



APRIL 2018 ► VOLUME XIV

MOVING FORWARD

FEATURED COLUMNS

- **Cover Story:**
Protecting Core Values
- **Alumni Association Reports**
- **High Alpha Report**
- **Hort Sense: Planning a Garden from Scratch**
- **Travel Nuggets:**
When Things Go Wrong
- **Wine Rack: New Value Wines**

BEYOND THE COVER...

- **News from Alumni**

COVER STORY: CORNELL TODAY: PROTECTING CORE VALUES

By Stephen Ashley '62



Over the past year, hardly a week has gone by in which incidences of racism, hate speech and visiting campus speakers being shouted down have failed to be reported. These incidences have

brought into question the meaning of free speech, hate speech, protected speech, trigger warnings and other nuanced descriptors. Cornell has not been free from incidences calling into question the climate on campus for expression and the meaning of a diverse academic community. This past fall, there were two incidences – one in College Town involving physical assault and the other at Psi U, which resulted in a permanent removal from campus.



Stephen Ashley

Cornell's new President, Martha Pollack, moved quickly in September 2017 to address the challenges posed by the two referenced events. Her statement issued on September 17, 2017 reads as follows:

One of the main reasons I came to Cornell was my admiration for its founding principle to be a University for "any person". The events of the last weeks are thus deeply painful and, of course, the pain is magnified a thousand fold for those whose dignity and indeed very bodies have been attacked. I will not tell you "this is not who we are" as the events of the past few weeks belie that. But -- it is absolutely not who we want to be. The leadership team and I have been working throughout the weekend and we will continue to do so to develop and implement steps to be a more equitable, inclusive and welcoming University.

The President then goes on to issue several directives:

- The IFC and Panhell councils are to develop a diversity training and education program for all the members.
- The Dean of Students is to create and implement a dispute resolution process that will supplement the University's current disciplinary system.
- Enhance programs and services for supporting diversity and inclusion on Cornell's campus.
- The convening of a Presidential Task Force that is "charged with examining and addressing persistent problems of bigotry and intolerance at Cornell."

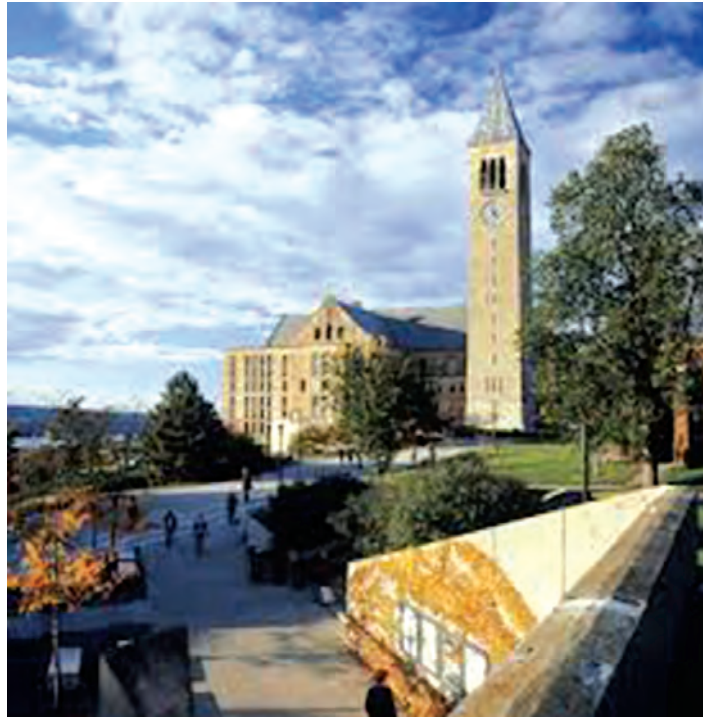
Further, the President is working to engage the Ithaca community and is requesting help from alumni to speak out against injustice, racism and bigotry. Prior administrations at Cornell have worked to address the core issues of racism and bigotry. While they in their own time have been meaningful, and I am sure made some difference, President Pollack's approach is by far the most comprehensive and drills deepest into the fabric of the Cornell Community.

I will now turn my comments to the Presidential Task Force. The charge to the Presidential Task Force on Campus Climate is to make specific recommendations regarding institutional change that "leads to a campus climate that is more diverse, inclusive and that expresses greater respect and understanding." Further, the Task Force is charged with examining the ability of the University's response to incidences of bigotry and intolerance. The work of the Task Force will be conducted through three subcommittees: Campus Experience; Regulation of Speech and Harassment; and Campus Response. The Task Force is to complete its work during the 2018 spring semester and is to make recommendations along three timelines:

- Those that can be accomplished immediately
- Those that could be accomplished between six and 12 months
- Those that are aspirational

Each of the three subcommittees has been provided with a series of questions to guide their work. I will provide a brief summary for each.

Campus Experience – No less than 44% of Cornell undergraduate students self-identify as something other than White/Caucasian. The broad challenge for this subcommittee is to examine the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the campus experience, both in class and outside, for the diverse community. In doing so, this subcommittee will examine current resources for both adequacy and effectiveness but also for gaps.



It is clear that the President's charge to the Task Force drives to the heart of the University's core values. The difficulty is that there are many definitions of core values and little distillation. That distillation will need to emerge through the process the President has outlined. She has indicated that the goal is "to move us forward as a community, recognizing that our campus is a reflection of our society, and that we cannot entirely eliminate attitudes and expressions of intolerance and bias but that we can and must redouble our efforts to re-

spond to them in a way that affirms Cornell's founding principles." ♦

Regulation of Speech and Harassment – This has been the flashpoint issue that has bedeviled many campuses across the country as invited speakers are disinvited, faculty are confronted on allegedly insensitive statements and discussion of controversial content is challenged. This subcommittee takes on a rather legalistic aura as it examines the campus code of conduct and raises questions as to appropriateness of various regulatory mechanisms and appropriate enforcement vehicles. It is useful to remember that the First Amendment applies to governmental bodies and agencies and not to private institutions, of which Cornell is one (Cornell University contracts with the State of New York to provide education in the four units that have a more defined public mission). For those wishing a more in-depth discussion of this topic, I recommend *Free Speech on Campus* written by Erwin Chemerinsky and Howard Gillman.

