



NOVEMBER 2018 > VOLUME XV

## UNDER REVIEW

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# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION REPORTS

By Rick Meigs '80

## UNDER REVIEW

**O**micron enjoyed a spirited start to the semester, confident in its strong leadership and advising, proud of its healthy culture, and with great enthusiasm for the excellent program its officers had prepared. A sure sign of this energy was strong recruitment of a fall class of 11, the largest of any Cornell fraternity and perhaps the largest fall class in Omicron's history. Another was a successful Homecoming, with the largest turnout in several years, celebrating the contributions of Jim Sollecito '76 and Sandy Gilbert '62.



**Rick Meigs '80**  
**President**

Shortly after Initiation, the High Alpha, Josh Nathanson '20, was called in to a meeting with Kara Miller McCarty, director of the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life (OSFL), and notified that the chapter was being placed on "interim suspension" due to "allegations of a serious nature." The source of the allegations is not known for certain, and indeed a formal list of the allegations has not even been presented to the chapter or its alumni or faculty advisors. Based on his extended exposure to the undergraduates over recent months, High Pi Jason Cho '98, is optimistic that the House will ultimately be vindicated of any serious wrongdoing. In the meantime, all undergraduates have been cooperating fully with the investigations.

Under "interim suspension" and "limited operations" (its Lambda Chi Alpha counterpart), all functions of the fraternity essentially cease other than

operation of the house and dining room. As the Oracle went to press, the investigations by both Lambda Chi Alpha International Headquarters and by Cornell remain underway. This is naturally a very disappointing outcome after all the good work over the past two semesters with alumni and the undergraduates striving so hard not only to meet the standards of Cornell fraternities, but to be a positive force driving the entire Greek Community forward.

We had hoped to know the outcome of the investigation by this writing, but it is now clear it will continue on for some time. As a result, we are moving ahead with this edition of The Oracle and I will let you all know the outcome by an email alert as soon as we have something to report.

In the meantime, please join me in thanking Jason Cho and the other alumni who have helped to advise the Chapter during this difficult time and wish our undergraduate brothers the best possible outcome for the House.

For any questions about the foregoing or Omicron alumni activities, feel free to contact me at [rmeigs@comcast.net](mailto:rmeigs@comcast.net). ❖

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## EDGEMOOR LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION REPORT

**E**lliott Sloane '74 reminds us that the Edgemoor Leadership Foundation (ELF) was founded in 2011 and incorporated and registered in Delaware as an IRS Recognized Charitable Organization. This makes all donations tax exempt.

The annual cash flow of the ELF is \$200,000 though it is rapidly diminishing as Omicron's Capital Campaign pledges are completed. Current assets are \$21,000 (ISWZA Education Project) and The Matthew Omans' Memorial Fund (\$75,000).

Income sources for the ELF are the Capital Campaign pledge payments, Legacy Gifts and random acts of kindness from the brotherhood. Expenses include monthly pledge and payment mailings, bank fees insurance and tax filings. The ELF has contributed \$1.1 million in educational facility renovations to the Edgemoor Chapter House. ❖

By Chris Turner '95

## ISWZA FRATERNITY, INC.

**E**dgemoor continues to be kept in good physical condition thanks to some important improvements and preventative maintenance over the summer. The live-in graduate advisor's apartment that had been used for furniture storage has been cleaned and retrofitted with a hot water connection and is now home to graduate advisor and law student from TEP at the University of Florida, Brandon Hanley.



Chris Turner '95

The outside doors in The Ashley Reading Room have weathered due to snow and rain and have been refinished to eliminate damaging UV rays and the tops capped with copper to prevent water and snow from penetrating and delaminating the doors. One of the cedar porch railings cracked and has been replaced, stained to match the rest of the deck and strengthened with support blocks beneath the lower rails in the center

of the longest spans. The room was also equipped with an air conditioner to accommodate the Telluride summer rental program.

The east side roof was not replaced during the renovation for cost reasons which has led to some leaks due to deteriorated roof shingles. The area is now under repair to correct the damage and to be made weather tight to prevent further damage.

Structural engineer, Javier Rosa, has been contracted to work with architect, Bert Fortner, to analyze the structural needs of the Summer House. A design has already been developed and much of the work has been completed with the remainder currently in progress.

The major remaining project to complete is the opening of the new bathrooms on the second and third floors. We had hoped to begin that process with the added revenue from the summer Telluride rental, but the lower yield in Rush

because of the House's provisional status has not made that financially possible. Instead, we have had to use the funds to subsidize the lower live-in rate so the Omicron House bills remain competitive with the other fraternities on campus. As we begin to move back toward normal social status, we hope to use the Telluride funds to address Edgemoor's remaining physical shortcomings. ❖



# CORNELL TODAY: NEW STUDENTS, ADMISSIONS, AND FINANCIAL AID

By Stephen Ashley '62

## The

third Friday in August 2018 was humid, damp and rainy as 3,325 freshmen and transfer students started their Cornell experience. These students, together with their parents and other family members, gathered in the rain for the New Student Convocation. This event was designed to welcome the student with remarks from lead-

ers of student government, Vice President for Student Life/Ryan Lombardi, and an address from President, Martha Pollock. The President's address touched on themes and advice that are valid for all students at Cornell as well as alumni with many years separating them from their freshmen matriculation. Martha spoke of the need for respecting points of view different from one's own, embracing others from different backgrounds, ethnicity and cultural traditions, and engaging in

opportunities to move out of one's normal comfort zone. She challenged the new students to approach their years at Cornell, both in the classroom and out, with "verve". The President uses this noun frequently in her remarks. She is looking for enthusiasm, vigor, spirit and vivaciousness. Schoelkopf Stadium was a sea of umbrellas with few, if any, faces visible. In spite of the rain few left, and at the end all were smiling and eager to move on to their individual college dean's welcoming. Thus was the start of a new academic year.

A closer look at the more than 3,300 incoming freshmen tells us that they come from 47 different states, Washington, DC, Guam, Puerto Rico and are citizens of 43 different countries. Cornell received 51,324 applications for the Class of 2022 and admitted 5,448. 61% of those admitted chose Cornell, which is the highest yield in more than 35

years. 13% of the freshmen class are the first in their families to attend college.

The foregoing represents the hard work of the Admissions Teams in Cornell's seven undergraduate colleges. However, this work takes place in the context of significant pressures on higher education to prove its worth, justify its cause, expand its outreach to lesser served communities and erase the elitist label. Harvard has recently been legally challenged over its admissions policy, pundits rail against legacy admissions and parents everywhere worry about job availability post-graduation.

