



The Paragon

Alumni Newsletter of the Ohio Alpha Beta Chapter of Phi Kappa Theta Fraternity

Spring 2000

It's Working!

I am excited by the enthusiasm and feedback we have been receiving from you, the alumni. The mission of the group is less than a year old, but it seems to be catching on. Those of you who have responded believe that "building a mutually beneficial network for both alumni and actives" is a worthwhile objective.

The timing could not be better as the active house is incredibly strong. This is critical in order to centralize what is now a largely decentralized group. If our efforts are effective, we will all benefit from that which comes from a highly organized and focused team.

So allow to me talk about the serious structural issues with the house. The kitchen must be gutted in order to pass the city inspection. The third floor electrical is fright-

ening to behold. And the inefficient windows cost the chapter hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars a year in heating bills. Ernie Schmidt used to make problems like these go away. I hope that as a group, we can rally around these issues.

Other fraternities that were strong in my day (such as the Pikes and Sigma Chi) have since lost their houses. As alumni, we not only share a house, but we also share ideals: the belief that our house will endure and that there really is meaning to the words "Brotherhood for Life."

Eric Malkin, 1989

President

Phi Kappa Theta Alumni Group

In This Issue

- Actives Activity
- Home Improvement
- Secrets to Chapter Success
- First Annual Phi Kap Alumni Golf Outing
- Upcoming 30-year Reunion
- Executive Office Report
- Let Us Be Faithful
- Life's Hard Lessons
- Add your e-mail address
- And more!

Actives Activity

Spring semester has been an extremely busy one for the undergraduate brothers of Ohio AB. The chapter placed 8th overall in Greek Week. We also won the Greek Spirit award. The basement is currently under construction. The new laundry room has been completed. But there is still much work to be done to complete the remodeling.

We are currently looking into ways of funding energy-efficient windows and replacing and bringing the kitchen up to code. The house completed several alcohol education programs required by the National Fraternity in order for the house to not go dry. These programs include liability education, responsible drinking habits, first aid and CPR certification, and a CD-ROM based alcohol awareness training. The programming we completed still needs to be verified but we are confident that we have fulfilled the requirements.

Meanwhile, several of our brothers will be moving on to graduate school or starting their careers at the end of this semester, while, as always, others have just begun their journey in Phi Kappa Theta.

Dave Rowan, '01
President/Alumni Chair



• Phi Kap actives gather after scroll signing.

Home (and Self) Improvement

My experience as a Phi Kappa Theta was short-lived when I joined my senior year. Having experienced most of my college experience in the dorms, I can draw one main distinction important to me — whereas I keep in touch with at most two or three of my dormitory friends, I am in touch with ten or more of my Phi Kap brothers.

Being a Phi Kap brother provides an opportunity to develop long-lasting friendships. Not only did we share a house, we shared working toward common goals that revolved around a unique commitment to an organization that, to a certain extent, has a life of its own. You don't just walk away from that when your college life is over but you carry that with you in the years ahead. The events in our lives are better experienced with others who have a common bond beyond merely a shared living space.

One thing that I'll take with me from the House is the sense of working together. It is a long standing tradition for the Phi Kaps to do for themselves. We always drew from the talents of the individual members to accomplish nearly every task needed to maintain and improve the house.



More Improvements That Need Funding

1. Upgrade East Wing bathroom plumbing
2. Redo electrical (especially the Third Floor)
3. Redo the plaster on the Third Floor
4. Repair awning over side door
5. Repair pillars/porch over front door
6. Landscaping (front and back yards)

At the beginning of the school year, we had our traditional Labor Day bash. The party wasn't the end of the festivities, however, as the subsequent time of that three-day weekend was spent scouring the house for every conceivable item that needed to be thrown out. And every conceivable item ended up getting thrown out. By Tuesday morning, the veritable trash heap of Mount St. Phi Kaps was waiting to welcome the city's finest trashmen back from a well-deserved day off. To see the cursing and carrying-on was priceless as they painstakingly collected every old desk, filing cabinet, lamp, and so forth to be mashed into their beloved trash-mobile.

