



FALL 2020

# OMICRON SPEEDS AHEAD DESPITE DETOUR



**BREAKING NEWS: SEVEN MEN SIGN FALL BIDS**



# EDITORIAL: OMICRON CHOOSES A PATH WISELY, TRAVELS FAR TOWARD RENEWAL, RUNS INTO A COVID DETOUR, BUT KEEPS MOVING FORWARD

By Mark Fernau '82

It

has been more than a year since the last issue of the *Oracle*, and for that delay I apologize to its loyal readers. Amid the complexities of 2020 Covid-world life, my personal road as neophyte editor has been rocky as I have tried to implement my commitment to carry on and move forward this fine publication that Henry McNulty and Sandy Gilbert and

other dedicated brothers have turned into one of the finest Lambda Chi Alpha chapter newsletters out there.



**Mark Fernau**  
**Editor**

I am happy to report that, while I have been dragging my feet, the Omicron undergraduate chapter has been extremely motivated and productive over the past year. When the last issue of the *Oracle* came out, it was uncertain whether the greatly reduced undergraduate membership would be able to overcome the challenges placed on them by the

Cornell sanctions and the expulsions and suspensions that were a result of a "Member Review" by LXA International Headquarters (IHQ). Faced with that crossroads in its journey, the remaining core group of chapter actives chose to follow a straight road to success. They rose to the challenge and had an extremely effective and successful rush campaign in both academic semesters, with 15 new brothers from fall 2019 and 23 new brothers from winter/spring 2020 being initiated into the brotherhood. This made them one of, if not the, most successful houses on campus in terms of recruiting. With the ending of probation after 2019, this critical mass let them become an active house

again in terms of social events, intramural athletics, community philanthropy, and a strong sense of brotherhood. The dedication, time, wisdom, and guidance that **High Pi Jason Cho '98** has shared with the undergraduates over this period of challenge and growth has been an integral part of their success; he is an embodiment of the ideals and core values of Lambda Chi Alpha.

Even more impressive is that this success has been achieved in the context of some outside factors that made the challenge even bigger than the internal hurdles that Omicron faced. In response to the death of a freshman in fall 2019 after visiting a fraternity event, Cornell President Martha Pollack implemented very tough new rules to regulate the behavior of the Greek system. Their details can be found online (<https://statements.cornell.edu/2019/20191218-greek-life-reforms.cfm>). In summary, social events will be even more rigorously monitored and the consequences of rule violations for chapters will be even more severe, with a minimum of 3-year suspension and a possibility of permanent dismissal. There will also be a reexamination and subsequent overhaul of the entire recruitment process, which it is hoped will lead to a culture shift away from hazing and "in group" behavioral coercion. This will begin to be implemented in the 2020/21 academic year and may be marked by a return to a more prolonged informal rush period and changes to the timing of formal rush and new-member education. Another, welcome, complication has been the renewed call and commitment to racial and social justice and equality that has arisen during 2020, and Omicron has embraced that commitment.

Of course, the biggest roadblock thrown in front of Omicron as it sped down the road of success was the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and its dramatic effects on campus life and in-person learning and group events. As Cornell moved to remote learning in the spring of 2020, a core of brothers was able to remain at Edgemoor, and the fraternity persevered in the face of adversity, maintaining brotherly bonds and participating with sororities and other groups in a number of very successful charity fundraising events. The pandemic meant that Edgemoor was not rented out to Telluride for the summer, and so, for the first time in a number of years, a small group of brothers returned to living in the chapter house over the sum-

*The cover image is taken from a news item reporting on the closure of East Avenue between Campus Road and Tower Road in April of 2018. The photograph was taken by and provided through the courtesy of Mark H. Anbinder, 14850.com.*

mer to secure and maintain the house. The fall semester began with Cornell on the forefront of those schools who chose to address the pandemic by combining a modified academic calendar, an extremely vigorous testing/contact tracing/quarantine program, and a hybrid in-classroom/remote learning approach. The details can be found again be found online (<https://covid.cornell.edu/>). Students were required to sign a Behavioral Compact in order to be allowed on campus. As of the time of writing, it has been successful and Cornell has not had to revert to complete remote learning and/or sending students home. As those who follow the news may be aware, at universities that have fallen short in this endeavor it is often large parties and social events associated with the Greek system that have been their downfall. So far, the men and women of Cornell's Greek system have been admirable in avoiding this fate. Omicron's own Terence Burke '21 has played a leading role in guiding that success through his current position as President of the Interfraternity Council. With the aid of Cornell and High Pi Cho, the Omicron brothers have returned to Edgemoor and have developed and approved their own detailed Covid prevention and response plan to which every undergraduate brother has committed. In their report, **High Alphas Rey Rodriguez '21 and Liam Vinal '22** give us their perspective on the challenges and successes of the last year.

