

VOLUNTEERS

Bob Nelson, ΔΔ916,
Association President
Alumni Chapter Commander
and Recorder

Nick Bucci, ΔΔ1510,
Association Director

Darren Crisman, ΔΔ1475,
Association Director

Pat Thompson, ΔΔ1400,
Association Director

Doug Kosydar, ΔΔ1249,
Association Director

Jon Vinas, ΔΔ1473,
Association Director

Chris Dorian, ΔΔ1483,
Association Treasurer

James Shincovich, ΔΔ860,
Alumni Chapter Lt. Commander,
Association Director,
LFAA Director

Edwin Sidwell, ΔΔ879,
Association Vice President,
LFAA Secretary

James Wyland, ΔΔ 1273,
Chapter Advisor,
University Advisor,
Alumni Advisory Board Chair

George Bonnewell, ΔΔ1490,
Alumni Chapter Treasurer

Lane Kintigh, ΔΔ1156,
Association Director

Steven Rodrigo, ΔΔ1160,
Association Director

Ernest Russom, ΔΔ1104,
Association Director

IN MEMORIAM



The "In Memoriam" section of the recent *Penn Stater* magazine listed the following brother passing to the Chapter Eternal:

Jeffrey R. Price, ΔΔ1105



The Delta Delta

Sigma Nu Fraternity at The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA • Spring 2020

www.sigmanupennstate.org

www.sigmanu-psu.org

HONOR ROLL

The following brothers have donated to the Re-Colonization Fund since our fall 2019 newsletter:

Michael Delo, ΔΔ1394, Founder —

By his parents in his memory

Robert Bruner, ΔΔ1077, Legion of Honor

John Frankola, ΔΔ1437, Legion of Honor

Robert Free, ΔΔ586, Legion of Honor

William Hibler, ΔΔ721, Legion of Honor

Robert Nelson, ΔΔ916, Legion of Honor

Steve Rodrigo, ΔΔ1160, Legion of Honor

Carl Schaaf, ΔΔ1227, Legion of Honor

Robert Comfort, ΔΔ713, Knight

Robert Federoff, ΔΔ749, Knight

Scott Miller, ΔΔ956, Knight

Albert Schmitt, ΔΔ1061, Knight

David Wittman, ΔΔ1026, Knight

Terhune Dickel, ΔΔ638, Rock Club

Thomas Schwartz, ΔΔ876, Rock Club

Alexander Wall, ΔΔ809, Rock Club

Thomas Armstrong, ΔΔ1041

We apologize for misspelling the name of Brother Dante Corso, ΔΔ821, in our fall Honor Roll.

SUPPORT FOR RE-COLONIZATION

Due to the generous support of our alumni, the Re-Colonization Fund now stands at \$12,985.

As discussed in our fall 2019 newsletter, we estimate a need for approximately \$150,000 by the end of our lease with the Evans Scholars Foundation. A capital improvement plan has been prepared and is summarized in the recent Annual Report. The Annual Report is available on our web site (www.sigmanu-psu.org). If you'd like a full copy of the improvement plan, please send an e-mail to nelsonnittany@aol.com.

We want to thank those men on our Honor Roll who have given. These men joined our Honor Roll by making a voluntary gift to support us and our desire to perpetuate something that is bigger than any one Brother

. . . something that is right and good and worth passing on. Do you agree?

Make a gift today to add your name to the Honor Roll. Every gift matters, regardless of how big or small. You can help us meet the challenges and opportunities head-on for future generations.

Using the form at the end of this newsletter, please send your donations to

Delta Delta Property Association
19 Colonnade Way, Suite 117, #239
State College, PA 16803

Unless the donors directs otherwise, all donations will be set aside to support the successful re-colonization of Delta Delta Chapter of Sigma Nu at Penn State.