For the past decade, Trustees have been very focused on tuition levels, affordability, access and student debt. There is no question that in gross tuition dollars Cornell is expensive, but not more so than its peer institutions. In rough terms, costs in the endowed units exceed \$60,000.00 and in the Contract Colleges, costs are in excess of \$40,000.00. Prior to 2008, the Board adopted a needs-blind admission policy. In simple terms that meant that if a student was accepted, the financial aid office would work with the student and the student's parents or guardian with scholarship and loans making it possible for the student to attend. Beginning in 2009, the University eliminated parental contributions for those with a family income of less than \$60,000.00 and assets less of \$100,000.00. Further, the maximum amount of debt included in financial aid was either eliminated or reduced for students at all income levels and the amount of Cornell grant aid was increased. The result of these initiatives is that the median net cost is lower now than it was in 2000 in inflation adjusted terms, resulting in a significant increase in admissions yield in a very competitive marketplace. Harvard, Princeton and Yale are often cited as being the most aggressive on financial aid. Duke, Stanford and Penn similarly way in -- all having resources in terms of endowment per student that significantly exceed Cornell's. Of the nearly 15,000 undergraduates at Cornell during the academic year 2017/18 -- 47% received financial aid of any type.

Beginning in the fall of 2018 most students from families with incomes between \$60,000 and \$85,000 are limited to a \$2,500 loan cap, and those from families with income between \$85,000 and \$135,000 will experience a loan cap of \$5,000. Most significantly, the percentage



Stephen Ashley

## NEW STUDENTS, ADMISSIONS, AND FINANCIAL AID

of enrolled Cornell students borrowing during the academic year has decreased from 43% in 2007 to 33% in 2017. Average debt upon graduation for Cornell students who borrowed is approximately \$25,500.00. The media stories that shock the conscience are those that address the extraordinarily high level of debt – in some cases approaching \$100,000.00 and beyond – and the correspondingly high default rates resulting therefrom. The more careful dissection of that data suggests that much of that excess debt and high default ratio is resulting from for-profit institutions that in some cases are predatory. Unfortunately, the Department of Education is rolling back some regulatory requirements that were designed to mitigate such abuse.



We started this column with a look at the welcoming of Cornell's new students and moved through some of the admissions and financial aid data that made it possible for them to matriculate. But what happens at the end of four years? Close to 94% of Cornell students graduate at the end of four years. The data for the class of 2017 (the most recent available) suggests the following:

Employed -- 57.2%  
Graduate School -- 25.6%  
Other -- 17.2%  
Mean Starting Salary -- \$65,187.00  
Median Starting Salary -- \$63,071.00

In summary, the data suggests that Cornell has pursued meaningful programs that economically diversified its student population, of supporting that effort with the appropriate needs-blind financial aid policies and sending its students into meaningful post-graduation opportunities at above median U.S. household income. Without question, these efforts will continue, be refined and developed and will be the basis for further philanthropic need as a tradition of grateful alums giving back to their alma mater generously.

Footnote: I am indebted to Ryan Lombardi, Vice President of Student Life for the data contained in this column. ❖



# GREEK LIFE: UNDERSTANDING OMICRON'S CHALLENGES

By Ralph Wilhelm '67

**Yes,**

after 18 months, yours truly is back writing for the *Oracle*. I needed a bit of time away and I suspect that you all needed that time also...without me. But hey, things have changed enough now that we need to discuss the mood on campus and the Changes that President Pollack has written and distributed on May 4th.



**Ralph Wilhelm**

(<http://statements.cornell.edu/2018/20180504-greek-letter-org-reforms.cfm>) Further, the Cornell Board of Trustees issued the following unanimous letter of support for this Pollack initiative. (<http://statements.cornell.edu/2018/20180504-greek-letter-org-reforms-trustees.cfm>) If you haven't already, I'd suggest you make the time to read both postings; they are quite significant for the Cornell Greek world.

Before we delve into the Pollack initiatives, I wanted to underscore a few points:

While both of these letters were posted on May 4, 2018, the President's message was begun in early February. Yes, it was thoughtfully crafted over a period of over two months with selected inputs from a variety of places.

None of these initiatives are "new" or crafted out of the clear blue. Rather all of them in one form or another have been discussed at length out in the open, within the FSAC, the administration, meetings with Alumni, and with multiple Greek chapter leaders, Omicron included. What is "new" is to see them worded as they are and in one document with the University President's signature.

This list of initiatives was discussed at length at a Trustee Board meeting in March with the President presenting the content and the rationale for taking these steps. As you would expect, Vice President Lombardi was there to aid and reinforce the message. The discussion was lengthy, transparent, and highly significant, as you would expect.

The unanimous support from the Board of Trustees regarding this Pollack letter came at the end of the discussion and is quite meaningful and significant. The BOT support this set of initiatives totally.

So, how to comment on these initiatives? I can and will do that below, but one more comment needs to be highlighted by itself: this "watershed moment" is exactly what it appears – a point in time where the University is laying out very clearly the expectations it must see from the Greek Community, undergraduates and alumni alike. Gone are the days of promises, presentations, and a disturbing lack of consistent irreversible corrective action. The Greek Community has been given a chance to recover and consistently improve, all due to support of the University staff leadership and the Board of Trustees. Make no mistake however: measured patience is gone. It is now up to us, alumni and undergraduates alike, to decide to demonstrate our commitment to that we say we live by. It is up to us as individuals, as chapters, as Councils, and as a Cornell Greek Community.

As some of you know, Kara Miller McCarty (married to Matt McCarty on May 5, 2018) is now the full time director of the Office of Sorority and Fraternity Life as of June 2017. She has hired three stunning leaders to each be responsible for the three tri-councils. The Assistant Advisor for the IFC is Justin Goldsman. I'd heartedly recommend that alumni and undergraduate Omicron leaders make the time to meet and build a relationship with Justin and Kara.

And as a recent update, Dr. Joe Burke, the Executive Director of Campus and Community Engagement and also Kara's boss, will be retiring on September 4, 2018. His replacement has not been named as of the writing of this update; Dr. Vijay Pendakur, the current Dean of

## UNDERSTANDING OMICRON'S CHALLENGES

Students, will do double duty for a while and fill in for Joe as well as keeping his current responsibilities.

Now moving to President Pollack's initiatives, I'd refer you first to Martha's letter easily reached by using the web link listed in the first paragraph of this column. I will comment on the items in order but try not to insult your intelligence; we will not comment on items that appear to be strikingly clear and unambiguous.

Changes effective immediately:

Substantiated acts of hazing resulting in loss of recognition. Already been implemented beginning in spring 2018 semester.

Hard alcohol not being permitted. One chapter already cited BEFORE classes started this fall. This will continue.

Changes to occur this fall semester 2018:

A system wide scorecard for each chapter. Outlined already; will be posted by Nov 1st, 2018. Chapter Judicial histories for multiple years will be separately posted.