**Omicron Alumni Association President Rick Meigs '80** says that the highlight of the year for him has been the undergraduate response over the last year or two in the face of the triple challenges of Cornell's sanctions in response to alleged hazing, the decrease in membership resulting from the IHQ member review, and the changes to campus life brought on by Covid. The brothers have executed a growth plan and have worked effectively and hard and are thriving. He is apprehensive about whether Covid will throw any new obstacles in their path. In terms of alumni and OAA, things have been pretty quiet with the cancellation of in-person Reunion and Homecoming. Subgroups of alumni have been having successful Zoom meetings on the Internet, in particular the mid- and late-1970s group. Being the quintessential engineer that he is, Rick compares OAA—and all of us brothers who share a common bond—to a flywheel that needs occasional and consistent inputs of energy in the form of Homecoming, Reunion, and alumni get-togethers to maintain its momentum in keeping the machine running. In addition to a commitment to be more timely with the *Oracle*, Rick's biggest concern is the lack of younger alums participating as active board members and dues payers, the needed energy for the flywheel, as it were. The youngest members going into the fall term are

from the class of 1998. Graduates from the last 5 to 20 years are clearly underrepresented. He feels that OAA's biggest challenge will be communicating with, listening to, and recruiting this next generation of leadership. It is time to do a canvass to update contact information and find out what our younger alumni brothers want and expect out of OAA. Perhaps it is time to rethink what OAA looks like and what are the best platforms and means of communicating and interacting with each other in the 21st century.

**Chris Turner '94, the President of the ISWZA** house corporation, was as impressed as Rick with the tremendous efforts of the undergrad chapter over the last year. He says, "I give special thanks to our current undergrad officers and to High Pi Cho for their leadership, and their efforts to strengthen the brotherhood, as we navigate a unique school year. The ISWZA Board has been meeting weekly since the spring. First, it was to make sure that we were able to house our brothers who were not able to get home—or just needed a safe place to finish out the semester. Through the summer we continued to house a few brothers, conducted a deep cleaning, addressed some maintenance issues, and made preparations for the fall. As we started the fall semester, we have been focused on overall safety for our brothers, as they adjust to a very different life on campus. We are pleased to report that the semester has gone smoothly so far, with no health issues. As you might expect, the undergrads are working to upgrade our wi-fi infrastructure in the house, among other adjustments to everyone spending a lot more time in the house. We will continue to monitor the situation on campus, as the weather gets colder." Chris, along with fellow ISWZA board members, continues to actively work on ways that ISWZA can take over the remaining mortgage on Edgemoor, and thus have more control over our own affairs, by creating an attractive investment vehicle for alumni.

In this issue of the *Oracle*, we highlight the well-deserved bestowing of the McKinless Award for Distinguished Service on longtime board member and Omicron volunteer Jason Cho. Both Wayne Mezitt and Jim Sollecito present "glass half full" takes on the interaction of horticulture and landscape improvement with Covid. Wayne's business has learned to adapt in various ways, and Jim sees an opportunity for comfort and invigoration. Alan Fridkin lets us daydream of better times to come with his paean to his beloved Paris. As they ease out of their volunteer commitments to the university, longtime columnists Stephen Ashley and Ralph Wilhelm are winding down their service to the *Oracle*, and they do not have columns in this number. The brothers of Omicron are extremely grateful