Campus Response – The role of this subcommittee is to provide a set of guiding principles as to how the University should respond to future incidences. There is a significant part of this subcommittee's work that will ask what campus groups and individuals can do when confronted with incidences that are perceived to be harmful.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS REPORTS

As

a reminder from my report in last fall's edition of *The Oracle*, our board is responsible for the following functions at Edgemoor:

- Setting and assessing room rates
- Administering room deposits
- Maintaining and improving the House and its facilities through scheduled maintenance and necessary capital improvements
- Owning and managing the debt on the property including the mortgage, loans and Brother Bonds.
- Funding from ISWZA Fraternity, Inc. comes from rental fees from the undergraduates.



Doug Levens '92
President

with our social probation from Lambda Chi International Headquarters, caused a significant drop in our Rush numbers for the year. While this shortcoming impacts the undergraduates because our rents are charged in a lump sum not on a per head basis, the housing corporation has decided to support the undergraduates in this difficult financial situation by working on a one-time reduction in rent to keep the per head cost within the current market rates in the Cornell Greek Community. In the short term, this hinders our ability to address some of our ongoing upgrade projects. The very successful Telluride summer rental program brought in about \$15,000, but because of the current financial situation described above, we are only planning to apply about \$5,000 of it for updating repairs to the back railing and some preventative maintenance on the doors leading out to the back deck off the first floor.

Working on the Alumni Control Board and the Membership Review has often been a time consuming and painful process. However, we are now a better Chapter having gone through it. Both the alumni and the undergrads have expressed feelings about our difficulties, but we have worked

side by side to fix our problems and achieve our goals. Our weekly mentoring calls have opened up communication lines. In fact, if any of you have ever been back to Edgemoor as an alumnus and felt slighted or unwanted, please give it another shot. Times have changed, and in the case of the current brotherhood, it is definitely for the better.

I should also relate that for the first time in nearly 20 years I attended an initiation ceremony. I would highly recommend this to everyone. No matter how much campus life and the undergraduate experience has changed over the years, The Lambda Chi initiation remains a constant. It is a powerful experience to watch and reminisce. It is a unique time when being a brother transcends age and everyone is an equal.

If you have any questions about the operations of ISWZA Fraternity, Inc. feel free to contact me at levens@cox.net. ♦



Rick Meigs '80
President

The Omicron Alumni Association assumes the duties not handled by ISWZA Fraternity, Inc, the housing corporation. This includes promoting fellowship and social interaction among our alumni and handling all alumni communications including The Omicron Oracle, The Cross And Crescent Chapter News, the iswza.org website, President's Letters and notifications about Reunion and Homecoming.

It is also important to note that these activities are funded by your alumni dues. As is often the case during a campaign funding drive, regular alumni dues payments tend to slip a bit. Unfortunately, in Omicron's case, the current dues payments are down by nearly 25%. However, for most of you, your campaign pledges have been fulfilled by now and we ask you to please return to paying your annual dues to help fund our communication program and support our Reunion and Homecoming events.

As Doug Levens alluded to in his report, the undergraduates have experienced a trying period. They are understandably

ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS REPORT

disappointed by the ban on any social activities, but they are working hard to follow Lambda Chi International's event planning system. This involves detailed planning and approval for any event considered an LXA Omicron event. This process is tied to the Lambda Chi insurance program and is basically a go/no go litmus test for event insurability. Fortunately, once the undergraduates learned that the lack of any LXA insurance meant they were relying on their own parents' insurance coverage, compliance became a no-brainer.



Dr. Renee

During this spring semester, it is very apparent that our undergraduates and the alumni have greatly benefited from the closer contact and from the regular one-on-one interactions with the members of the Alumni Control Board (ACB) and the undergraduate officers. During last month's spring board meeting, we heard a lot more "We" and much less "Us" and "Them" than we have heard in a long time. This is a very good sign that we are coming together as a brotherhood.

As required by the Lambda Chi headquarters during the Chapter's suspension, Mark Fernau '82 and I attended the Neville Advisor's College in Indianapolis as members of the ACB. It was a very informative experience and it helped Mark and me get a better understanding of millennials and why they think and do what they do.

Mark Fernau describes some of the highlights of the two-day plus Neville College experience including some expert presentations and a small-group idea exchange led by highly experienced High PIs and the demonstration of some online tools that Lambda Chi headquarters offers undergraduates and their advisors that help them understand their Chapters and how to be successful and minimize risk.

Mark reports that the main takeaway from the session was how important it is to have a mature and engaged High PI for the Chapter who spends significant time at the house to help avoid the risky behaviors that leads to suspensions and probations. Given Ithaca's geographical isolation and the fact that most Cornell graduates don't end up living there, this has been a challenge for Omicron over the years.

This is why I am very pleased to announce that Omicron has secured Dr. Renee Alexander '74, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Intercultural Programs, as our faculty fellow.

"Dr. Renee," shown above, as the students affectionally know

her, is one of the most popular and well-respected members of the Dean of Students office. She is known on campus for her efforts to bridge Cornell's many race, class and gender divisions. Omicron's relationship with her began when Noah Goodman '19 was High Beta and he organized through her office "Breaking Bread" events last fall where Omicron brothers shared a meal with a member of another organization they might not have traditionally chosen followed by an open discussion. While "Dr. Renee" is not a Greek, she works with many fraternities and sororities and has taken a personal interest in our brothers. She

was invited to attend the March 10th Matthew Omans Memorial Committee talk led by Alex Aidun '08. She said the session humbled her as she was taken by the brothers' openness to her and the obvious affection they had for each other. The Chapter plans to host her for dinner at Edgemoor at least once a month and actively participate in her office's events. It is our belief that this very positive new relationship with "Dr. Renee" coupled with the continued one-on-one involvement of the ACB with Omicron's undergraduate officers will help produce a successful future for the Chapter.

