brother to Brother

David L. Mari '64 wrote in to say, “I have lived in Montana for the past 20 years. I noticed that **Ron Wabel '62** was listed as a lost brother recently. Shortly thereafter, I received an alumni newsletter from my high school that his sister was Teacher of the Year in Montana. I contacted her, and she put me in touch with Ron, so he is no longer “lost”. As fate would have it, he and his wife have been working in Yellowstone National Park for the past several summers. My wife and I met them for brunch near the park before they went back home to Michigan. We had not seen each other for about 45 years. It is a small world - all four of us went to the same high school.”

Do you have news you'd like to share with your brothers? Post interesting information about yourself online at www.AcaciaIllinois.com. Did you recently get married? Have a baby? Change jobs? Retire? Let us know. Post your news today.



Corporation Board Seeks Support

The Corporation Board is in need of greater alumni support.

On page three of this edition of *The Hello*, you will note the resignation of our Corporation Board Treasurer. Such transitions typically occur for a variety of reasons and, on the positive side, result in periodic new thinking and approaches being brought to the Board as new, conscientious alumni lend their shoulder to the wheel. Do you have ideas that you think would benefit Acacia?

The Board has a key group of strong participants, each working in areas relating to their interests. Still, the Acacia Illinois Board numbers fewer than ten members, compared, for example, to the Indiana University Board that has 20 active members.

The Board needs the support and involvement of more alumni. The pursuit of a new permanent home at Champaign and the capital campaign are just two areas that require considerable thought, input and effort.

Though two to three hour evening meetings (about 8 to 10 per year) are mostly held in Chicago, a telephone conference hook up is available for those who live out

of town or may be away temporarily on business. Board members also enjoy the benefits of reengaging with friends of earlier years.

Our alumni directory indicates there are 380 alumni residing in the metropolitan Chicago area. We trust one or more of them would want to enjoy the benefits of being a part of structuring Acacia's activities and destiny at Champaign. If you are such a person, please contact Board President **Art Mertes '85** at (312) 454-0311 or amertes@synergylawgroup.com to inquire further or volunteer to join our current conscientious members. If you live outside of Chicagoland, we can accommodate your desire to give back through multiple electronic means. Our goal is a 20 member Board. Perhaps you're ready to help - and Art awaits your call and inquiries.

The Hello Editors

Jason Postlewait '11 - jpostle3@gmail.com

Mel Rapp '49 - mrapp3@sbcglobal.net

Adam Powers '98 - adampowers1@gmail.com

Property Management Committee

With a new house on the horizon, the Corporation Board, along with the chapter's executive board, realized the need for a new style of management for the fraternity house. **Drew Millard '98**, a Corporation Board member and the owner of 33 Realty in Chicago, has volunteered to revamp the current system to ensure our future house is managed properly.

The first step taken was to expand on the house manager role to oversee the 5-man committee. Each of the five committee members has a very defined role including holding and monitoring security deposits, recording and monitoring house inventory, coordinating repairs and capital expenditures, maintenance and coordinating the move in and move out process. The committee has also installed some new technology to store contracts, parental guarantees and damage deposit agreements online so no documents are misplaced over the years.

The Corporation Board has also decided to hire a third-party, full time house director. The role of the house director is to oversee not only the property management committee, but house operations as well. It is the responsibility of the house director to brief to the Corporation Board on the weekly activities of the house. The Corporation Board, along with the National Fraternity, feel this overall change in management style and philosophy will ensure our investment in a new facility is secure for years to come.