for their years of contributing their insider knowledge and valuable perspectives on the state of Cornell and its governance and how that governance interacts with and affects the Greek system and our chapter. Well done, men! Steve does plan to contribute a few more columns over the next year. The obituary section is much bigger than usual, as time catches up with the Greatest Generation and those born during the Depression and war years. It is an honor to read and reflect upon the many and varied accomplishments of these brothers. In the news section, Sandy Gilbert updates us on his efforts to aid in ridding Florida of the red tide. The rest of the news is predominantly from brothers from the 1980s and earlier, reflecting Rick's observation of the aging of the brothers who currently have the most interest in things ISWZA/OAA. A goal for the *Oracle* is to identify correspondents from more recent decades who can wrangle a few news items out of their contemporaries

for each issue (contact Mark at mef29@cornell.edu if you can help!). Jason Cho is an exemplary High Pi and organizer of regional and campus events, but his real love is history, and he has served for years as Omicron's historian and "stuff" collector. In this issue, he tells us about a donation of memorabilia from the late Brother Hyde.

Fall rush will be under way when you receive this issue, and the uncertainty associated with Covid and the behavior of the Cornell student body is such that things may have changed by the time that you read this, but the overall message over the last year and moving forward is that, faced with a fork in the road and uncertain maps, the young men of Omicron have put an ear to the ground, chosen wisely, driven with skill, and are moving in a very positive direction, despite the presence of a few more obstacles in the road. ♦

## ISWZA FRATERNITY, INC.

By Chris Turner '94

**As** a headline update on our financial situation, we continue in a somewhat precarious situation. COVID has not made this any easier. We were not able to rent the house to Telluride this past summer, which left us without \$20,000 in additional income. As long as conditions on campus remain stable, our active brothers will be able to remain in the house, and



Chris Turner

we will be able to service the mortgage. "Virtual Rush" will be challenging, but we are optimistic that we will be able to continue to recruit new members.

Our priority remains the long-term financial security of ISWZA, and the retirement or replacement of our debt—currently \$1,200,000 in mortgage obligations and \$300,000 in remaining "brother bonds." We are exploring options to refinance the current mortgage,

given the attractive interest-rate environment, but we prefer

private giving and borrowing from our alumni group to ensure that we remain in full control of the house.

A more urgent part of the refinancing is the retirement of the brother bonds which were generously provided by a few of our alumni to help us complete the renovation. While we very much appreciate those brothers continuing to extend the term of those loans, it is time for us to honor our commitments to them.

Our refinancing plan also includes two key elements: 1) addressing long-term maintenance needs, specifically the roof, the bathrooms, the stairwell, and the front entrance, and 2) giving us flexibility to adjust the rent we charge to our active brothers, to ensure that the cost of living in the house and joining our fraternity does not become an impediment to recruiting future members. If you are able to help, either with a donation or a loan, please contact me or my fellow ISWZA Board Members—Phil Prigmore '69, Mike Agostin '92, or Mike Coggins '98.

The environment on campus remains challenging in many ways for our active brothers. We are proud of their efforts this year to operate safely—and responsibly—and to take care of each other. It is not the college experience that they imagined, I'm sure. With the ongoing uncertainty that they face on campus—and we all face—we can provide some certainty by resolving our current financial challenges. Thank you all for your continuing support of Omicron. ♦



# HIGH ALPHA REPORT



**Rey Rodriguez '21**

*[Ed. Note: Rey was the president of the chapter during the 2019–20 academic year during which the challenges discussed in the editorial had to be addressed and were met so successfully. Liam has taken over the helm during the uncertainty of whether and how Cornell will be able to have a fall on-campus semester in light of the Covid pandemic.]*

Rey: Summer of 2019 was no doubt a tough one for the Edgemoor boys after all of the expulsions and suspensions from the national fraternity. To be honest, after that happened the morale of the house was pretty low, and we really didn't know how we could

possibly turn our situation around. Luckily, we had some great guidance from the alumni and especially from High Pi Jason Cho, who personally talked with every member, helping us to bring our spirits back up and keeping us believing that this wasn't the end of the road for us. After the dust settled, we came back to campus with our heads high and had a year that surpassed most of our expectations. In the fall of 2019, we took in an associate member class of 15, and in the spring of 2020 we took in an associate member class of 23. We felt great (and still do) about both of these numbers, and the new guys have been amazing in bringing new life to the house and keeping us moving in the right direction. These rush numbers and our ability to turn around the awful situation in which we found ourselves are most definitely what I was the most proud of during my time as High Alpha—mostly because it was a total effort not only from every officer in the house, but also from every member of the house and the alumni as well. As a

result of those rush numbers, our live-in numbers basically doubled from last year to this year as well, which is definitely a goal that we had set for ourselves. Obviously, Covid is a whole different story, but I think it's more fitting for Liam to speak on that and on our plan surrounding it (on which we have spent a lot of time working).