Event management guidelines are being worked now in a separate committee chaired by Kara, composed of alums, undergraduates and staff. This committee will tackle a wide variety of topics including how many events a chapter may host, potentially College-town events, the use of Sober Monitors and Cayuga's Watchers, best practices from other universities, etc. These guidelines will be close to final before the end of the calendar year.

Changes to occur in spring semester 2019:

"Leadership positions" in each chapter to live in and

be only juniors or seniors. It is proposed that this will apply to two chapter officers in the spring 2019 and to four officers in the fall 2019 and thereafter. At a minimum the President MUST be included in this count; it is up to the chapter to define which load-bearing and significant positions will be "counted" and qualify the chapter each semester (besides the Chapter President.)

The Chapter Review Board process that governs recognition will be revisited, studied, improved upon, and submitted for approval by the University President. See separate paragraph below for more explanation.

Changes to occur in the fall semester 2021:

All residential fraternities and sororities must have a live in adviser. A committee on Live In Advisors has been formed and has been meeting already; it is made up of staff, alumni and undergraduates. (Note that close to HALF of the Greek Houses on campus already



## UNDERSTANDING OMICRON'S CHALLENGES

have Live In Advisors, including about a dozen IFC Chapters. While we have a lot to do to unify expectations, provide multiple feeder paths for potential advisors, the past history of chapters who have had them is UNIVERSALLY supportive of this approach. This does work.)

As for the Chapter Review Board, this will take more time than we like I'm afraid. Currently there are TWO review boards and separate Codes of Conduct for the Greek world and the non-Greek world on campus. This is problematic. The good news is that a recent Presidential Commission reported out in early May to President Pollack that this one item was a huge issue and needed to be addressed. The University leadership will comment on this early in the fall semester, but in terms of the order of approach, the Student Code must be addressed first. I am oversimplifying here, but it will be addressed and then a Committee established to formulate a consistent and transparent judicial process for the campus. It will most likely be one process and not two separate ones, but stay tuned as the solution and approaches are made public and progress is made to tackle the Code and also the judicial process.

Obviously this is a time for considerable change on campus with Greek Chapters, their members, and frankly with expectations for Greek alumni. The individual chapters and their members need individual alumni and Alumni Board support more than ever. And quite frankly we continue to have misguided alumni (thankfully not in large numbers) who are part of the problem with regard to Chapters and their undergraduate members who make unhealthy choices. My plea for the Omicron Alumni as individuals and those on our various Boards is for more involvement, support and guidance to the Chapter and to the undergraduates. Without that support, we can and probably will slip into our challenging behaviors of the past that led to real, consistent and problematic behavior. It IS up to all of us; our choices will make a difference.

Last item is to suggest where you can stay in touch with these changes. Firstly, I am always "open" for conversation; email and cell phone info is listed at the bottom of this column. But there are also sessions that will occur over this academic year where senior University staff and informed alumni will be available to talk, listen, and clarify what the changes mean and when they will take place. These future meetings include:

Homecoming (every year): September 21 to 22; Greek

information reception on Saturday, 9 to 11 am, Sept 22. I will also be joining other Omicron Alums and undergraduates at Edgemoor on Saturday 11 am to discuss these changes.

A.D. White Greek Leadership Summit (every year): October 12-14; Friday dinner through Sunday lunch on campus. Only weekend totally devoted to Greek affairs, for undergraduates and alumni.

Trustee Council Weekend, TCAM (every year): November 2-3; various sessions but primarily Greek Breakfast, Saturday, November 3, 7 am to 9 am, Chi Phi this year.

Cornell Alumni Leadership Conference (CALC): February 8-9, 2019, Boston Sheraton this coming February. Multiple sessions and tracks for education including two for Greek Affairs on Saturday, plus a Greek reception on Friday night that brought in over 200 alums in February 2018.

It is my hope that Omicron can begin to be more present at these meetings versus our previous track record of only a few of us in the past. It will help in numerous ways beyond networking: lessons learned, best practices, building bonds with staff and alumni leadership, interactions with undergraduates and other alumni, etc. If you want more information please let me know.

One last item. The 2018-19 academic year will be my last as the Chair of the Fraternity Sorority Advisory Council. That will make eleven years and while they have been quite rewarding, this needs to change. No organization should have a leader in the same position for more than four years. Period. The good news is that Vice President Lombardi has interviewed and selected the next chair already and that person will serve as Chair-Elect for the fall and spring 2018-19 as we jointly hand off in a seamless way. This new person will do extremely well and I hope that many of you are able to make her/his acquaintance and form a solid friendship.

Thank you all as always for your support and encouragement.

As always, I'd be pleased to answer your comments and questions. My "door" is always open and you can reach me at [RalphWilhelm1@gmail.com](mailto:RalphWilhelm1@gmail.com) or (317) 508-6866. ❖



Edgemoor at Twilight

# HOMECOMING AT EDGEMOOR

By Sandy Gilbert '62

**H**omecoming 2018 at Edgemoor on the weekend of September 22-23, featured the return of a large group of '60's era alumni and wives who created a series of special pre-weekend lunch and dinner events that maximized their time to catch up with their contemporaries and share memories of their days back on The Hill.



**Sandy Gilbert**

and barbecued ribs and a tasty selection of desserts.

On Friday afternoon, the House was open for alumni to visit and pick up a very informative Welcoming Kit prepared by Jason Cho '98 with a fact sheet about the demographics of the current undergraduate brothers and a pre-released copy of Ralph Wilhelm's '67 Greek Life column found on page 6 of this issue of *The Oracle* explaining the current challenges facing fraternities and sororities at Cornell.

Friday evening, the House hosted the traditional welcoming reception for alumni and the '60's era group held a dinner at Joe's down

The weekend kicked off for many of our alumni guests with the "Early Bird" Dinner on Thursday evening at the Antlers Restaurant out on the Dryden Road. Chef Toby gave the Omicron alumni and guests a special dinner menu featuring lobster bisque, entrée choices of salmon, filet mignon



on Buffalo Street for thirty alumni and guests.

Saturday morning began with the usual Alumni Board Meetings shown above where both Chris Turner'94 and Rick Meigs '80 were unanimously re-elected as Presidents respectively of ISWZA Fraternity, Inc and the Omicron Alumni Association. For the alumni visitors, one of the highlights of the morning was the presentation of a commemorative plaque by Rick Meigs to Jim Sollecito '76 for his great landscaping contribution during the renovation of Edgemoor. That's Jim on the left and Rick on the right in the picture on the bottom right of the next page. Jim gave a very gracious and heart felt acceptance speech relating the positive impact that being an Omicron brother had on his life.