During my two semesterly work weekends at the house, I learned so much from watching fellow brothers demonstrate their expertise — in plumbing, drywalling, carpentering, wiring — that I was able to do most of the work in my first house on my own. I netted a nice profit that I would never have gained without being a member of Phi Kappa Theta.

I'll never forget the time when Chris Anderson repaired a leaky plumbing joint. It took him quite some time to complete because we couldn't completely shut off the

water to the joint, which consequently made it almost impossible for the solder to hold. But he stuck with it until the job was done and as a result, I learned how to repair copper plumbing connections.

Working together with my fellow brothers has given me the ability to not only be part of a team but also to accomplish goals as an individual. This lesson learned I'll always be able to take with me.

Joe Jirgal, '88

What Makes a Successful Chapter

As many of us who have left the undergraduate Phi Kap experience for some time know, today's student carries with him very different experiences, expectations and even family life structures as he enters college. These changes are what sets each class of new members apart from the one before.

These changes beg for consistent alumni support. Our undergraduates face many larger and potentially life-threatening challenges that we did not — the continual pressure of alcohol abuse and misuse; and an increased popularity in recreational drugs, some of which, like GHB, are being utilized at alarming numbers and resulting in horrible repercussions.

Our undergraduate brothers also face a multitude of sexually transmitted diseases and a shifting moral paradigm, which encourages disregard for traditional morals and values. On campus, our brothers deal with ever-changing policies and regulations concerning their behavior, making being Greek increasingly difficult if not unattractive. Even the public has taken to bad-mouthing and stereotyping Greeks, increasing the already negative publicity of fraternities. It is indeed a difficult time to be a college student and even harder to be a fraternity man. This is the situation where we as alumni are needed, almost required, to support and advise the young men that have taken our place at the chapter level.

As a member of the Executive Offices staff for over three years and having had the opportunity to visit every chapter, colony and affiliate group of Phi Kappa Theta, I have discovered a basic secret to a successful chapter that has far-reaching effects.

Strong, stable, successful chapters, colonies and affiliate groups have one aspect of their operations in common: an organized and supportive alumni advisory board or group. Behind every successful chapter lies an

organized alumni group that provides continuous advisement verbally, by email, by mail and by personal contact at chapter meetings and other events.

These alumni provide alumni advisors who match up with critical chapter executive officers such as the Recruitment Chairman, Treasurer, President and Associate Member Educator. These advisors ensure that the officers clearly understand their duties, advise them on activities, act as devils advocates to the officers' ideas, and facilitate proper officer transition. By providing this assistance to chapters, they ensure consistent chapter operations, prevent the chapter from making major mistakes and provide guidance on various chapter issues. As an alumnus, you can be responsible for the success of a chapter by providing advisement to the undergraduates.

Joshua Gisi
1996 Kansas Epsilon
Director of Chapter Services

Let Us Be Faithful

I hadn't thought about how much Phi Kappa Theta meant in my life until just recently when I had to give a witness talk at my church about a conversion in my life. While I was writing it, I came to realize that everything I have in my life right now — faith in God, my family and my community of friends — is a direct result of my days at the fraternity.

After pondering this, I reflected on the meaning of each letter in our fraternity's name. I met the love of my life, Margaret Smith, while I was still a pledge at the time



• This year's Phi Kap Greek Week banner, before it was painted and fully assembled.

and she really turned my world around. At the time, she was renting the apartment above the garage while attending the Cleveland Institute of Art. I doubt I would have even met her had I not joined the fraternity.

In turn she introduced me to her faith in God and helped me on a journey to God through the Catholic Church that I would have never encountered without her. We were married in 1993 and we now have three beautiful daughters — Monica, 5; Bridget, 3, and Clare, 6 months.