2018 Spring Events:

A Reunion reception will again take place at Edgemoor on Saturday afternoon in the same successful casual format that we have used in recent years. Details and Registration will be available shortly on the House website at iswza.org.

Homecoming is slated for the weekend of September 22-23 with the afternoon football game against Yale. For early arrivals, there will be an "Early Bird" dinner at The Antlers Restaurant on Thursday evening, September 20th, beginning at 6:00 PM. All Omicron alumni and guests are welcome. Contact Sandy Gilbert for details at sandem133@aol.com.

Homecoming activities at Edgemoor will begin with our usual casual reception on Friday evening September 21st, the Alumni Board meetings on Saturday morning followed by an open-discussion on the future of Greek Life at Cornell and a reception and dinner at the House after the game.

It should be noted that because Homecoming will occur during the last weeks of the Chapter's social suspension, events at Edgemoor will need to be dry during the weekend.

For our alumni from the '60s era, there is a reception and dinner at Joe's on Friday evening, September 21st. It is a "Reservations Only" event and please contact Sandy Gilbert at the email address above for details and to make a reservation. ♦

HIGH ALPHA REPORT: MOVING FORWARD

By Noah Goodman '19

As

the new High Alpha, I am pleased to introduce myself to The Oracle's many alumni readers and give you an update on life here at Edgemoor. I grew up in Syosset, New York out on Long Island and attended Long Island Lutheran High School. I chose to come to Cornell for a number of reasons. My Mom went to Cornell and I basically grew up here as a result. I always knew I wanted to follow in her footsteps. In addition, Cornell was the best fit to meet my rather unusual interest in studying Applied Economics Management while looking to pursue a film career.



Noah Goodman

When I came to Cornell, I was pretty anti-fraternity, but Lambda Chi appealed to me because of the obvious closeness of the brotherhood. I saw how much these guys genuinely liked each other. At Edgemoor, Rush was not a show like it was at many other fraternities. I wanted a fraternity where I felt I could hang out with every member, not just a certain few. I was drawn to the broad background of the brothers and the fact that their diversity didn't create any cliques.

As you can well imagine, this has been a trying period for the House given our social probation. However, I am pleased to report that the undergraduates have responded positively to the situation by filling the gap with more brotherhood activities and philanthropy events. Some of the brotherhood events we have undertaken included a trip to Syracuse for a basketball game, a trip to Greek Peak for skiing, snowboarding, and tubing and a renewed interest in our intramural sports program where our basketball team is looking good for a run at the championship. Our philanthropy efforts include trips to local food shelters, a funding program for Feeding America and House participation in Relay For Life.



Omicron has also made it a mission to get even more involved on campus partnering with organizations focusing on diversity and inclusion to help heal and bridge the gap between the different factions of the Cornell community.

While our probationary status is not ideal and we all are anxious to move beyond it, the brotherhood is handling it much better than most expected. We have made a real effort to refocus and use the opportunity to host a wider variety of events and become closer as a brotherhood. In fact, as strange as it might seem, last semester was one of my favorite times at Edgemoor because of how much closer the brotherhood became.

Omicron has a very active brotherhood on campus with over 80% of our members involved in some capacity in clubs or teams and nearly half of them hold leadership roles in these organizations. For example, we have two members who are officers on the Intra Fraternity Council, the Managing Editor of the Big Red Sports Network, The Cornell Mock Trial Captain, the President of Unite for Sight, President of Cornell Kung Fu, the manager of Cornell Basketball and Chairman of Greek Health and Wellness. In addition, we have several brothers on the Cornell Alpine Ski Team and two varsity golfers as well as a number of Omicron participants playing club basketball, rugby, soccer and water polo.

The slate of officers working with me to manage Edgemoor and run our programs and events are shown in the Fact Box on the following page:



OMICRON FACT BOX: Spring 2018

High Alpha.....	Noah Goodman '19
High Beta.....	Nicholas Kacena '20
High Theta.....	Sam Tellier '19
High Gamma.....	Phil Garbarini '20
High Epsilon.....	Max Kester '20
High Kappas.....	Ian Fried '18
.....and Calvin Beckwith '18	
High Tau.....	Josh Nathanson '20
High Rho.....	Bill Lithen '20
High Sigma.....	Jake Friedenbergl '19
High Delta.....	James Motyl '19
High Phi.....	Thomas Suesser '18
High Iotas.....	Trevor Mills '20
.....and Mike May '20	
High Mu.....	Matthew Spoth '18
Jock.....	Josh Calka '18
Diversity & Inclusion Chair.....	Juan Sebastian Forero '19
Sustainability Chair.....	Jonathon Augarten '19

Following Rush, we have been joined by the thirteen new Associate Members shown above and listed below in alphabetical order:

Alex Barraclough '20, CALS, *Spencer, New York*
 Jason Bin '20, ILR, *Great Neck, New York*
 Terrence Burke '21, Arts & Sciences, *Greenwich, Connecticut*
 Will Freihofner '19, CALS, *Scarsdale, New York*
 Michael Garcia '20, Hotel, *Palm Springs, California*
 Jacob Gellert '21, Hotel, *Hillsdale, New York*
 Eric Huber '21, Engineering, *Groton, Massachusetts*
 Andrew Kim '19, ILR, *Los Angeles, California*
 Bjorn Kroes '21, CALS, *Lake Placid, New York*
 Tyler Levine '21, Arts & Sciences, *Woodmere, New York*
 Conner Magnessen '20, ILR, *Hinsdale, Illinois*
 Dylan Petrello '21, Arts & Sciences, *Pelham Manor, New York*
 Jonah Schieber '21, Human Ecology, *San Francisco, California*