## HOMECOMING AT EDGEMOOR

Another key note of the morning business session was the Forum on the Future of Fraternities at Cornell chaired by Sandy Gilbert '62 that featured updates on Omicron's current status by undergrads President Josh Natnanson '20, Terence Burke '21 and Nicky Kacena '20. Omicron Alumni Association President, Rick Meigs, gave a very thorough explanation of the Alumni Control Board's roll in working one-on-one with the undergrads to ensure better awareness and compliance with the rules and regulations that define acceptable behavior for Rush, initiation practices and general fraternal social activities.



Following the undergraduate review, the Forum moved to alumni speaker Steve Ashley '62 who shared his insight as a Cornell Trustee on the current Trustees' thinking about the Greek Community on campus. Steve also had the opportunity to recently spend some personal time with new University President, Martha Pollock, and related her goals and objectives in reforming the Greek system to the group. Her key issues are reducing anti-social or dangerous behavior in hazing and other Greek activities. Her ruling on allowing only the use of beer and wine (not hard liquor) in Greek houses is part of her initiative. The Forum concluded with Ralph Wilhelm '67 summarizing the points he made in his Greek Life column that most of the attendees had read in the Welcoming Kit.

After the Forum, the undergrads gave tours of the living quarters at Edgemoor and some of the attendees gathered to converse on the back patio as shown above. The Cornell Vs Yale football game had a late start at 3:00 PM so there was also plenty of time to check out the ever-growing campus.



While Cornell did lose the game via two field goals, the team looked more competitive than it has in years by scoring three touchdowns and a field goal and a defense that three times held Yale to field goals inside the ten-yard line. The Cornell Big Red Band looked very sharp and pounded out a rousing rendition of Toto's rock hit "Africa" that brought a thunderous roar from the full house in the Crescent. It was refreshing to see the enthusiasm for the team among the students and I heard a number of them say they were encouraged with the level of play and prospects for the team for the rest of the season.

After the game, the alumni and undergrads returned to Edgemoor for a reception and dinner. The dinner was a nicely prepared buffet with a wide range of salad, pasta and beef and chicken selections.

Over dessert and coffee. As shown above, left, Jason Cho presented Sandy Gilbert with the Dedicated Service Award for his tenure as the Editor and Publisher of *The Oracle* and his work in organizing the many '60's era alumni events over the years.



Be sure to look for a preview of Homecoming plans for 2019 in the upcoming spring edition of *The Oracle*. Based on the activities on campus and the events at Edgemoor, Homecoming is a great time to come back to The

Hill for a memorable weekend with some good friends from "back in the day." ❖

# HORT SENSE: AUTUMN BLOOMING WOODY PLANTS

By R. Wayne Mezitt '64

As

As summer draws to a close and the days grow shorter, September brings a plethora of flower color to our gardens. Herbaceous perennials like aster, chrysanthemum, sedum, goldenrod, Japanese anemone, and many

ornamental grasses dominate the garden and provide so much color. After late summer in New England, only a handful of woody plants continue to bloom, including roses, hibiscus, hydrangea, Buddleia and sumac, finishing their bloom periods which began earlier in the season.

Among the very few woody plants that start their bloom after August are three noteworthy plants that should be more widely used in our

gardens. The native common witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is locally considered ubiquitous and so has been only occasionally used in gardens. In contrast, both the Franklin tree (*Franklinia alatamaha*) and seven-son flower (*Heptacodium miconioides*) are now extinct in their original sites; these two species are still available only because their discoverers recognized their value and distributed propagules, helping assure their survival.

Common witch-hazel grows naturally in open woodlands from Canada to Florida, forming a 15-20 ft. multi-stemmed vase-shaped shrub with zig-zag branches. Coming into flower in October just as its fall foliage turns golden yellow, its extended period of bloom, often into December, is among the longest of any woody plant. Clusters of fragrant flowers growing along the branches create an attractive show; each individual witch-hazel flower cluster is comprised of four delicate, twisted, strap-like, lemon-yellow petals that unfurl on warm days and re-curl during the cold.

Recent selection and breeding has produced several landscape-worthy cultivars with more substantial flower and growth characteristics. Specialty nurser-



**Witch-Hazel**

ies are now offering 'Little Susie', a compact-growing selection with a nice display of larger flowers, well suited for smaller gardens; 'Mohonk Red' and 'Vincent's Red', both featuring yellow flowers with darker rosy-pink centers; and 'Harvest Moon', whose autumn leaves drop quickly and cleanly to best show off a profusion of particularly large yellow flowers.

Relatively obscure in the market, the Franklin tree, is rarely seen in gardens, despite its beautiful flowers that coincide with attractive fall foliage color. Sweetly-fragrant, bowl-shaped camellia-like 3" white flowers open each September, each sporting a boss of egg-yolk-yellow center stamens. Narrow, glossy 5" dark green leaves turn striking shades of orange, red and purple as the flowers open. Winter hardy to USDA Zone 6, it can grow 10-20' tall as a single trunk tree or multi-stem shrub.

In the 1770's William Bartram with his brother John discovered the single colony of trees on a secluded 2-3 acre Georgia riverside banking. Bartram brought back seeds to his Philadelphia garden, recognized its uniqueness and named the new species after Benjamin Franklin, his father's great friend. Last verified in 1803 and now considered extinct in the wild, the species fortuitously perpetuated in cultivation, and all plants growing today remarkably derive from Bartram's seed collection.

The seven-son-flower has likewise reportedly disappeared from its original central China mountainside habitat (although nine small populations still exist elsewhere under government protection). Ernest Wilson discovered this species in 1907, bringing back seed for the Arnold Arboretum, from where it was success-



**Wayne Mezitt**

# HORT SENSE: AUTUMN BLOOMING WOODY PLANTS

fully introduced into Western cultivation.

Delicate clouds of creamy-white fragrant flowers open progressively in early September, clustered at the ends of the current year's growth, and persist for two weeks or more, attracting pollinators like butterflies, hummingbirds and bees. As the flower petals drop, a unique display of red-purple begins, as the bases of the flowers (calyces) expand to surround the developing seeds. This color is a most spectacular feature of this plant (particularly when back-lit by the sun), surpassing the beauty of the flowers and intensifying for many weeks, until the fruit matures or frost ends the season.

During winter the exfoliating, papery, whitish, ginger-colored and grey bark shreds attractively in narrow strips from the stems and trunk, exposing the smooth, blond-tan color beneath, distinctly attractive in the winter garden. Ultimately reaching about 20 feet, it can grow as much as 3 feet a year and is reliably winter

hardy to Zone 5. Generally offered for sale as a multi-stem shrub with angular branches, it can be trained to grow as a single trunk or low-branched tree.

Obviously the numerous features of each of these underutilized plants can't be fully covered in this short article. So please ask the experts at your local garden center about them, and check them out online. Including some of them in your garden will certainly enhance the enjoyment of your outdoor spaces as autumn continues its progression into winter.