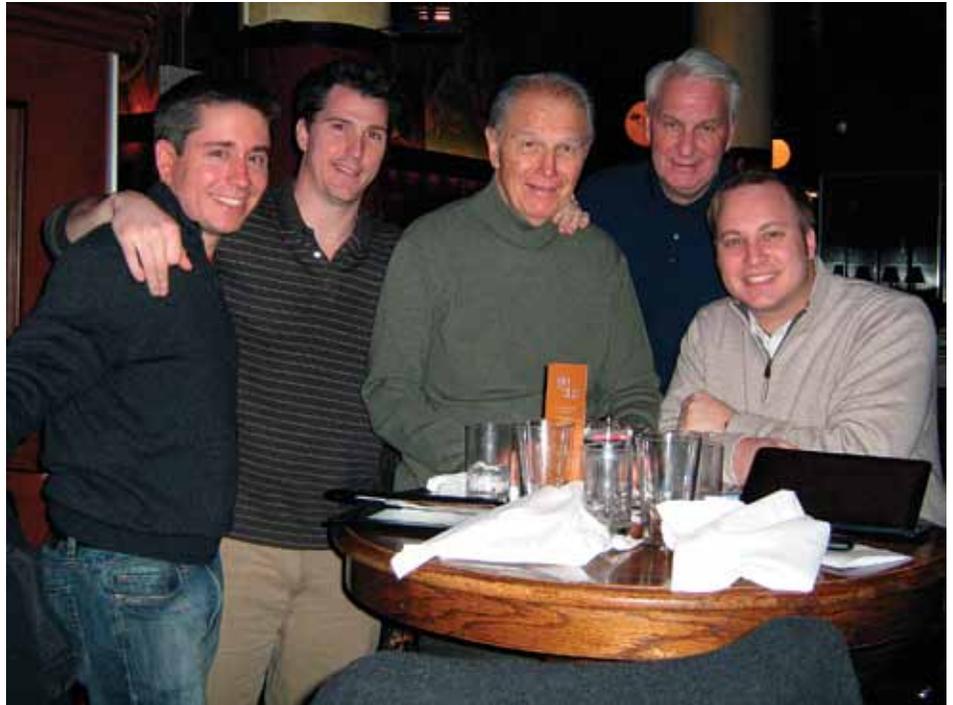
Obituaries

D. Lynn Hall '54 of Mount Prospect, IL passed away in April 2009.

David J. Allen Indiana '57

Acacia's International President passed away on October 6, 2009 at the Indiana University hospital in Bloomington, IN. For the past 30 years, Dave had remained active in the affairs of the Fraternity, including serving on the Indiana University House Corporation Board, and as chapter advisor. He served the International Fraternity as Judge Advocate and was currently fulfilling his second term as International President.

Communication support and assistance provided by Omega Financial, Inc.
(800) 955-ALUM (2586)
www.OmegaAlumniServices.com



All work and no play? Acacia Illinois Board members (L to R) Michael Conniff '93, Drew Millard '98, Mel Rapp '49, Mike Duncan '74 and Adam Powers '98 enjoy socializing before getting down to business.

Chapter Retreat

continued from page 2

STRENGTHS:

- Social
- Strong leadership - Executive Committee
- Acacia pride
- Strong recruitment skills
- Diversity in interests and skills
- Adaptability
- Strong brotherly bonds

WEAKNESSES:

- Member apathy (too used to our comfort zone)
- Sociability with and support from upperclassmen members
- Pledge class alienation from other classes
- Lack of campus participation
- Philanthropy service events
- Adherence to the rituals of Acacia
- Sticking to our core values

OPPORTUNITIES:

- Greek Week
- Philanthropy
- Sober social events with sororities
- Build rapport with University admin
- Clean slate in terms of new members
- That we're even still open and have the ability to prove that we are a well- rounded group
- Busy campus atmosphere to react with
- New house next year

THREATS:

- Location of new house next year
- Loose ends in membership (confusion about status)
- Under more scrutiny that subsequent classes might fall into similar position
- The possibility that current leadership won't step up to the extent needed
- Negative view of Acacia "out there" in the minds of some people
- Those brothers that are not "active" but are still enjoying the benefits of membership

Please note that these responses were spontaneous and therefore may not always reflect the views of everyone.





Acacia Fraternity
University of Illinois #695
PO Box 2187
Columbus, GA 31902-2187

Help us keep our alumni records up-to-date! Edit your member profile online at www.AcaciaIllinois.com or clip this form, place it in a stamped envelope and send to: Acacia Fraternity, University of Illinois #695, PO Box 2187, Columbus, GA 31902.

Name _____

Roll Number _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____



Acacia Initiates 22

Initiation took place on Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5 for this year's 22-member pledge class.

Alumni interested in attending future initiations should contact a member of the Board for event dates and locations.

Why not join the chapter in these ceremonies and bring back some memories in the process?



The Hello Distribution Expanded

Now included on the mailing list for *The Hello* are the parents of all active chapter members and pledges for whom *The Hello* has a home address. We welcome these new readers and any views they may wish to share with *The Hello*.



Thanks to all the Brothers who turned out to make this year's Homecoming a great time for undergrads and alumni alike!

Acacia Illinois wishes you and your family all the joys of the Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!



Visit the Acacia Website

Visit www.AcaciaIllinois.com, the official alumni website, to:

- Learn more about the chapter
- Search for alumni
- Update your address, phone number and e-mail address
- Find out about upcoming events
- Post noteworthy accomplishments (a new baby, a recent marriage, a recent promotion, etc.)
- Support the fraternity's capital campaign