Liam: The house is doing well! We have not had any Covid cases through executing both our own detailed



**Liam Vinal '22**

Covid plan (covering room occupancy limits, handwashing, cleaning and sanitation of surfaces, food prep, social distancing, mask protocols, health monitoring and reporting, among others), and participating in the university's rigorous testing program. This past year has been great for the house. We recruited 15 men last fall, with me included, and then took in a spring class of 23—the best two classes in the Fraternity system last year. We're looking forward to rush this

semester, and we already have great prospective members that we have met (virtually) over the past few weeks. Our philanthropy, while hindered by no in-person events, has been doing well. Last semester we raised thousands of dollars through Instagram bingo boards, and we have a few more coming up this semester as well. While it's been an unusual semester, we have become closer than ever as a brotherhood, and we're looking forward to the rest of the year. ♦

# LIST OF 2020 GRADUATES



These young men made it through one of the most tumultuous 4-yr cycles in recent Omicron history, being subject to temporary and formal probation periods from both Cornell and IHQ, with no social events or athletics, helping to right the ship, and then having their final semester be one of uncertainty and cancelled graduation ceremonies, as a result of Covid. Through it all, they remained a brotherhood.

## OMICRON COMPLETES SPECTACULAR YEAR

The undergraduates in the previous academic year not only rallied from the sanctions imposed on them by Cornell and IHQ as a result of alleged hazing and rules infractions, but had one of their most successful recruiting years in a long time, one that placed them as one of the top recruiters among Cornell's fraternities in 2019-20. Fall rush resulted in 15 new brothers, and the spring efforts led to 23 new brothers, a combined total that went far toward returning Omicron as a sustainable and successful chapter going forward. As symbolized by the flags in the photo of the spring group, the new cohort represents several different countries from around the world as well as a good representation of the United States. As High Pi Cho recently summed up, "Rush went exceptionally well for us." At the helm for this impressive display of leadership and success was High Delta (Rush Chair) Bjorn Kroes '21. He and all of the undergraduate chapter navigated with a flourish the changed Cornell conditions that were set down by President Pollack following the death of a freshman after attending a party at Phi Psi in the fall of 2019. And with the crackdown on *all* fraternities, Omicron excelled as, again in Jason's words, "...on that leveled playing field, the boys of Edgemoor obliterated the competition."

### *The Fall 2019 initiates:*

Jermic Aryee, CALS '22, Union, NJ  
 Zenzo Beresford, Business/Hotel '22, Portland, OR  
 Callum "Cal" Chatterton, CALS '22, Needham, MA  
 Christopher "Chris" Costa, ILR '22, Suffern, NY  
 James Czech, Business/Dyson '22, Poughkeepsie, NY  
 Jonathon "Freddy" Frederick, Eng '22, Cortland, NY  
 Luc Ghaleb, Arts '22, Beirut, Lebanon

Jason Bin, Arts  
 Johnny Carollo, Business/Hotel  
 Ani Chitale, CALS  
 Tenzin Chonden, Business/Dyson  
 Augie Cudeck, CALS  
 Phil Garbarini, Business/Dyson  
 Michael Garcia, Arts  
 Nicky Kacena, Business/Dyson  
 Bill Lithen, CALS  
 Nevan McCann, ILR  
 Trevor Mills, Arts  
 Josh Nathanson, Arts  
 Eno Okon, ILR  
 Michael Riano, Engineering  
 Troy Rosale, Business/Dyson  
 John Rutkauskas, CALS  
 Matt Spoth, CALS

Joseph "Joe" Hayes, CALS '22, Nanuet, NY  
 Aidan Jordan, Business/Hotel '22, Syracuse, NJ  
 Theodore "Theo" Kapogiannis, CALS '22, Poughkeepsie, NY  
 Niko Potamitis, ILR '22, Andover, MA  
 Dongyoon "Yoon" Shin, Arts '22, Seoul, South Korea  
 Ritik Shrestha, Arts '22, Kathmandu, Nepal  
 Liam Vinal, Arts '22, Potomac, MD  
 Robert "Rob" Yampanis, Arts '22, Norwell, MA