Wayne Mezitt, LXA O-952, is a 3rd generation nurseryman and a Massachusetts Certified Horticulturist, now chairman of Weston Nurseries of Hopkinton and Chelmsford, MA, and owner of "Hort-Sense", a horticultural advisory business; he currently serves as Trustee chairman for the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at The Gardens at Elm Bank in Wellesley MA. ❖

# THE WINE RACK: CHOOSING THE RIGHT WINE IN A RESTAURANT

By Sandy Gilbert '62

**I** am often asked how do I know what wine to choose in a restaurant. I always answer the question with the following story. Back in the '70's when I was in in the publishing business with TIME Magazine, I was fortunate to attend a small luncheon with Robert Mondavi and some other magazine people when he opened his new winery in the Napa Valley in California. Someone asked him the above question and this is what he said.

Assuming you are in a group of four to six friends, you will have a fairly wide range in taste for wine and in the tolerance of how much to pay for it. This means that the "right" wine choice considers both a range in appreciation for taste and pricing.

First ask the group what basic type of wine they prefer and



come to a decision on red or white. Then get a general preference for the specific variety of wine they like. Let's say the group chose red and the general consensus is that they'd prefer a Merlot.

Now comes the fun part. How do you pick a wine that will satisfy the palate of a more sophisticated wine drinker and not give sticker shock to the others in the group who generally consume a bargain brand. As you look over the wine list, ignore the vintner and the place of origin and go directly to the price per bottle. Run down the column until you find a selection that is in the middle

of the price range. That's your choice. It might be from California, Italy or France. It doesn't matter because it will be at least acceptable to the wine connoisseur and the others will prefer it to their normal choices.

I have followed this advice over the years and it satisfies the group every time. ❖

# TRAVEL NUGGETS: ITALY - THE PLACES IN BETWEEN

By Alan Fridkin '65

**I** ask my foreign friends and acquaintances: have you been to the US? Those who say yes have usually been to New York and Miami. Some have visited Los Angeles and Las Vegas. But is that really seeing the US? The same might be said of our countrymen who have been to Rome, Florence and Venice. That is only a small part of Italia.



Alan Fridkin '65

Over the decades, we have poked around Italy. It always generates surprises. Besides the above tourist draws and the currently fashionable Cinque Terre and Amalfi Coast, you may know the wine regions of Toscana and Piemonte. Perhaps you may have even rambled around the magnifi-

cent lakes in the North. Many Americans are drawn by family to the South and Sicily. That still leaves a lot of interesting places to visit. This past spring, we crafted a driving itinerary that no guide book recommended. It uncovered some delightful venues.

I will share some of our favorite new spots, but also suggest that you venture out and find your own. For a country that is politically and economically chaotic, it is surprisingly organized when it comes to marketing and protecting what it does best.

If you are looking for beautiful unspoiled places, you may be a century or so late. It's hard to stay pristine with tourism's heavy footprint. Still, you can avoid the convoy of tour busses and the worst commercial excess. The Italian sense of style usually prevails. Today it is a lot easier to rent a house, apartment or pensione/residence as an alternative to a traditional hotel. This can add substantially to your "local experience".

Local, regional and National Tourist Offices in Italy masterfully catalogue their assets. Their websites are worth visiting before your trip and their offices when



Portovenere, Italy

you get there. As in France, some of the most beautiful villages have banded together to form an association. Take a look at [www.borghipiubellidiitalia.it](http://www.borghipiubellidiitalia.it). It could send you packing. If you like pristine beaches, Italy has thousands of miles of coastline. The association, [www.banderablu.org](http://www.banderablu.org), is committed to the highest environmental standards. The Slow Food Movement started in Italy and there are dozens of "convivia" or chapters there that are passionate about preserving their local traditions and specialties. Restaurants that serve Slow Food specialties are a real treat. See: [www.slowfood.com](http://www.slowfood.com) for some references. There are also many associations of exceptional chefs. One good example is: [www.jre.eu/en](http://www.jre.eu/en), a grouping of well regarded young restaurateurs. The Michelin Guide, Gambero Rosso and L'Espresso also continue to be excellent sources to find the best restaurants.

So, here are a few places we stayed for the first time and enjoyed some small vilages: Radda in Chianti and Montemerano in Toscana; Castiglione del Lago in Umbria; Rustigazzo in Emilia Romagna; Castrocielo in Lazio and Portovenere in Liguria.

Some smaller cities we enjoyed: Reggio Nell 'Emilia; Viterbo; Gaeta.

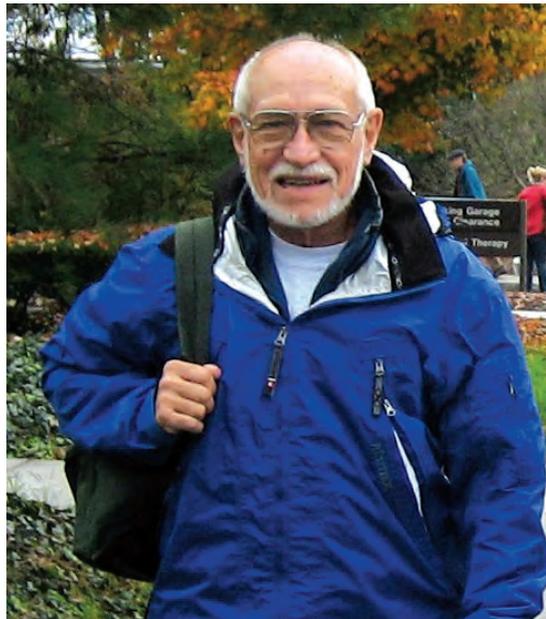
Some that were a bit disappointing: Montecatini Terme and Marina di Massa although both had delightful hotels.

We encourage our friends to visit and savor the gems like Cervo, Camogli, Alba, Bergamo, Cremona, Merano, Ascoli Piceno, Lecce and Erice. Italy has dozens of places that merit your time and we are busy working to add to the list.. ❖

# ALUMNI MILESTONES

By Jason Cho '98

Like many in his generation, Bob's education was interrupted when he joined the U.S. Marines during World War II. Fortunately for us, he was sent to Cornell for training whereupon fellow jarhead, Tal Williams '47 recruited him for the reorganizing Omicron Chapter and he became brother O-612. After graduating in 1948, Bob married his childhood sweetheart, Nancy Faus and his career took them to three continents before they settled in Alexandria, Virginia where they raised four children.



**Bob McKinless '48**

When his children were grown, Bob's interest in Cornell was rekindled- though not at first with the Omicron Chapter. To put it most charitably, in those days the Omicron Alumni Association and ISWZA had a very small footprint. They rarely, if ever, interacted with the undergraduate brothers and the President and Treasurer had a tendency to make decisions without input from the Board. The system had functioned well enough in the postwar years, but the House was aging, the brotherhood changing and the campus climate was becoming inhospitable, even hostile to fraternities.