LEASE EXTENSION

The Property Association's Board of Directors and the Evan's Scholars Foundation (ESF) have verbally agreed to the provisions of an amendment to the current lease that would

extend the lease until 2028. At the time this newsletter was prepared, the lease was with the respective attorney's for legal review.

BLUE-WHITE WEEKEND

The football team's annual spring scrimmage will be held on **Saturday, April 18**. If you plan to be in town on Friday, contact Brother Nelson to arrange a possible get-together beverage and/or meal. Otherwise, he plans to hold a tailgate beginning at 8:00 AM in the grass lot of the north end zone. Contact him for more details.



HOUSE NEWS

Recent Repairs and Maintenance

After years of foundation leakage in the north basement, we installed a foundation drainage system with dual sump pumps. Water damage to the lower walls was repaired with new studs, sill plate, insulation and paneling. The total cost of this project was approximately \$16,000.

A failure of a portion of the third floor hallway ceiling heat required the installation of two baseboard heating units. Our five-year-old hot water heating system required two repairs. The roof's ridge vent is leaking and an order has been placed to replace this portion of the

roofing system. Leakage is being collected to prevent ceiling damage. The remainder of the roof, last replaced in 1999, is reported to be in good condition. A much needed masonry repair of the brick steps outside the kitchen was completed.

MEETING REPORT

Annual Alumni Meeting

The annual meeting of the Association and Alumni Chapter, required by our bylaws, was held by telephone conference beginning at 7:00 PM on September 22, 2019. Agenda topics included officer and director elections (see the listing on our web site using the Alumni

tab), status of the lease extension, financial status, plans for the year, and a brief report by Brother Nelson. A meeting report was prepared and distributed.

FLASHBACK

OKBOOMERS

What year? Can you name at least 10 brothers?



Nearly Forgotten Philanthropy

While reviewing some historical files about our chapter, a reference to the HR “Ike” Gilbert Memorial Fund was found. **Ike** was $\Delta\Delta 206$. The university was contacted to learn the fund’s status. Apparently, our alumni either started this fund around 1973 (we have a list of the early Delta Delta donors), or significantly contributed to it, for post-graduate scholarships for athletic managers. Brother Gilbert was a graduate assistant manager for the football team.

The university reported the current market value of the fund is \$75,672.22 and the book value of the fund (total of gifts received) is \$22,785.29. Additionally, we were informed that his daughter, Joyce Sipple, is receiving the annual stewardship reports and funds were awarded this year to James Weaver who is the head manager of the men’s volleyball team.

Brother Gilbert served as our alumni newsletter editor for many years and our files contain a few copies. He was held in high regard by the alumni of his era as well as those who followed. His communications with alumni during the period following the February 1966 fire were critical to the success of our rebuilding campaign. Because of Ike’s efforts, and other dedicated alumni leaders, the house was redesigned, rebuilt, refurbished, and reoccupied by September 1968, while helping to keep the undergraduate chapter functioning – a remarkable achievement.

Our alumni database records that he was born in 1904, joined Sigma Nu in 1923, and resided locally at Ridge Ave. Ms. Sipple, age 82 and a State College resident, has agreed to meet with Brother Nelson to review scrap books and any other relevant information she may have. “Stay tuned” for an update in later newsletters.

ALUMNI NEWS

A very popular feature of earlier newsletters was alumni updates. We want to renew this feature. If you have news of you and/or your family that you’d like to share, please send a note to Brother Nelson at nelsonnittany@aol.com or post an update at our website, www.sigmanu-psu.org. Also, if you have a “shout-out” to another brother or group of brothers, please let us know and we’ll try to accommodate.

LOST BROTHERS

No Brother Left Behind

We’re missing contact information for some of our alumni brothers and need your help to find them. Head to our website to see a current copy of our lost mailing and email lists. Do you see a brother you know? Email your updates to alumninews@affinityconnection.com.