On behalf of all the undergraduate brothers, I want to thank the many hard-working alumni who have given their time and advice to help us move beyond this difficult period. It is our goal to get Omicron back where it belongs as one of the leading fraternities on "The Hill." I also want to extend an open invitation to all our alumni to stop by Edgemoor whenever you are visiting Cornell or the Ithaca area. ❖

TRAVEL NUGGETS: WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

By Alan Fridkin '65

If

you read this column, you probably both enjoy traveling and feel you are pretty good at it. Whether you are an independent traveler or prefer tours and cruises with someone else doing the planning, once in a while, stuff happens. An unpleasant problem overseas is more difficult to handle than at home. Think about this before you leave your easy chair. You will be glad you did. Especially when you have a day you would prefer to erase. There are no pretty photos this month, just some hard-earned advice when you are in harm's way.



Alan Fridkin

sad and probably foolish. Our favorite hotel in Nice is four blocks from the terrible truck rampage. A city we love is not unsafe. Whether you would now go to places like Istanbul, Jerusalem or Moscow is more of a judgment call. Don't rely just on social media and an occasional news flash. Check State.gov., the State Department's Website, for Country information and Travel Warnings. They encourage you to register indicating where you will travel! That gives the local Embassy and Consulates a heads-up about Americans in their territory. All Embassies and some Consulates have websites with useful materials. Local country, city and region tourist offices websites are helpful, but may sugarcoat or airbrush problems.

When I had Navy Duty in the Netherlands, Belgium and London in the eighties and nineties, I advised my sailors don't make yourself a target. Don't be conspicuous. Avoid large public events, minimize your time in big tourist attractions and don't go to known neighborhoods where crime is rampant.

In over a hundred international trips, we have had just

one nasty surprise. In a train on the Italian/French border, about ten years ago, my wife and I were pickpocketed by some very efficient Romanians. They got my wallet out of my right front pocket! They also grabbed a change purse from the top of my wife's shoulder bag, which contained cash and some favorite earrings. My loss was worse: Passport, cash and credit cards.

Since then, I NEVER carry all of the above in one place and I use a wallet on a wire enhanced belt keeper inside my trousers. Similar devices around your neck or inside your shoes/socks are helpful. RFID blocking materials are also prudent.

The Transit Police in Ventimiglia had the 800 numbers for all the credit card companies on a clipboard on the wall! Cancel stolen ones immediately and seek replacement cards ASAP. Losing your Passport is a more serious matter. You won't be able to fly or cross some borders without one. Always keep copies of your credit cards, Passport, etc. on line and at least one copy in your luggage. You will have to obtain a Temporary/Emergency Passport from a U.S. Embassy or Consulate. There is a Form to complete, specific photos to present and a fee to be paid. The Embassy or Consulate may be a long way from where you are! Call them for their hours and download the Form when you need it.

The chances of being a victim of an armed robbery, physical assault or being a victim of a terrorist attack are very small.

Accident or Illness

In more than fifty years of travel, other than an occasional trip to a foreign pharmacy, we have not had to worry about this subject-until last October. In a small Italian town we have visited for decades, my wife had a very bad fall on a hidden step. She landed full tilt on her right shoulder. There was a fracture. She had to hold her arm in what I call "the Napoleon Position". Our lesson in Italian Medicine 101 could be replicated anywhere else you or we travel.

First and foremost, you want to get highly competent care. Second, you will want to know who pays for it. Third, is this something that must be handled locally, or can you get home to have the condition treated by medical people you know.

If you are on a tour or cruise, the tour company will be the first line of defense. If you are traveling independently, your hotel (if you are at one), will have reliable contracts. If you are in an AirBnB or a rental property, you are in charge!

I strongly urge you to join IAMAT, the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers, a non-profit that takes voluntary donations. They maintain a data base of American and English Board-Certified Physicians who pledge to treat travelers at a fair fee. IAMAT also does research on diseases that affect travelers. Their doctors and clinics aren't everywhere, but it is an excellent source of reliable information.

Seniors, covered by Medicare-there is no coverage overseas! Everyone should consider some form of "Emergency Medical Coverage" and there are plenty of companies that would be glad to sell it to you. Beware: nearly every policy has a Pre-Existing Condition Clause. They vary widely, and some are downright unconscionable. I litigated these cases when I worked for an honorable insurance company. Some clauses exclude conditions you don't even know you have during the look back period!

Veterans with Tricare, it covers some emergency health care overseas on a reimbursement basis. Most travel policies are a smorgasbord of Trip Cancellation, Baggage Loss, Medical Care and Emergency Evacuation Services. The MedJet Policy offered through AARP is solely of the latter kind, but only kicks in if you have been admitted to a foreign hospital and a U.S. doctor and/or one there certifies you would be better treated at home and are capable of being med-evacuated.

Medical care is often less expensive overseas but may require upfront payment if you don't have insurance. Many countries have a public and a private health system. The quality of care can be excellent, adequate or inadequate. The U.S. Embassy, your Credit Card Com-



panies and Insurance Carriers may offer contacts, but there is no substitute for local intelligence! Our Italian experience was decent, marred by language barriers (some nurses spoke English). An Italian surgeon recommended surgery. We declined. We returned early with my wife's arm in a sling. Our Doctors here confirmed the fracture, but concluded

surgery was "neither necessary nor appropriate."

Baggage Damage, Loss and Missed Flights

There are elaborate and boring regulations dealing with this subject. They won't be of interest to you until it is your turn in the barrel. Again, insurance protection is a plausible supplement to the Airline's responsibilities.

We once had a flight from Philadelphia to Paris cancelled in fine weather with the plane sitting at the gate. USAir had two flights on that route that night and the first flight wasn't anywhere near full. They put us on a later flight to London that night and then on to France. It took the baggage a day to catch up with us.