Along with all of this, the fraternity helped me to experience true brotherhood and prepared me for living and dealing with all types of people I would meet along the way. My circle of friends that I have now are very similar to the guys I lived with at the house, the kind of people that would do anything for you, no questions asked. I know now that God had a plan for me and it came to light in the most unlikely of places, a fraternity house. I hope and pray that all the current and future members of Phi Kappa Theta, Ohio Alpha Beta can have as incredible of an experience as I did and be open to God's plan in their lives, even if they don't realize it at the time. God bless you.

Fred Karboski, '91

Life's Lessons, the Hard Way

I have many fond memories of my days as a Phi Kap. As a commuter, joining the ranks of the wine and gold provided a much needed boost to my social life. In fact, I loved joining so much I did it twice. That's right. I pledged my freshman year and then quit half way into the program. I then had the fortunate experience of repledging the next year and patronizing the same guys I had pledged with the year before. Some of us are just slower I suppose. As it turns out, my children are even grateful that I joined, for they wouldn't be here unless I did because I met my wonderful wife Vicki through one of the brothers.

One of the funniest moments I recall was during a "Hell" week. The seniors and alumni took control away from the underclassmen by forcing an emergency executive board meeting in the middle of the night. The underclassman had turned "Hell" week into a Work week and the senior members had enough of the folly. We were then given a test on hieroglyphics, which everybody failed of course. (No lifelines back then!) Just a few days before, Mark Francioli (a.k.a. Moose, '75) had given us a crash course on hieroglyphics, but it didn't help.

So after the tests were scored, we were forced to line up in front of glaring lights with

First Annual Phi Kappa Theta Alumni Golf Outing

Saturday, July 15, 2000

First tee time: 12:00 noon

Brunswick Hills Golf Course

4900 Center Rd (Rt. 303)

Brunswick, Ohio

\$55 per person

Open to all Phi Kappa Theta alumni,
family, friends, acquaintances

On Saturday, July 15th, we are hosting our first annual Alumni Golf Outing at Brunswick Hills Golf Course. We will be playing 18 holes of golf, with a chance to win valuable prizes including a \$10,000 cash prize for a hole-in-one and cash for winning teams. The \$55 per person registration fee covers golfing, a cart, prizes, and food. Golfing will be done as a four-person scramble, so we request you register with three others at one time or give us the names of other golfers when you sign up. Otherwise, we will assign you a foursome at random.

This outing is open to any interested golfers regardless of their affiliation with our fraternity. If you have a regular group you golf with, all are welcome. If you golf with your wife, son, daughter, or other family members, they are welcome to golf with us as well. Be sure to talk up the outing with your friends and any brothers from your time at the house, as the more people we have, the more fun the afternoon will be. Please register by July 1st and include your phone number or email so we can inform you of your tee time.

Also, we are looking for sponsorship for each of the holes. So if you work for a corporation willing to sponsor, or if you own your own business, know other business owners, or would just like to have your name on a hole, please pass the information to us and the cost will be \$100 per hole.

To register for the outing, or to sponsor a hole, please send a check payable to Phi Kappa Theta to the house address: Alumni Golf Outing, c/o Dave Rowan, 11016 Magnolia Dr., Cleveland, OH 44106.

Any questions can be communicated to Dave Rowan, President and Alumni Relations Chairman by email at dpr@po.cwru.edu or call him at (216) 905-9478. Or email Brian Bacher, Alumni Board Member, at bacher@stratos.net.

Directions to Brunswick Hills

From the north:

Take I-71 South from Cleveland to the Route 303 exit. Turn right (going west) and travel for about 2 miles. Cross through the Pearl Rd. (Rt. 42) intersection. The course is about a mile farther on the left.

From the south:

Take I-71 North to the Route 303 exit and turn left (going west) and follow above directions.

seniors shouting in our faces and acting like total idiots. But we were used to that. Then it all climaxed when Moose very nearly had a nervous breakdown as he announced one of the answers to the test he administered: "The snake kicked the chicken in the head!" He then added, "Everybody knows that snakes can't kick!"