### *The spring 2020 initiates:*

Joseph "Jojo" W.W. Aboaf, Arts '22 New York, NY  
 John Aclufi, Hotel '23 Staten Island, NY  
 Nandan S. Aggarwal, Arts '23 Miami, FL  
 Joshua S. Bates, Eng '23 Seattle, WA  
 Christian D. Boswell, Eng '23 Oak Park, IL  
 David B. Cabello, CALS '23 Hauppauge, NY  
 Benjamin M. Choe, Arts '23 Herndon, VA  
 Logan D. Dunham, Dyson '23 Cortlandt Manor, NY  
 Corey J. Edelman, Hotel '23 Jericho, NY  
 Martin Gutierrez, Arts '23 Key Biscayne, FL  
 Jose "Joey" E. Ibanez, Arts '23 Mayaguez, Puerto Rico  
 Samuel W. King, Arts '23 Jacksonville, FL  
 Joshua E. Lundmark, Eng '23 Hinsdale, IL  
 Aleksander S. Mehta, Arts '23 Columbus, OH  
 Liam S. Ordonez, HumEc '23 Sarasota, FL  
 Andrew Y. Peng, Hotel '23 Potomac, MD  
 D. Stephen Snabes, Arts '23 Ann Arbor, MI  
 Matthew J. Tan, ILR '22 Lexington, MA  
 Daniel O. Vebman, Arts '23 New York, NY  
 Christopher S. Vaziri, Dyson '22 Napa, CA  
 James D. Weaver, Eng '23 Westford, MA  
 Thomas F.J. Wiener, Arts '23 Greenwich, CT  
 Aiden R. Winkle-Bueno, Arts '23 McKinleyville, CA





## LIST OF FALL 2020 OFFICERS

Liam Vinal '22, a junior in the Arts College, is our Alpha for the new academic year. He is a native of Potomac, MD, and is studying economics in the Arts College. Jon "Freddie" Frederick '22, a mechanical engineering major from Cortland, NY, is the new Beta. Both are part of the club hockey contingent who joined in the fall of 2019.

Alpha/President: Liam Vinal '22

Beta/Vice President: Jonathon Frederick '22

Tau/Treasurer: Conan Chu '21

House Manager: Eric Huber '21

Theta/Philanthropy: Joe Hayes '22

Gamma/Secretary: Andrew Peng '23

Iota/Risk Manager: Alek Mehta '23

Iota/Risk Manager: Daniel Vebman '23

Kappa/Fraternity Educator: Terence

Burke '21

Delta/Recruitment Chair: Theo Kapogiannis '22

Phi/Ritualist: Joe Hayes '22

Sigma/Scholarship Chair: Nandan Aggarwal '23

Epsilon/Social Chair: Martin Gutierrez '23

Epsilon/Social Chair: Stephen Snabes '23

Rho/Alumni Relations Chair: Ritik Shrestha '22

Standards Chair: Rey Rodriguez '21

Pi/Alumni Advisor: Jason Cho '98

Steward: Chris Costa '22

Jock/Athletic Chair: Joey Ibanez '23

Diversity & Inclusion Chair: Logan Dunham '23

Fall 2019 Chapter GPA: 3.38

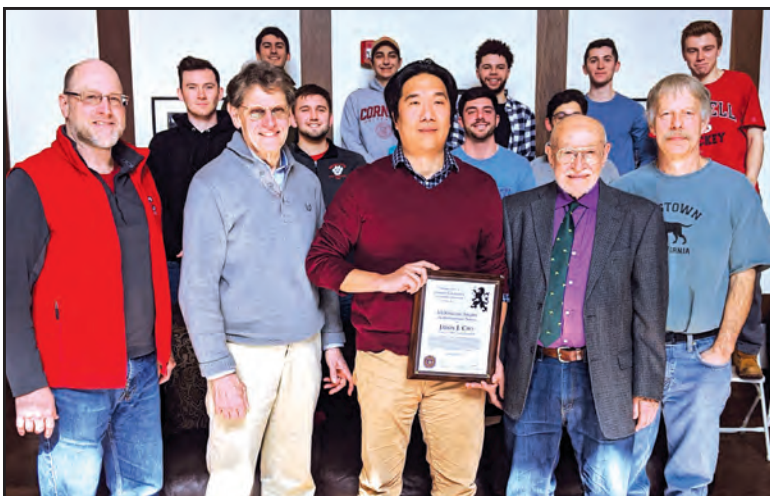
Live-in Advisor: Brandon Hanley (U. Florida '17 TEΦ), Cornell Law