In 1966, while chaperoning high school students on a Cornell Club of Washington-sponsored campus visit, Bob ran into parent, Bill Miller, father of Howard Miller '67 who was planning to stop by Edgemoor. Bob had not originally planned to visit the House, but he agreed to join Bill for a short visit. The visit became a long visit after Bob met several undergraduates including Ralph Wilhelm '67, then the High Alpha. Bob returned for Homecoming and was elected to the Alumni Board and returned to join Ernest Fischer '10 and President Duke Schneider '58 at the Atlantic Conclave the following spring. Shortly thereafter, he led the efforts to improve the organization.

Alumni-undergraduate interaction at the time was weak and Bob saw only missed opportunities. He

did not walk into meetings dictating a master plan for reform. That was not his down-to-earth nature or style. Instead, Bob accomplished his goals by recruiting one brother at a time and establishing one relationship at a time. He is a master at making new friends, then making them friends of one another. The Board added a spring meeting for further discussion without the social distractions of Homecoming and pushed for younger alumni to volunteer. He showed by example that alumni should not just meet, but befriend their younger brothers. The new, reinvigorated Alumni Association and the stronger alumni-undergraduate relationships he fostered helped

the Chapter weather the tumultuous early 1970s and the financial difficulties in the following decade.

Over the years, Bob has worked to the utmost to bring worthy men into the fraternity through his involvement with the Cornell Alumni Admissions Ambassador Network (CAAN). As an applicant interviewer and Regional Director for CAAN for over 35 years and through his involvement with the Cornell-in-Washington program and the Cornell Club of Washington, Bob was quick to identify and refer quality candidates to the Chapter.

Bob is also well known to Omicron alumni for two of his personal passions, music and biking. He shared his love of music with his late wife, Nancy, who passed away in 2015, with his singing in the award-winning choral group the Washington Men's Camerata that has been a featured performer at the Kennedy Center. With the Camerata, Bob has served as the first curator of what is now the Library of Men's Choral Music and he has been active with the Cornell Glee Club alumni, his church choir and is regularly called upon to lead the singing of the alma mater at alumni events.

Bob is equally well known for his great interest in the outdoors and cycling, which he took up in the 1980s.

# ALUMNI MILESTONES

He originated the Cornell Club of Washington's semi-annual Old Rag Hike and Potomac Paddle events-returning from leading these to attend his 80th birthday party in 2007. He has hiked many mountains and completed many cycling road trips with brothers decades his junior like the RAGBRAI ride across Iowa with Tim Rogan '81 and riding the Natchez Trace with Mike Buckler '96. In 2004, he fulfilled his dream of a three-generation ride with his son and grandson biking about 300 miles to raise funds for literacy.

Bob's work for Cornell was recognized with the Frank H. T. Rhodes Exemplary Alumni Service award in 2003, Cornell's highest honor for alumni and he is a lifetime member of the Cornell Council. It seems that other organizations have run out of awards to give him and have started naming awards after him. The Cornell Club of Washington recently created the McKinless Scholarship in his honor to benefit a student who is actively involved in volunteer community service at Cornell. And for the Chapter's part, the Omicron award, created in 1984, to honor his long-standing contributions, was renamed in 2015 as the McKinless Award, our truest exemplar of lifetime service to the fraternity. And just this past summer one of the most active and generous omicrons of all time was awarded the 2018 Order of Merit, the highest honor of service by the Lambda Chi Fraternity. You can congratulate Bob on this well-deserved honor at [bikerbob8@mac.com](mailto:bikerbob8@mac.com).

## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

For the past eight years I have had the distinct pleasure of managing the creation and publishing of *The Omicron Oracle*. It has been a very interesting and rewarding journey for both me and the vehicle itself as we have received a number of publishing awards from Lambda Chi Alpha International and a great deal of enthusiastic support from our many alumni readers. Now it is time for some younger hands to navigate the ship as we move further into the Information Age with ever



**Sandy Gilbert '62**  
Publisher-Editor of  
*The Omicron Oracle*

more electronic means to communicate.

Before I pass the baton on to other hands, I would like to acknowledge my thanks to the other alumni who have made *The Oracle* the outstanding communications vehicle it is today. No account of *The Oracle* can be complete without mentioning the long-standing contributions of Henry McNulty '69 who took the editorial helm as an undergrad in the late sixties. Ten years later in the late 1970s, he became the first alumnus to edit and oversee the production of *The Oracle*, Omicron's traditional four-page black and white newsletter. Over thirty years later in the spring of April 2011, he published the last paper Oracle.

Faced with the need to stem the ever-increasing costs of printing and mailing a paper newsletter to over 850 alumni, Henry and I worked together on the transition of *The Oracle* to a 16-to 20 page full-color online magazine with the fall edition in 2011. The cost savings have been substantial dropping from \$3,500 per issue to only \$500 in online form. The new publishing economy was largely due to Brett Ainsworth '92, Publisher of *The Retrospect*, a New Jersey regional newspaper, who graciously offered the services of Mark Ziegler, his designer, who has designed and laid out *The Oracle* ever since.

The advantage of more text and full color photography in the new online Oracle also enabled us to create an in-depth series of messages keeping our alumni informed and engaged with the progress of the renovation of Edgemoor. The magazine became the main communication vehicle for the progress on the renovation and is generally believed to have been an integral part of the extraordinary success of the campaign.

I especially want to recognize our four principal alumni columnists who have provided such well-written and informative articles for our readers. Steve Ashley '62 has given us Cornell Today, an inside look at the plans and direction of the Cornell administration. Ralph Wilhelm '67 has shared his first-hand insight into the evolution of the fraternal environment on campus in his Greek Life column and Wayne Mezitt '64 and Alan Fridkin '65 have provided some interesting life style information in their Hort Sense gardening and Travel Nuggets travel articles respectively.

# ALUMNI MILESTONES

It is the contributions of these men who have given *The Oracle* its unique editorial character as an alumni magazine and captured the interest of our nearly 850 alumni readers.

I also want to thank the many of you who have regularly submitted entries for News from Alumni. This is one of the most widely read sections of the magazine and it helps keep our various generations in touch with each other.

I am also indebted to Peter O'Brien, our online manager, for his skill and hard work that converts the printed text of *The Oracle* into the online magazine you can access via the Announcement Email or on the House website at [iswza.org/oracle](http://iswza.org/oracle).

And lastly, I want to thank my wife, Emmy Lou, our chief proof reader, for catching the errors and typos that seem to invariably pop up here and there in my various drafts of the magazine.

It is my pleasure to announce that the management of *The Oracle* will now be handled by Mark Fernau '82 who is well known to many of you through his in-depth involvement over the years with the Omicron Alumni Association.