At that moment he thrust a bottle onto the floor, shattering it into a gazillion pieces. But not one pledged flinched. We stood there at attention completely unimpressed with Moose's antics.

As you can imagine, this sort of training has proved quite helpful in today's work climate. I can take criticism as good as any one and my boss knows it. And now you see how being a Phi Kap has prepared me for life.

Dave Essi (Essap), 1982

If The Walls Could Talk

I recently got a phone call from my little sister who now attends my alma mater of twelve years past. She and her dorm mates had been invited to a Phi Kap party this past fall. Outside of having a great time at the event, she was tickled to find a picture of her elder brother with a wild haircut looking all of eighteen years old. She traced the pictures through all of the years she could find. She was considering pledging a sorority, and she asked me if I thought it was worthwhile. My response to her was simple. I explained to her that when I was pledging Phi Kappa Theta, I too had to go through the composites on the wall to trace back big brothers and their big brothers to no end all as part of what would become four years of expanding a network of friends that last a lifetime.

I asked her to look at the composite the next time she was invited to the house and remember a few names, especially ones on the composite near the lecture/dining hall. These were the faces that would soon begin to fade after the semester was over. The significance of brotherhood, I told her, was that each of the faces on the walls was a chapter in my undergrad life. The stories in these chapters were of happy and sad times. There were stories of learning and growing through others adventures. There were stories of organization in midst of disorder. There were many stories that influenced the life patterns of those involved until this day.

Most importantly, these stories were only made possible through a collection of all of the characters, my fraternity brothers, the Phi Kaps. The importance of the growing experience at the undergraduate level should still be

a part of our lives today. I think this should be passed on through our involvement as alumni.

Dr. Gregory M. Beten DDS, FAGD
CWRU '88, CWRU DEN '93

Executive Office Report

Things are very busy at the Phi Kappa Theta Executive Offices in Indianapolis these days. Brother Craig Melancon (University of Louisiana-Lafayette) has become our ninth Executive Director of the National Fraternity.

He previously worked as a project manager in the telecommunications industry.

Craig has been getting day-to-day operations back on track after the fraternity went without an Executive Director for about nine months. He has helped bring costs down, along with our Manager of Business Operations Liz Langford. Both have helped greatly in bring stability back to the Executive Offices.

I have the privilege of serving the National Fraternity as a Trustee and also currently serve as the National Secretary, which means I get dubious honor of keeping the minutes for Board meetings. The new guy pays his dues. Brother Jim Flanigan (Iowa State) is

30-Year Phi Kap Reunion Now an official tradition

In 1998, the Case Phi Kaps from the Class of 1968, under the leadership of Dave Cesaratto, held a 30-year reunion at the chapter house on Magnolia Drive. Dave deserved a lot of credit for having the energy and the initiative to pull this off.

About 20 brothers attended, mostly from the class of '68, although there was a smattering of alumni from '69, '70 and '71. Some of the brothers hadn't seen their classmates since graduation, so it was a terrific gathering. The "man-mile" award probably would go to Ken Stianche '68 from Colorado, with a close second to "Mama" John Leone from North Carolina.

Not to be outdone, the class of '69 had their own reunion the next year under the direction of Rick Jerdonek. Prior to the party, Rich had a great idea to meet with a group of brothers and reconstruct a songbook containing many of the favorite Phi Kappa Theta party (drinking?) songs. Singing those songs at every house party was a great tradition that unfortunately has died over the past thirty years. Rich brought song sheets for all — and we used them. We sang damn near every song! Talk about bringing back some fun memories! Rich and his crew did a great job of planning the event and providing food, beverages and music.

Brothers came from as far away as Colorado (Cos Sciotto), Massachusetts (Bob Kinicki) and Florida (Jim Hokes). I hadn't seen any of these guys since 1969.

In order to keep this reunion tradition alive, I am coordinating a get together for the class of '70. The current actives have graciously allowed us the use of the chapter house for the night of the event. I look forward to a great response from my fellow classmates and any other Phi Kaps who would like to celebrate the first 30-year reunion of the new millennium.