Recently, we flew from Nice to Paris on Air France, staying in the Capital a few days before returning home. One of our bags came off the conveyor belt with an eight-inch gash in the top. Their Baggage Claim Department confirmed that it was not repairable. They gave us two choices: take a new bag from their stock of "similar" luggage or buy a new one and make a claim through Delta Airlines, their partner, when we got home. Since their bags were of inferior quality, we chose the latter. We bought a new bag from the same manufacturer at a Paris Department Store. We submitted paperwork to Delta when we got home. It took 3 or 4 weeks, but we were reimbursed.

Overall, travel is too wonderful to let potential problems discourage you. But planning can minimize the sting when your day on the road is less than perfect. ♦

HORT SENSE: TIPS FOR PLANNING A GARDEN FROM SCRATCH

By R. Wayne Mezitt '64

Planning a garden around your home can seem like a daunting, overwhelming undertaking — so many choices, so much investment, so little understanding about what plants to use, seemingly huge risks should you make the wrong decisions. The



Wayne Mezitt

process involves far more details than we can address in a few paragraphs here, but a few fundamentals will help simplify the decision-making, whether you do it yourself or seek professional help.

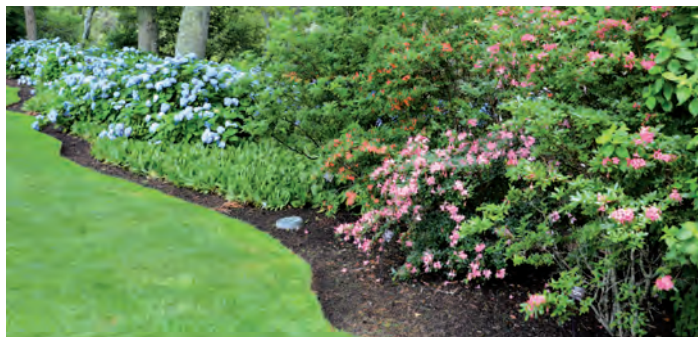
You'll need to determine the type of garden you want. Discuss with your family how you expect to be using the spaces. Are you seeking an appealing public-face from the road, a welcoming entrance, screening, a backyard retreat, a minimal-maintenance space to relax, or something else?

Choosing a well-defined objective helps narrow the focus and simplifies your choices.

Observing while walking around your neighborhood, visiting friends' yards, touring public gardens, reading garden design publications, and participating in gardening discussions are all good ways to help develop concepts. Join a local gardening group or bring your ideas to design professionals at your local garden center.

Make sure the elements that comprise your chosen area are appropriate for your intended purpose. Be aware of soil characteristics, moisture, sunlight, wind exposure, accessibility, and proximity to features you want to enhance or conceal. How do you intend to use the space each season? From what vantage points will the area be viewed or approached? Considering these conditions and others helps define the type, sizes, colors, textures, and other characteristics of the elements and plants you should choose for your design.

Investing the time to learn about the types of plants that suit your plans will yield considerable rewards. Many homeowners visiting garden centers tend to



choose what's showing color at the time, and that's generally a mistake. Combining plants with different seasons of interest adds significantly to the value of your yard. The best garden designs are appealing for more than a single point of time during the year and include considerations like maintenance requirements, fragrance, form, and texture. Gardening publications, online resources, and horticultural advisers at your local garden center can suggest options.

Set a budget for your project. Installing mature-size (expensive) trees or shrubs may not be your most prudent choice. Underestimating how fast plants grow and how large they will become is a common mistake, so design your plantings to accommodate change as their component trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials grow toward maturity.

Make sure you start by installing the critical basic elements for the garden, adding less essential components as you are able. Some gardens successfully utilize temporary plantings like non-woody "filler" plants, colorful annual flowers, and tropicals in gaps between smaller, less costly "starter-size" shrubs and trees. Filler-type non-woody plants that can survive more than one season include rhubarb, strawberry, lavender, thyme, sage, oregano, rosemary, and chives. Annual herbs like dill, nasturtium, basil, and parsley can also be good choices. For vegetables, try chard, carrots, lettuces, beets, corn, kale, peppers, tomatoes, fennel, and cabbage.

Don't fear making mistakes; every garden changes over time. Rare is a planting plan that never needs to be modified. Plants are living organisms, continually affected by elements beyond our control. Droughts, floods, sudden temperature changes, pests, insects, heavy winds, snow loads, and so many other factors are involved in influencing how well your gardens perform. Planning yours should be a pleasant, rewarding process, particularly when you've done your homework and know to ask the right questions. ♦

THE WINE RACK: THE TRADER JOE'S CONNECTION

By Sandy Gilbert '62

As many of us become more familiar with a wider variety of wines from all over the world, we begin to encounter and acquire a taste for some of the finer offerings. The problem is, even if you shop at the discount wine sources like ABC or Total Wine, the French Bordeauxs like St.-Emilion or Pomerol or the finer Italian reds like Amarone are priced way beyond what most of us are willing to pay for a bottle of wine. For example, Prices for a 2015 St.-Emilion start at \$50.00 a bottle and run up to over \$200.00.