After graduating from Cornell and getting a PhD in atmospheric science from the University of Michigan, Mark worked as an air pollution computer modeler for ten years for a government lab and then a private consulting firm. During that time, he wrote reports, proposals and peer-reviewed scientific papers in his field. In 1999, he moved directly into scientific publishing to become a technical editor for the American Meteorological Society that publishes ten scientific journals in the fields of meteorology, climate science, oceanography, hydrology and related policy. Mark acted as the liaison between the scientists/authors and the Publisher. This process involved the editing and polishing of technical aspects of research papers and tables and charts. He also reviewed the copy edi-



**Mark Fernau '82,  
Editor**

tor's changes to be sure the scientific meaning had not been altered in the process of adhering to a house style. Five years later, Mark was named Managing Technical Editor supporting a staff of nine other technical editors. He has now been a professional editor for nineteen years. Mark has also done some interesting free-lance copy editing on the side including material as diverse as a PhD thesis on Martin Luther to a memoir of a year in the personal life of his friend, Bob Hodge, in which he describes his coming in third in the 1979 Boston Marathon to his disappointment after extensive training to have his spot in the 1980 Olympic Marathon in Russia wiped out by the U.S. boycott of the games.

Mark says his goal for editing *The Oracle* is to maintain its level of quality and relevance to our alumni and undergraduate readers by both working with the existing columnists and reaching out to alumni from other decades to join the editorial effort. One new area of coverage could be job recruiting and business advice that has always been a big area of interest among our undergraduate readers. Another intriguing area to explore could be a regular series on Omicron history covering events at the chapter and stories about some of our outstanding alumni over the years.

I hope you all will afford Mark the great support you have given me in my tenure as editor and I encourage anyone who would like to assist with the editorial process as either a correspondent for alumni news or an occasional columnist to contact him directly at [mfernau@ametsoc.org](mailto:mfernau@ametsoc.org). Long live *The Omicron Oracle*. ♦

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## OBITUARIES

*The Omicron Oracle notes with sadness the passing of the following brothers:*

Albert B. Lauderbaugh '53.....April 12, 2017

Merral B. Neely '61 ..... June 12,2017

Jacob D. Fry '48.....February 25, 2018

# NEWS FROM ALUMNI

## ► 1948

Bob McKinless tells us that he had a great time at his 70th Reunion in June. One of his singing buddies drove him up from D.C. and Jason Cho'98 drove him home. He spent most of the weekend singing with the alumni Chorus and Glee Club, but he did get to have a dinner with Jason Smith '98 and stopped by the reception at Edgemoor on Saturday afternoon.

Bob was really busy this past summer with another bike adventure in British Columbia and Washington State with his son and he and Jason Cho attended the general Assembly in Jacksonville, Florida in August where as noted in the Milestones Column Bob was presented with the Order of Merit. An honor well earned. You'll catch Bob at [bikerbob8@mac.com](mailto:bikerbob8@mac.com).

## ► 1960



Pete Saderholm reports that his United Methodist Church in Maryland has done extensive missionary work at the St Mathew's High School and church in Logan Town, Liberia for over ten years. When they began their mission, Liberia was just coming out of a two-decade period of civil unrest with a non-existent economy causing 85% unemployment. The infrastructure was in shambles, especially the school system with students going without any education for years. Members of the church went to Liberia to see the situation first hand and decided to help St Mathew's rebuild it's building and educational curriculum. Over the past ten years, Pete's church has provided annual scholarships and purchased a gasoline driven generator to provide lighting and power for some needed equipment. As the school renewed operation, its popularity grew and the church also helped the school build five new classrooms.

Just as the economy and the St Mathew's school began to reach a state of normalcy, Liberia was devast-

ed by the Ebola epidemic that came over the border from Guinea. Pete's mission supported the local efforts around the school by providing sanitation supplies which were in short supply and very expensive.

The much-needed clinic shown above was also largely built with funds from Pete's home church in Maryland. Following a recent visit to review the clinic's operation, he was very pleased to see that the clinic was operating efficiently and effectively caring for the local population. The mission of Pete's church in supporting St Matthew's High School and the clinic has been a long, sustained effort that has provided invaluable resilience for the community and a great sense of accomplishment for Pete and his fellow church members. Pete can be found at [pdsgms@gmail.com](mailto:pdsgms@gmail.com).

## ► 1961

Bob Pezzulich writes to say that there is not much new in his neck of the woods except that the family is crazy enough to try once again to raise their own chickens to have a supply of fresh eggs. Following past massacres of their chickens, they are protecting their new flock of twelve with an electric fence. Their fingers are crossed that this line of defense will work. Bob lives at [pezz88@mac.com](mailto:pezz88@mac.com).

## ► 1962

Bob Miller reports that his wife, Katarina, son, Tor, and Katarina's mother stayed on campus at The Statler over the 4th of July and enjoyed a local wine tour. They also got to stop by Edgemoor and were impressed with the renovation. He says he'll be away in Europe during Homecoming, but sends his best to all the visiting '60's era alumni. Bob answers at [rcmiller@davidsondawson.com](mailto:rcmiller@davidsondawson.com).

Chris and Barb Napjus were fortunate enough to be able to take an extensive Around the World trip last spring and the following is Chris's account of some of the high spots along the way:

Although it took Phileas Fogg 80 days some years ago to make the trip, Barb and I made it in precisely six weeks during March and April traveling east to west. Although there was a lot of indirect routing due to the availability of frequent flyer tickets, we basically spent two weeks in Australia, two weeks in the far east and two in Europe, spending anywhere from three to seven days at each stopover. Point-to-point routings, not counting local travel, totaled 34,360 miles. Highlights include:

# NEWS FROM ALUMNI

*Beijing -*



Overview: An enormously energetic city, very modern in the main areas and spread out over many square miles. New buildings are going up everywhere, including hundreds of cookie-cutter high-rise apartment buildings in the outskirts.

Highlights: The Forbidden City shown above and the Great Wall.

Curiosity: Despite hordes of traffic of every nature in and out of the city, we didn't see a single service station. Where do they get gas?

*Hong Kong -*



Overview: I had visited Hong Kong before just as it had reverted back to China and was curious to see how "Chinese" it had become since then. In fact, "Big China" stays very much in the background, superficially at least, as street signs remain posting both English and Chinese (Cantonese) names. The city has continued to grow with ever taller buildings somehow carved into the mountainside.

Highlights: We did all the tourist things and enjoyed them very much including the vernacular ride to Victoria Peak shown above, taking the Star Ferry to Kowloon, a sampan ride in the fishing village, Aberdeen shown below and perusing the huge variety of wares in the stalls at Stanley Market.



*Bangkok -*



Overview: This was our hottest stop with temperatures in the 90's every day with humidity to match. Although still a lovely city, and superficially the same as a previous visit back in 2000, the increase in population has made it almost impossible to get around the city by car in any reasonable time.