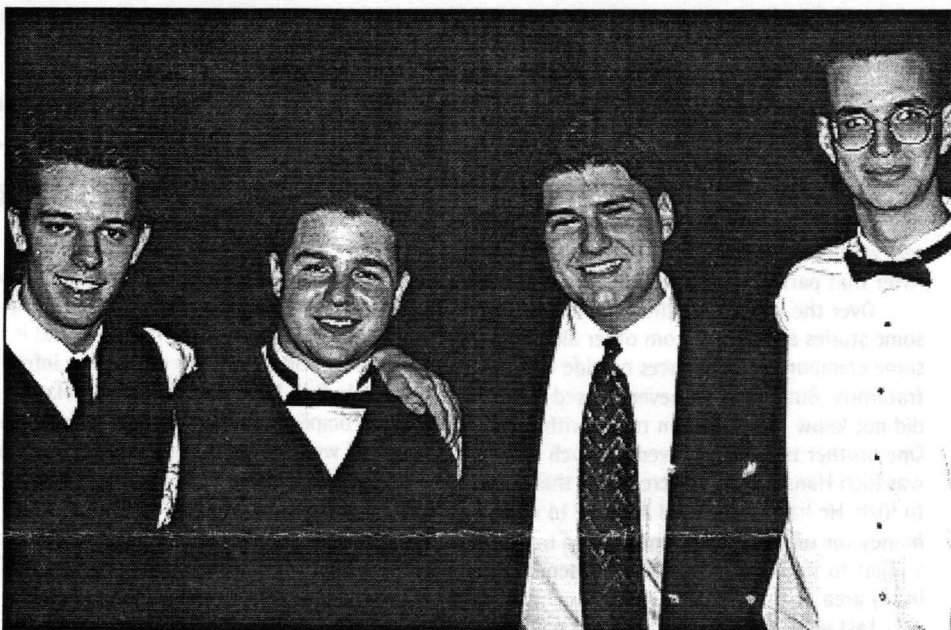
Let this article serve as a formal invitation to all brothers, but especially the classes of 1968 through 1972. I have been attempting to personally contact these classes by letter or e-mail, with more information. I encourage everyone who is interested in attending to contact me whether you think I have your address or not.

I already have firm commitments from the likes of Rick Treveloni, Mike Ahrens, Dan Mayton, Sam Morgan and Fred Epp, to name a few. Please mark the date on your calendar!

Mike (Ghost) Urbancic, '70

Saturday, June 3, 2000, 7:30 p.m. at the House

Brothers from the classes of 1968 through 1972 are especially invited. All brothers are welcome. Food, beer and soft drinks will be provided. CDs will provide the music. Feel free to bring your own. Special prizes will be given for the most ingenious, nostalgic, outrageous, ridiculous Phi Kap memorabilia. Courtesy of the Class of 1969: Song books with the original Phi Kap party songs will be available and a songfest will follow. RSVP required by May 26th. \$25/couple, \$15/person. Payment appreciated in advance so we can facilitate our planning. All excess funds will be donated to the Ernie Schmidt Fund to benefit the Chapter. Contact Mike Urbancic, 6996 Donna Rae Drive, Seven Hills, OH 44131, 216-524-6247, mju.cmu@worldnet.att.net.



• At Winter Formal: Brad Roepstorff, Amitai Schlair, Joe Difrancio, Eric Pinzur.

the relatively new National President, and has been working diligently with Craig to help the Fraternity operate smoothly.

As our National Treasurer, Brother John Love (University of Cincinnati) has been working on getting our accounts receivables down. As of March 31, 2000, the National Fraternity's accounts receivable was \$198,060. That number is slightly deceiving, though. It is a considerable spike from the February 29, 2000 accounts receivable of \$148,949. The difference is primarily new per capita and other billings for the spring semester. However, this is wholeheartedly unacceptable to John, me, and the rest of the Board. John is performing a Herculean effort to follow up with the 10 chapters who are accountable for 41.5% of that outstanding accounts receivable.