# LOYALTY, RESPECT, SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP: BROTHER CHO RECEIVES THE MCKINLESS AWARD

The highlight of the Spring 2020 joint ISWZA/Omicron Alumni Association Meetings was the occasion of presenting Omicron's highest recognition of excellence, the McKinless Award for Distinguished Service, to current High Pi and longtime member of the ISWZA/OAA boards Jason Cho '98 to recognize decades of dedicated service. The award is named



after Robert F. "Bob" McKinless, '48, who has been a tireless promoter of all things Edgemoor for more than 70 years. He prides himself on meeting and getting to know as many brothers as he can, traveling to Ithaca as often as he can, and making a specialty of wooing and recruiting alumni board members. Bob is also recipient of Cornell University's Frank H. T. Rhodes Exemplary Alumni Service Award (2003) and the international fraternity's Lambda Chi Alpha Order of Merit for "unusual, length, and dedicated" alumni service (2003; the first, and only, true Omicron recipient since Leon Brockway '08). So it was especially gratifying to the OAA board that Bob himself could be present at the meeting (which managed to elbow bump its way to completion just before the onset of the Covid-19 societal upheaval) to personally present the award to his neighbor and good friend of many years Jason.

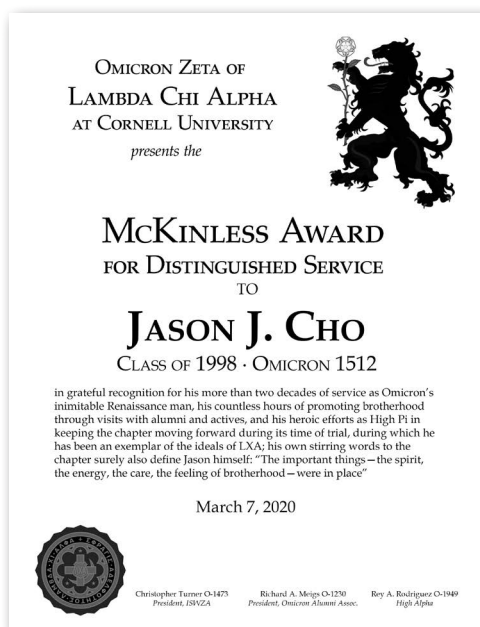
Jason's honor was earned and deserved for a myriad of reasons. The wording of his certificate is given in the accompanying photo, but that only begins to scratch the surface of why Jason has earned this award. The reasons begin with his ongoing labor of love as chapter historian to assemble, document, preserve, and pass on the objects, memorabilia, history, and personal stories of all Omicrons and infrastructure and to maintain an Internet presence and repository for it all. Then throw in his decades of service

on the alumni boards and his frequent get-togethers with undergraduates and alumni alike, ranging from Homecomings and Reunions in Ithaca to regional gatherings all over the country, highlighting his constant efforts through personal interactions and written narratives to keep the generations of brothers engaged with the House and interactive with each

other. On top of that, add in his heroic assumption of the mantle of (remote, with lots of driving and conference calls) alumni advisor during an extended period of uncertainty and near chaos that began with the undergrads having to adapt to Edgemoor's temporary closure and relocate to other quarters; continued with several years of Cornell and IHQ scrutiny, investigation, and sanction; and now has had added on top of that the extreme challenges of operating a university and a fraternity chapter in the midst of the "Covid year." The whole mix is then spiced with Jason's refined sense of humor and way with words and his unceasing love for Omicron and all for which it stands.

Through all of this, Jason has remained the hardworking, positive, and optimistic point person for the interactions between the undergraduates and both LXA alumni and the university. Along with the extended and dedicated efforts of the undergraduates and their officers and the continuing transfer of experience and positivity from other volunteer alumni control

board members, the turn-around, recruiting success, and continuing operations of Omicron are due in no small part to Jason's guidance and efforts. So, congratulations, and "here's to Brother Jason, he's with us tonight!"