SPECIAL PROJECT

House Mother’s Suite

The lease amendment includes terms that are very favorable to the Association for converting the HMS to an uncovered patio. If/when the amendment is executed, we’ll share the details via a dedicated e-mail to all alumni for whom we have an e-mail address.

Virtual House Tour

Please go to the Photo Album tab on our web site and select **Virtual House Tour** to see all of the recent renovations performed by ESF.

DELTA DELTA HISTORY

Send your pictures and stories to be featured in this section in the future

Beginning with this newsletter, we’ll include an article on the chapter’s history, not necessarily in chronological order. In this newsletter, a first-hand account of the 1966 fire by Brother **Robert J. Niznik, $\Delta\Delta 855$** , as extracted from the June 2000 *Delta Delta*. Upcoming articles include an account of a “Dock Party” and a report on chapter’s participants in the historic 1948 Cotton Bowl.

The Day of “The Fire”, by Robert J. Niznik, ’68, $\Delta\Delta 855$

It was a cold day on February 23, 1966, but then again, aren’t they all cold in State College at that time of the year? I was trying to stay awake in my E. Mch. mass in one of the engineering buildings on the southwest part of campus. I was pondering why I was still in mining engineering, being on the verge of flunking out after two consecutive terms on the dean’s list. (The dean has two lists, you know, and the one that I was on was not the one your parents normally brag about.) I kept getting interrupted from my drowsy state by the background blare of sirens and bells from fire engines. Something, not good, was definitely going on.

As class was over and I was walking up the mall, I heard murmuring about a fire on campus. Rounding the corner heading back to the house, I could see smoke billowing in the distance. It was then that I heard some students saying, “Frat house on fire.” My pace quickened as I thought “It must be the ancient ratty-looking Sigma Chi house next door.” As I got closer, however, I realized that it was not Sigma Chi but someplace further up the street, and the next thing up the street was us. Now I was running, and then I saw it ... smoke pouring out of all the windows, fire trucks everywhere, chaos on the ground and all the spectators gawking.

I forced my way to the front of the crowd, pushing people out of the way, up to the police barricade where I was told to “move back.” When I told them that I lived there, their entire attitude changed, and they quickly ushered me in, eager to know who I was. As I saw some of the other brothers there, I saw looks of relief on their faces, as I had been put on the list of people who were “missing.” No one had known of my whereabouts, nor those of my roommate, **Bud Hirshberg ’66**. We were the only two residents of the “little dorm” and had not been seen that day. I knew for certain that Bud was at the ROTC building – of course, where else would he be – and sure enough, his Monza came zooming into the parking lot shortly thereafter.

My recollections of the events of the fire were as follows: early on that morning, **John Hoyt ’67** (a.k.a. the “Rochester Flash”), **Don Bain ’65**, and some of the others guys were having breakfast in the kitchen while most of the others were still asleep. When they left the kitchen and entered the foyer there was smoke beginning to billow from the basement stairwell. They knew it was a major problem and dashed back to the kitchen to get fire extinguishers. When they returned a

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DELTA DELTA HISTORY

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few seconds later, there were flames shooting out of the basement stairwell. Hoyt ran up the stairs throughout the house sounding the alarm. Unfortunately, since most of the brothers were asleep, they did not really comprehend the seriousness of the event. Others said later that they thought John was an excitable guy and was maybe exaggerating the gravity of the situation. At this point there was scant evidence that a fire was raging. The next thing you knew, *bam*, the fire had broken out from the walls, the ceiling, the floors, everywhere. For those who had not heeded John's initial alert, it was now deadly serious.

Brian Circosta '68 was in the second floor shower when smoke started pouring in. He "barely" managed to get to the corner window, push it open, and push a six-pack of Pepsi off the window ledge. The Pepsi landed on the head of Don Bain, who was on the ground encouraging Brian to leap – which he did – *au naturel*, where Don Bain and others broke his fall to the snowy terrain below. They quickly provided Brian with a jacket to cover up.