Highlights: The Royal Palace, shown above, remains a must see along with many beautiful temples. We had a delightful dinner along the river including a boat ride. Curiosity: I was able to get an elephant ride outside the city to add to my earlier animal encounter in Morocco with a camel ride. Quite an experience given the size and majesty of the animal.

# NEWS FROM ALUMNI

Budapest -



Overview: We took a scenic train trip for a few days in Budapest, by way of Salzburg and Vienna along the banks of the Danube River.

We found Budapest to be an exceptionally beautiful city on both the Buda and Pest sides of the river. The buildings were done in classic Hapsburg architecture with noticable pains taken to restore war-damaged buildings.

Highlights: St. Stephen's Basilica, shown above, was beautiful both inside and out and a huge public market encompassing an entire city block.

Curiosity: We took a bus ride for an hour literally on the Danube. It looked like a perfectly normal tour bus except it was equipped with a special bottom and a jet propulsion system for water travel. As we went down the river and back up onto the land, many of the locals seemed astonished at what they were seeing. It was a fun ride.

It was a memorable trip and it went off without a hitch. Even so, after all the long air travel, we were both very glad to be back home to Annapolis. Chris resides at [cnapjus@verizon.net](mailto:cnapjus@verizon.net).

## ► 1963



Bob Elliott, his brother John '66, shown at left and their wives enjoyed a wonderful trip to Ireland this past spring. This is the birthplace of their Morton grandparents. John retired in June 2017 as the longest serving professor in history at Kenyon College. With

available time this spring, he planned the itinerary for their swing through the Irelands. It began with four days in charming Dublin followed by 1000 miles on the "wrong" side of the road visiting old monasteries and castle ruins and the beautiful green scenery everywhere. They found especially striking scenery along the coast from Ring of Kerry in the southwest to Giants Causeway and Antrim Coast in the northeast. The food and Guinness were good everywhere. Bob advises if you ever get to go, it's a beautiful country, but definitely bring an umbrella and drive with care.

While John and Jackie went to Paris, Bob and Connie went on to Scotland, the original home of the Elliott clan. Bob says that the castles in Edinburgh and Sterling were truly spectacular. The drive to St. Andrews, the Highlands and then to Loch Ness was beautiful, but stressful in some places with its narrow curves and turns. They saw many beautiful golf courses, but it was often raining like those in Ireland. Bob and John and the wives also caught up again this summer at Bob's place down on the Jersey shore to reminisce and view each other's pictures from their trip. You'll find Bob at [bobell89@aol.com](mailto:bobell89@aol.com).

Tom Miller reports that he is well into the major project of renovating his home in Reston Virginia. It's slow going, but very satisfying work. The major project will be dealing with some structural issues in the kitchen and nailing down the delivery of some new cabinets. Tom says there are some advantages in dealing with a one-man construction company. Only a small part of the house gets torn up at a time and you only have to deal with one person. He hopes to have the project completed by November. In the meantime, he plans to sneak away for Homecoming Weekend to catch up with some of his contemporaries from the '60's. Tom lives at [tdurhammiller@yahoo.com](mailto:tdurhammiller@yahoo.com).

## ► 1969

Henry McNulty reports from his summer home on the Connecticut shore that he and Anne are enjoying retirement and have taken on the task of training and housebreaking a new Golden Retriever puppy. So far, things are going well for all concerned. Henry answers at [henry.b.mcnulty@gmail.com](mailto:henry.b.mcnulty@gmail.com).

## ► 1976

Back in July, Jim Sollecito took another one of his unique trips to the hinterlands to find some great fly fishing spots. This time he went to the Artic area of Quebec on the float plane to go from river to river looking for the best fishing. In what he refers to as "bar hopping" or going from sand

# NEWS FROM ALUMNI



bar to sand bar, he managed to set another IFGA world record on an 8-weight fly rod. That's Jim shown with his prize fish. You can catch Jim at [jim@sollecito.com](mailto:jim@sollecito.com).

## ► 1978



George Lutz sent in the above picture of 1978 alumni and wives from Reunion this past June. Shown above from left to right are Andre and Stephanie Martecchini, Tom and Marilyn Gaska, Bill and Nancy Murphy, George Lutz, John Sovocool, Eric Jacobs, Brian Kelly, Bob Shaw and Harry Kaiser. Pictured in the back row are Ralph Wilhelm '67, Bob Bocchino '77 and Barbara Jacobs. The group enjoyed visiting Edgemoor for the traditional Reception on Saturday afternoon and a nostalgic dinner at Joe's. George Lutz said that Jason Cho '98 gave a complete rundown at the Reception on the provisional status of the House, how it happened and how it has been addressed. The attendees understood the situation and were very impressed with the job the alumni officers have done in righting the ship. George can be found at [George.m.lutz@gmail.com](mailto:George.m.lutz@gmail.com).

## ► 1998



As mentioned earlier, Jason Cho hosted the Reception on Saturday afternoon at Reunion and he reports that the event was very well attended by the classes from '78-'98, '08 and '13. Other appearing alumni were Bob McKinless '48, Ralph Wilhelm '67 and Gary Hedge '72. Jason says the undergrads had the House in excellent condition and there was plenty of food and drink to go around.

Unfortunately, The Nines is the latest Ithaca hotspot rumored to be closing its doors so the early arrivers from '98 shown above took in a meal there on Friday. Shown from left to right are Andy Osborn '00, a Director at Wells Fargo in Charlotte, N.C.; Jason Smith '98, posted to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency at Ft. Belvoir, but retiring from the Marine Corps this fall; Tom Lak '98, Disaster relief Coordinator for the United Methodist Church in the Northeastern U.S., based out of Haddonfield, NJ; and Rob Osborn '98, a Supplier Relationship Manager for Xerox in Rochester, N.Y. You can reach Jason at [jjcseven@gmail.com](mailto:jjcseven@gmail.com).

## ► 2008

Alex Aidun writes that he is very pleased with the way the undergraduates came together this school year to improve the state of the fraternity. He feels they have proven that they are able to rise to the challenge and course correct from the mistakes made the previous year. Many of the new rules implemented by Cornell have already been adopted and embraced by Omicron as a result of its probationary status. Alex attended the March 1st Alumni Board meeting and felt that the undergraduate officers seemed to be working well with the Cornell administration and the alumni advisors to strengthen the quality of programing and culture at Edgemoor. As he has done so well in recent years, Alex led a session on mental health after the Board meeting that was well attended by both the undergrad and alumni brothers. The undergrads have expressed interest in continuing these sessions and the March meeting will likely be the place for the sessions in the future. Alex will be found at [bobuel@gmail.com](mailto:bobuel@gmail.com).

PER CRUCEM CRESCENS



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