# HISTORIAN'S CORNER: A DONATION OF MEMORIES

By Jason Cho '98

**Ms.**

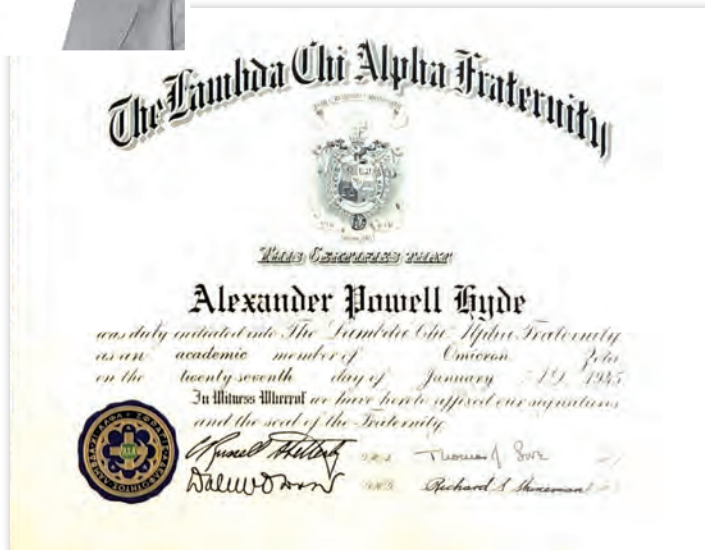
Susan Garland of West Columbia, SC, widow of the late Dr. Alexander P. Hyde '47 (O-590), sent us a passel of memorabilia.

The collection includes songbooks, his *Paedagogus*, and his wartime initiation certificate, issued January 27, 1945. A few blank postcards show Edgemoor looking much the same then as it does today.

Of note is the program from his Initiation Banquet, March 11, 1945. This now-lost tradition was a celebration of new and old, as alumni journeyed back to Ithaca to welcome the newest brothers into the fold over porterhouse steak, french-fried potatoes, and vanilla ice cream.

A Massachusetts native and Navy veteran in the Pacific theater, "Orky" Hyde was a chemistry and mechanical engineering double major. He was active in the Big Red Band, the Sage Chapel Choir, the Glee Club, and the Cornell Radio Guild, and he served as house manager and *Oracle* editor. After school, he earned his MD from Boston University and devoted his life to those with mental illness. He taught psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, authored the seminal book *Living with Schizophrenia* while in private practice, and served for many years with the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill. He passed away in March of 2011.

If you have fraternity memorabilia you wish to lend or donate for study, please contact Jason Cho '98 (O-1512), chapter historian.



## AN OMICRON TIMELINE

By Jason Cho '98

100 years ago: January 1920

The chapter, like the country, contends with the aftermath of the Great War, including a bout of high inflation. Rent at the house has soared to \$20.00 a month, and board to \$8.00 per week, plus \$3.00 in monthly dues.

75 years ago: January 28, 1945

Bataan Death March survivor 1LT Carl Rhodes '38 dies aboard the Japanese "hellship" *Brazil Maru*; three years in the notorious Cabanatuan POW camp #1 had taken their toll. He is remembered with great warmth by his men.

50 years ago: January 1970

A massive icicle crashes through the roof of the dining

room, adding an unwanted 1-foot hole skylight just before the start of spring rush. While the temporary patch is ugly, at least smoker conversation topics are a little easier to come by.

25 years ago: May 1995

Don "Check" Worn '50 (O-660) embarks on a month-long cross-country bicycle ride from Los Gatos, CA, to Ithaca for his 50th Cornell Reunion. Riding from 51 to 140 miles and from 6 to 12 hours per day, he encounters heavy rains and steep hills, but also majestic views and thrilling tailwinds, and only four tire punctures. After a rapturous reception at the class luncheon, he takes the plane back home.



# TRAVEL NUGGETS: TOUJOURS PARIS

By Alan Fridkin '65

**My**

test of whether a city inspires is simple. After you have seen most of the “tourist sites” and done much of what the guidebooks recommend, do you still care about being there? If you do, it can be a quasi-religious experience, like allegiance to your favorite team.