However, there is hope for value seeking wine shoppers. Visit your nearby Trader Joe's, the popular food dispensary from California, and head to the wine section. You'll find examples of many of the premier wine



varietals mentioned above at very attractive prices. Here are a few examples to try:

FRANCE:

- Tertre du Moulin St.-Emilion Grand Cru 2014
- Chateau Roudier Montagne St.-Emilion 2011
- Sainte Celine Chablis 2010

ITALY:

- Conte Di Bregonzo Amarone della Valpolicella 2014
- Amarone della Valpolicella Pasqua 2010
- Conte Fini Pinot Grigio 2016

All the wines listed above are priced at under \$20.00 at Trader Joe's. Do they taste the same as a \$60.00 wine of the same type? Generally, no. However, they all will be one of the best tasting wines you have had for under \$20.00. Try a few and you'll see what I mean. ♦



NEWS FROM ALUMNI

► 1960



Curt Curtice '60, a long-standing member of the group of brothers who gather in the Adirondacks every summer for some R and R, reports the group is doing well as reflected in the picture above taken in a pub in Gloversville, New York. Pictured from left, Carl Igelbrink '59, Wayne Mezitt '64, Curt, John Comstock '61, Lee Leonard '63, Pete Saderholm '60, Bruce Veghte '60, Bill Fuller '61, Tom Shineman '65, and John Schneider '58. Curt says that Carl Igelbrink told the group that Ed "Pelly" Parazynski '57 has a son, Scott, who recently published his autobiography, "The Sky Below", recapping his amazing seventeen-year career as an astronaut, physician and explorer. Scott has been a member of five space shuttle missions and performed seven space walks including repairing a badly damaged solar array. In addition to his NASA career, Scott has summited Mt. Everest and explored some of the deepest lakes in the world.

Curt also tells us that his life is going well as he and Pam were able to visit her family in England last October to celebrate her aunt's 96th Birthday. He was amazed that the weather was actually quite good and not surprised that the fish and chips beer and wine were plentiful. Curt says most of their trips are short local jaunts to Savannah and Sea Island, Georgia and Blowing Rock, North Carolina. You can reach Curt at wtcurtice@aol.com.

► 1961

Don Coleman writes to say that he must be nuts or slipped a cog because after 53 years, he now has a

presence back in Central New York in the industrial mechanical construction business. He has invested in a start-up mechanical contracting business in Batavia with his nephew, Joe. They are looking for business in pipe fitting, plumbing and light general contracting. If you need a mechanical contractor in central New York or Northern Pennsylvania, contact Don at coleman-heavyconst@yahoo.com.

► 1962



As shown at left, Sandy Gilbert is continuing his ongoing interest in art with a new venture into painting abstracts. The picture at left is entitled "Eight Ball" and hangs in his and Emmy Lou's

new golf villa at the Meadows in Sarasota, Florida. He keeps busy as the Chairman of START (Solutions To Avoid Red Tide) a non-profit organization that raises money for marine environmental projects that help preserve our coastal waters. Sandy also has taken up pickle ball and still enjoys a round of golf. You'll find him at sandem133@aol.com.

Chris Napjus '62 reports that he successfully escaped a big scare with an emergency medical procedure that required eight blood transfusions causing the cancellation of an extended cruise across the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. All is well now and he was able to take a trip to Bavaria around the Christmas holidays. Chris says he and Barb are looking forward to the '60's era gathering at Edgemoor for Homecoming in September. When he's not traveling, you'll catch Chris at cnajpus@verizon.net.

► 1963

Bob Elliott reports that they experienced a tough winter with lots of cold weather and snow. In one storm a large tree branch blew down and damaged two cars in their driveway. Bob says he and Connie caught up with Sandy '62 and Emmy Lou Gilbert last month for an Italian dinner at Giorgio's in Sarasota during their winter escape to Florida. They have been going to Naples for a month or so for the past few winters and really enjoy the break from the weather up north. Bob answers at bobell89@aol.com.

John Lutz tells us that he has been diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer's disease, but is handling it well

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

so far with some medication. He and Tracy continue to enjoy skiing and hiking and John travels to model railroad meets to practice his skills with the new computerized trains. You can track John down at jrlcorp@verizon.net.



As a member of the Adirondack Group mentioned earlier, Lee Leonard sent in the above photo of the group. At the table left to right are: Dick Veghte, Bruce's brother, John Comstock '61, Tom Shineman '65, Wayne Mezitt '64, Curt Curtice '60, Bruce Veghte '60, holding a picture of friend Bert Vonderahe, Lee Leonard '63, Pete Saderholm '60, Carl Igelbrink '59, John Schneider '58 and Bill Fuller '61. Lee wrote the following engaging wrap-up of the event.

"We are, we are, we are, we are, we are the Lambda Chis!"
"We can, we can, we can, we can, we can demolish forty ryes"

Early in August every year, these words reverberate in a well-tuned chorus through the dining room of a fine restaurant in the foothills of the Adirondacks about ten or twelve miles from the New York State Thruway. The words and those of other Lambda Chi and Cornell songs (with language adjusted according to whether children are present) are sung by a dozen Omicron brothers from the late 1950's and early 1960's. Believe it or not, the songs are not only applauded by the other diners, they are anticipated each year by the local regulars. The gathering, hosted by brothers Bruce Veghte '60 and John Comstock '61, was started 15 years ago by the Gloversville Boys and attracts brothers from Maryland, Massachusetts, Georgia, Washington, New Jersey and other places. During the three or four day gathering, the brothers visit an historic site, have cocktails at Bruce's home on Caroga Lake, eat at several restaurants, play some golf, enjoy a steak dinner at John

Comstock's house and, of course, regale one another with memories and "war stories" from Edgemoor and Cornell. This past august, the group drove two and a half hours to Ausable Chasm, hiked a mountain trail and rafted down the Ausable River before returning to home base. Camaraderie is the main goal and it is readily achieved.

► 1964



The picture above shows Wayne and Beth Mezitt '64 and Jan and Tom Shineman '65 at dinner celebrating Tom and Wayne's mutual August 23rd Birthdays at Lake Placid Lodge last summer. Wayne can be found at waynem@westonnurseries.com. While Tom's address is esfusion@sellmoretraining.com.