Expansion efforts are currently under way at seven universities. Those universities are: Duquesne, Arizona, Lewis, Sam Houston State, Texas-Pan Am, Marian, and Syracuse. Josh Gisi, Director of Chapter Services, is submitting an expansion application to Eastern Washington University shortly as well. We have an aggressive plan to expand the reach of Phi Kappa Theta on more campuses. This will include the hiring of a brand new Expansion Director, a new position at the Executive Offices. If you know of any campuses that would be hospitable to the establishment of a new colony, please contact Josh at the Executive Offices.

As always, feel free to contact me at 404-202-7226 or robert.stalder@us.pwcglobal.com. Also feel free to contact Scott Bova, Director of Development and Alumni Affairs, at the Executive Offices at 1-800-969-INDY or sbova@phikaps.org. Scott also handles the planned giving and other donations to the

National Foundation.

There are many exciting programs that the National Foundation would like to fund for the National Fraternity if you have the means to help. One example is the Presidents' Academy, which would bring all the chapter Presidents to Indianapolis each year to train them to be more effective chapter Presidents. Please contact Scott for more information on this program and any others.

Rob Stalder, '94

Common Bonds of Brotherhood

I received sad news recently on the passing of a brother I had met a couple years ago, and it became the catalyst for some thoughts that I want to share with you. The brother I am referring to is Fred Kelly, the younger brother of the famous dancer Gene Kelly. I met him at the San Diego Convention two and a half years ago where he received an alumni award, addressed the attendees, and accompanied us on the ritual that evening.

Whenever I have an opportunity to attend conventions, visit other chapters, meet alumni groups such as those who attend Mark Francioli's annual Christmas party or get in touch with individual alumni, the first thing that impresses me is that despite the formal introductions, there exists a feeling that we already know each other on some level.

Now I wouldn't think someone like me, a simple engineering student in Cleveland at the time, would have anything in common with

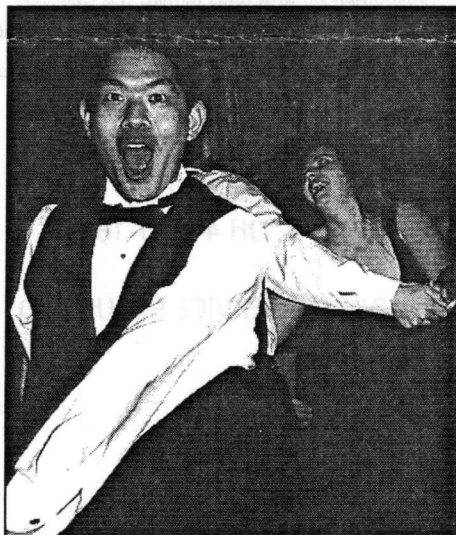
the man who taught Gene Kelly how to dance, along with the Queen of England and John Travolta. Yet there is a connection based in the intellectual, social, fraternal and spiritual ideals upon which the fraternity was established and which are espoused by its members. These ideals are what we all strive to incorporate in our lives, in our relationships and in our service to others. These ideals serve as the backbone of our fraternity experience and are the common bond we all share whether we've met personally or not.

I believe they are also part of what attracted us to the fraternity initially, since they become a part of who we are and show through in our actions. These concepts enhanced our experiences and relationships during those years, and can continue to motivate us in this different, yet vital role as fraternity alumni.

About a year ago, we expanded the alumni board's membership, defined new leadership roles, elected new leaders, and created a vision statement that defined a mission to create a mutually beneficial network of alumni and brothers that would serve to strengthen our chapter, the fraternity as a whole, and the relationships we have with one another.

This newsletter is one of the first fruits of our mission, as it is the first one composed mainly by efforts of alumni. It allows for us to be involved by writing down some thoughts we would like to share with the brothers, communicate news about new businesses, new family situations, new locales, or any other news that we feel moved to share.