Lew Powell '66 had a worse time from the third floor, jumping all the that way and landing in the hedges in front of the house, miraculously escaping serious injury. **Bill Kirschner '66** got on the roof of the house mother's room and debated going back in and taking the stairs or leaping to the ground below. Wisely, he chose jumping, and he too avoided injury. Most of the guys scrambled down the back stairs known as the fire well (or fire tower). All in all, the brotherhood

was lucky ... all of the guys got out. It was not so fortunate for our housemother, Mrs. Margaret Yungert, who perished in the fire.

[Editor's Note: According to a news account, the correct spelling is Margareath Yuengert. She was 67 and died at the Centre County Hospital in Bellefonte as a result of second and third degree burns.]

When the alarm was sounded, Mom Yungert also was in bed but awakened, and assured the person who alerted her that she was on her way out. When she did not come, she was summoned again and was even told that she should exit out of her first-story window. No one is sure what happened next. Speculation was that she, being a proper woman, did not want to exit out the window. Another version is that she did leave the house but could not find our cook, and went back inside to assure that she also escaped. Mom probably may have glanced into the living room, seen what she construed as safe passage, and started to make her way to the front door. The smoke was then so thick there that she overshot the front door, walked into the dining room, and was overcome by smoke. That is where she was discovered, a victim of the lightning fast fire.

We were shocked and saddened. We cried. It was not possible to believe. I can still see her playing cards with **Bobbi** and **Bob Spinelli '67**, the **Bains**, **Brokenshire**, **John Ruland '65** or **Tom Boyd '66**. I'll always remember her impeccable appearance, always

housemother and resulted in the destruction of the large building and its contents. Mrs. Margareath Yuengert, 67, died at the Centre County Hospital in Bellefonte yesterday at 5 p.m. as the result of second and third degree burns received shortly



MRS. YUENGERT

after 10 a.m. when she apparently was trapped as she attempted to leave her first floor apartment.

She was found unconscious and badly burned by Alpha firemen soon after they arrived at the scene. The cook and fraternity president had called her when the fire was discovered and told her to leave the building, they reported.

Lewis M. Powell, senior from Temple Hills, Md., who jumped from an upper floor window to escape the fire, was listed in "good condition" at the Risenour Health Center on campus this morning.

Dr. Herbert R. Glenn, medical director at the center, said Powell would remain under observation for several days. He has small facial lacerations and abrasions, but received no broken bones. His parents are in State College and have been visiting him at the center.

As representatives of the State fire marshall's office today began an investigation—described as a normal procedure when a fatality is involved—officials planned to take fraternity members into the building, one by one, to check the rooms and recover any

See FIRE Pg. 11

a lady.

There was speculation about what caused the fire, but as far as

I remember, they always had two theories about the reason. The first was that the electrical wiring, which was old, shorted out and started it. The other theory was more intriguing. For years everyone had been tossing cigarette butts into the fireplace in the study. It was thought that the trap in the floor had a breach in the opening. A cigarette butt went down, landed in the false ceiling above the chapter room [Ed Note. Now the north basement or bar room], ignited and, literally burned internally, all night long, suddenly bursting out all over the place.

Whatever the cause, the effect was devastating: one life lost and scores of others inextricably altered for years to come. We were lost, homeless and depressed. Ironically, it was Ash Wednesday.



546-266

Yes! I want to support Delta Delta's Recolonization!

Please accept my contribution of:

- Founder (\$500 and above)
 Legion of Honor (\$250–\$499.99)
 Knights (\$100–\$249.99)
 White Rose (\$75–\$99.99)
 Rock Club (\$50–\$74.99)
 Other (Up to \$49.99)

Total amount \$ _____

Gifts are not tax-deductible

My check is enclosed payable to **Delta Delta Property Association.**

Mail to:

Delta Delta Property Association
19 Colonnade Way, Suite 117, #239
State College, PA 16803