► 1965



As shown above second from left, John DeWitt continues to be very active playing bass with a variety of bands in the Sarasota, Florida area. He says he plays somewhere almost every night and sometimes has two or three gigs a day. That's because there are a lot of good musicians who have retired in this area. John has recently played with a number of LA studio session guys and a former Tower of Power guitar player. Because of the number of retirees in the area, the gigs are

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

usually short (two hours or so) and end by 9:30 PM. The most common genera of music is jazz, but John also plays in some rock and rhythm and blues gigs. He recently played a concert with The Coasters, The Shirelles and Freddy Cannon. John says his schedule in retirement can get hectic at times, but it sure is fun. John answers at johndewitt64@gmail.com.

► 1966

Dave Landrey reports that he took an interesting solo drive from Sarasota, Florida to Salt Lake City while his wife, Joan, flew to Salt Lake. They spent a week in Utah touring the parks. After the park tour, they flew to Seattle to board a cruise to Alaska. Dave says the scenery from the ship was spectacular and it was a memorable experience. They then repeated the return trip with Joan flying home and Dave driving back to Sarasota. On his way home, Dave shaped his itinerary so he could visit the three state capitals, Helena, Bismarck and Madison, that he hadn't seen before. Dave lives at drlandrey@aol.com.



Paul Williamson tells us that, as shown at left, his sign business continues to grow by leaps and bounds and he is much busier than he ever thought he'd be at this age. His sales in 2017 were up over 40% over 2016 and he is buying

new machines and adding employees. Art Sign Works is morphing from mostly a sign company to a mostly plaque company. His customer base is mostly Federal, State, County and City governments, along with the Military, police and some universities and schools. One of the nice aspects of the business is that his customers already know what they want as they are looking to turn their printed seals and coat of arms (like Lambda Chi) into wall and podium plaques. Despite all the activity with a growing business, Paul and Cheryl have managed to get away for a cruise from San Diego to Ft Lauderdale through the Panama Canal and are looking forward to a European river cruise this fall where they plan to visit their youngest daughter and her family in Germany. You'll catch Paul at paul@artsignworks.com.

► 1967

Frank Sullivan writes that when he retired a few years ago, he sat down and made a list of things he wanted to do. He is proud to say that he has only gotten to about half of them and is busy enough that he doesn't have time to undertake the balance. Both he and Ellen spent a good deal of time on airplanes with their jobs when they were working and swore they never wanted to see an airport again when they retired. Wrong! This year they are headed to Florida for ten days, Cap d' Antibes for a week, and London and Paris for a week. Travel still can be hectic, but it's different when you can choose where to go and what to do. Frank also keeps busy serving on three boards and has finally figured out that his AA was doing a lot of the logistics for him when he was working. Now he is the chief cook and bottlewasher. Too much paper and too little time. Living in New York City, he and Ellen also enjoy taking an afternoon to see an exhibit at one of the galleries or museums. Frank has concluded that retirement is not a trap of boredom as many fear, but quite the opposite. It's another phase of life that can be very rewarding and enjoyable. Frank resides at FSullivan@fs2re.com.

► 1969

Phil Prigmore reports that Central New York has had more than its share of snow and cold weather so far this winter. Keeping warm has been a full-time job. Phil has been busy with the ongoing restoration of Edgemoor with the rehabilitation of the second and third floor bathrooms for the Telluride rental and other upgrades. He is especially pleased to report that the traditional octagonal tables that have been a fixture in the House since the 1920's have been fully restored and now reside in the first floor Electronic Learning Center. He and Carol are looking forward to joining the '60's era gathering at Homecoming in September. Phil answers at lxownersrep@gmail.com.

► 1974

Elliot Sloane writes that the family returned to their former home in Philadelphia to celebrate their niece's graduation from Muhlenberg College. They enjoyed the campus tour, Allentown's car museum and distant Musikfest routes to Bethlehem and sampling brews from their bustling pubs. Then came the Florida hurricane season with visits from Harvey, Irma, Maria and Nate. They were glued to the weather reports for several months. Irma headed their way and they evacuated to the Panhandle of Florida and beyond to Biloxi, Mississippi. Irma grew from a category 1 storm to a category 5 in just 15 hours leaving record damage in her wake in the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and parts of Florida. Fortunately, they only found a little minor damage to their home when they returned to Florida. Elliot

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

continues to be very busy developing an online Doctoral program in Nursing for Nova U, a blended classroom/online Masters of Business in Health Informatics for South University and an online Graduate Certificate of Health Informatics for Villanova University. He is traveling a bit less but has his hands full with a five-bedroom rental home remodel. You can reach Elliot at esloane@gmail.com.

► 1976



Ron Samascott shown above running the “Tail of the Dragon” near the North Carolina/Tennessee border, has been working his farm since graduation. The farm has evolved from a mostly wholesale business to a retail enterprise that now grows over 100 varieties of apples and other fruits and vegetables that will thrive in upstate New York. Once his four children reached adulthood, three of whom work on the farm, Ron and his partner, Bonnie, started taking time off to tour the country on their motorcycles. In the past ten years, they have ridden all over the contiguous states except Kansas and Rhode Island. Some of the places they have visited by bike include Key West shown above, Lake Katadin in Maine and most of the national parks out west. Lately, to cover more ground, they have been leaving their motorcycles out west in storage lockers. They tour for 10 to 25 days and then fly back home. They tend to avoid most large cities and instead stop at farms to compare notes with the locals. Ron says he can definitely report that there is no shortage of cows in this country and, in many areas, they have free range of the road. They see wildlife everywhere from buffalo, elk, moose, bears, roadrunners, eagles, seals and wild horses. Touring by motorcycle isn’t for everyone, but for Bonnie and Ron, it is a stimulating way to see the country. If you are in the Kinderhook area of New York, Ron says you are welcome to stop by for a tour of the farm and a chance to sample some great apples. You’ll catch Ron at rsam1954@aol.com.