Another aspect of our network is to be an active voice on our campus and at the National Fraternity level by attending conventions and having our voices and votes heard to help shape Greek life on campus and the fraternity into the next century. We are working



• Ken Nagano at Formal. Go Ken go!

on this at the board level and were successful in getting our vote to the last convention this past summer.

A third aspect of our active alumni network is to provide social outings to continue, enhance, and maybe rekindle some friendships among ourselves. As with any vision, we must step out on the faith that this is the future for our alumni association. These roles are rather different in nature, but with over 700 alumni from our chapter alone, we can be confident that certain motivated people like you will step forward and work together so our vision comes to fruition as an active, energetic, mutually beneficial network of Phi Kappa Theta alumni.

Brian Bacher, '98

E-United

As a member of likely the largest pledge class ever inducted into the Alpha Beta chapter of Phi Kappa Theta (40 strong), I was charged with the duty of getting to know all the actives and to get them to sign my "Black Book," just like all the other pledges. Since the class nearly outnumbered the actives, the actives were getting a little tired of being besieged by pledges every time they set foot into the house.

But I had no problem getting one particular active to sign my book. Ron M. Hamrah — better known at that time as "Camel Jockey" — earned his nickname simply from his Lebanese descent and being the approximate size of a respectable jockey. Ron was easy to find because there was always a lot of commotion when he was in the house, mostly caused by him. He was friendly, loud, funny, and Lebanese through and through. As a fellow Lebanese American, I was quickly befriended by Ron who helped me through many of the pitfalls of pledging. I was one of

the 30 or so pledges who became active in the spring of 1965.

As fellow actives, Ron and I enjoyed many exciting, crazy and memorable activities together with our brothers for the next two years before Ron graduated. He came back to a party in 1968, the year of my graduation, and gave us some much-needed advice on the real world beyond college and fraternity life. After that party, I never saw Ron again.

Over the years since then, I had heard some stories about Ron from other alums and some common acquaintances outside of the fraternity. But our paths never crossed and I did not know how to get in touch with him. One brother that I had stayed in touch with was Rich Hansen, '68. The credit for that goes to Rich. He has volunteered his time to raise money for the University, and he also made it a point to stop and visit with me when he was in my area.

Last year, when I finally bought a computer for my home, my wife and I began getting back in touch with friends and relatives via email. It was wonderful to reconnect and to catch up on their lives. So after Rich visited us recently, I sent him an email, asking for email addresses of any other alumni that he had. One of the addresses he sent was Ron Hamrah's.

When I sent Ron a message, he quickly responded. We exchanged messages for a couple weeks, each one telling the other their life history since we last saw each other in 1968. We were delighted to be communicating again and to find out how each other has been doing. Ron has graciously invited me and my family to visit him in the Washington D.C. area whenever I can and to take us to the best Lebanese restaurant inside the Beltway. I can't wait for my next opportunity to get there.

Getting e-united with Ron was a stroke of luck. Wouldn't it be great if there was an easy way to get in touch by email with many

more of the brothers that we shared so many good times with, so many years ago?

Mark T. Bryan, 1968

Get e-united! Send us your e-mail address!

Get in touch with brothers you haven't seen in years. Receive information about upcoming events. Fill out the following form and mail it to the address below, or simply **e-mail the information to Erik Malkin at ilshaan@aol.com**. We are compiling an ever-growing alumni database that we want to share with all Ohio Alpha Beta Phi Kap alumni.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail address: _____

If you choose to mail this form, do so to **Eric Malkin, 8642 Courtland Dr., Strongsville, OH 44136**. Do it now!

The Paragon is published on a semesterly basis by and for the alumni of the Ohio Alpha Beta Chapter of Phi Kappa Theta. This edition edited by Joe Banks (joe@joebanks.com) with ample assistance from all contributing alumni and actives. If you have ideas or suggestions to consider, or if you would like to become active on the board, e-mail Alumni Group President Eric Malkin at ilshaan@aol.com. Visit the Actives' web site at phikap.cwru.edu.

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