Jim Sollecito wrote from The Keys that he has been working to repair his place down there from the wrath of Irma. His place in Syracuse was flooded too so it’s been a lot of extra work this year. All the work will keep him from another Cuba visit this year. He’ll miss seeing the people and old cars. He did get to visit with Ron Samascott when he was in the Albany area to see his daughter sworn into the New York Bar. Jim plans on stopping in for Homecoming and you can reach him in the meantime at jim@sollecito.com.

► 1982



Mark “MEF” Fernau, shown above at the Cornell/Harvard hockey game in Cambridge, reports that the tradition continues on with the late ‘70s and early ‘80s era Omicrons attending the annual game. This year’s game was especially successful with a 3-0 shutout drubbing of Harvard by the Big Red and a strong showing of Lambda Chi attendees. Scott Jacobs ’79 made a surprise showing joined by Bill Stasiuk ’80, Joe Kane ’79, Mark Hallock ’79, Dennis Barone ’79, Cliff Manko ’80, Steve Keegan ’80, Mike Lennon ’81 and T. Scott Brown ’81. Filling out the gathering were a number of spouses and children along with a few friends. Several members of the group stayed over night in Harvard Square and after the game caught some blues in a local restaurant and club and ended the evening back at the hotel for a few

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

► 1998



more beers. The group liked the club so much that they went back the next day for a leisurely brunch and some mellow jazz. Mark says the group always has a good time at the

game and in the local hangouts and welcomes any interested Omicrons to join them for next year's outing. You'll find Mark at mfernau@ametsoc.org.



Jason Cho tells us he has was able to join a group of Omicrons graciously hosted by Eric Helmy '96 and his family during last year's Cascade Cycling Classic in Bend, Oregon. Members of the group included Adam Borah '94, Scott Alessandro '96, Trevor Connor '95 and Jason. Trevor remains active in the cycling world as a competitor, trainer, coach, magazine columnist and podcaster. Eric relocated to Bend from Portland several years ago and has a successful law practice there. Adam, now out of the army, is a VA psychiatrist in the Austin, Texas area. Scott and Jason remain in their long-time jobs, educational advising and software development respectively. The weekend was replete with all the signatures of Central Oregon: wood-fired pizza, cycling, kombucha, kayaking, craft beer, whitewater rafting as shown above and Eric's crushing bear hugs.

► 1995



Jason Cho '98 sent in the above picture and notation about Mark Piretti's '95 big win at the Oscars for his work on the acclaimed Disney Pixar's animated film, "Coco". That's mark second from the left holding his Oscar for Best Animated Feature at this year's award ceremony. Mark is a pioneer in facial animation. Many of today's undergrads grew up on his work from Blue Sky's "Ice Age" to Pixar films like "Ratatouille", "WALL-E", "Toy Story" and "Brave". Last year, his team won the Visual Effects Society Award for Outstanding Animated performance for Hank, the octopus ("septopus"). You can reach Mark at markpiretti@gmail.com.



As shown above, last December brought Jason, Tom Boorady '92, Dave Hiemstra '95, Chris Turner '94, and Scott Alessandro '96 to the Maryland home of Doug Piper '93 for crabs, nerf gun battles and two extremely rare occurrences: a visit from Art Homes '95 and the

NEWS FROM ALUMNI

Chicago Bears actually leading a football game at half-time. The Bears group (sans Holmes and Cho) has met up for a number of years to watch a game in person or to bravely endure, if need be, that ordeal from someone's home. You can catch Jason for other news at jjseven@gmail.com.

► 2008

Alex Aidun reports that this has been an eventful fall and winter season since he stepped away from his role as High Pi at the House to spend more time focusing on his career. As an undergraduate, he always thought he would learn a discipline and then apply what he learned for the rest of his career. Well, as anyone who has graduated will tell you, that is clearly not the case. There is a large market for adult education, especially in the technical fields where people have to continually learn to stay competitive and companies continually educate employees to facilitate innovation. As the Manager, Education Services at Qubole, Alex gets to immerse himself in Big Data Cloud Technologies and stay on the cutting edge of the services that are empowering enterprises today. He feels it is a real joy to combine his passions in this way in a job that he had no idea even existed when he was a student. He loves the chance to keep learning and improving in his work. You can contact Alex at bobuel@gmail.com.

► 2011

Jason Cho reports that the elusive Travis Hartway '11 has returned to New York from South Dakota where he was raising cattle to run the gardens and bakery in the family farm. Known as Sourced Market & Eatery (www.sourcedme.com) in Orleans County, it focuses on sustainable agriculture. They have a network of other organic growers in the area as well as a catering operation overseen by his sister Katie, another Cornell grad.



► 2015

Ari Rubin shown at left at his new workplace, the 75,000 seat Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, North Carolina, reports

that his new job is very different from his work at the Spectrum Center, the city's basketball arena. At the Spectrum center he supervised the food service for 100 different events ranging from Charlotte Hornets' basketball games, to concerts, college graduations, Monster Truck events, business conventions and Disney on Ice. At the football stadium for the Carolina Panthers, there are only ten home games, three college football games and one Fan Fest. Ari says with only fourteen events, it puts a lot more pressure on each event to make sure they get everything right. One of the mottos of the organization is "The fan is the most valuable member of the team" so the emphasis is to ensure that the fan is having



the best possible experience. He says their top selling items are hot dogs, beer, bottled water and bottomless popcorn. Pictured above is Ari with his family who came to see a football game at the stadium. His sister is a 2008 graduate from the Cornell Hotel School and his mom is a 1973 graduate with a Masters in Communication Arts while his dad is a Syracuse graduate. You'll catch Ari at ericarirubin@gmail.com.

OBITUARIES

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

Hubert Ross Heilman '39
August 30, 2005

Wilbur R. Dameron '49
May 31, 2016

Philip A. Snyder Jr. '46
February 22, 2017

Charles Rowland Wood '51
November 19, 2017

Anthony J. Orel '72
July 2, 2014

William Kingman Browne '52
October 26, 2016

Rockne Edward Burns '54
May 7, 2017