Alan Fridkin '65

There are only a handful of cities where a lifetime is insufficient to explore them. It is not the geography, but the cultural mix that keeps them exhilarating. For over 100 years, folks have said that Paris was so much better in the past. Absent time travel, we should be content with the present version.

On perhaps our tenth trip there, we mingle with the locals, shun the tourists, explore one-of-a-kind corners, and sample world-class food and music. It's a fine place to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary.

Whether you know the town well or not, seek out what is not generic. This is not a road map but rather is an example of what can be uncovered.

## Your Neighborhood

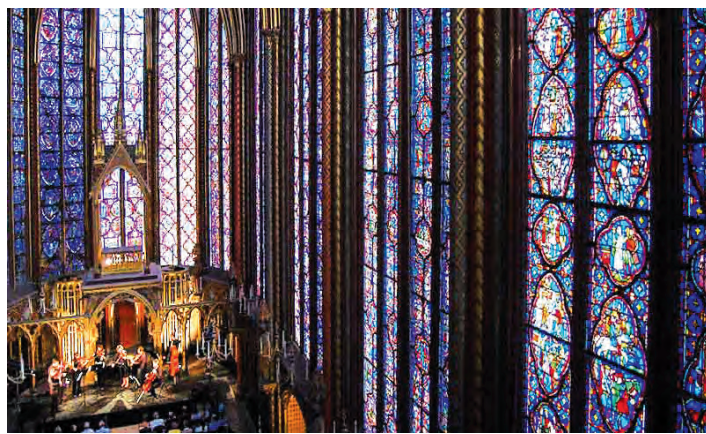


There are 20 arrondissements/districts, in the city. Distinct sections appeal to different tastes and budgets. It is easy to move around the city, but you need a base. For us, our second home is near rue du Cherche-Midi in the 6th. It was once a Roman Road and is now a mostly upper-middle-class shopping street. Laennec, who invented the stethoscope, lived on a corner; the Count of Rochambeau, who helped us to win our Independence, was a resident; Abbe Gregoire, a revered Catholic priest, died there; he was an advocate of universal suffrage, an opponent of slavery, and a supporter of the rights of Jews.

## Your Music



Classical music, opera, jazz, world music (especially from Africa), and French chanson are performed year-round. Listening to the 8,000- pipe organ in Saint-Eustache (the largest in France) or to a trumpet concert in the Royal Chapel (Sainte-Chapelle) amidst the incredible 15 fifty-foot stained glass windows is unforgettable. A concert at the Olympia Theater, a jazz session at New Morning, or some time at the piano bar Café Laurent are big-city pleasures.







### Your Café

Around every Metro stop and crossroad, there are cafés, from elegant to modest, from famous to obscure, and some are open from dawn to the wee small hours. Whether you order a coffee, a drink, a sandwich or a Plat (dish), you are guaranteed to sample some local color and, in fact, to be part of it.

### Your Transportation

Paris is for walkers! But you can pop up around the city like a groundhog using the extensive Metro and RER train system at a modest price. Surface buses are also wide ranging. Taxis, Uber, and Lyft coverage are dense.

### Your Shopping

Perhaps you are no longer in the acquisition stage of life. But if you want something truly handcrafted, Paris has it: antiques; artwork; fashion clothing; rare books; professional cooking ware; gourmet food and wine.



### Your Dining

You can get a bad meal in Paris, but you have to try hard. At every price point, from modest to regal, here is some of the best food in the world. It is still the national pastime. The cost of a meal in a 2- or 3-Michelin-starred restaurant resembles a mortgage payment, and the experimental cooking is not to everyone's taste. A cozy neighborhood bistro or a lively brasserie may be comparable in cost to what you pay for a nice restaurant at home. It will be a hell of a lot better. See my reviews on Tripadvisor ("ulysses4"). On our recent 8-day trip, we had many fine meals. But I close my eyes and think first of lunch on a rainy day at an old favorite: La Rotonde, with its bordello-red interior, extensive artwork, brass and mirrors, the ballet of truly professional waiters, and the fine brasserie food. I would be a habitué if I could! ♦

# HORT SENSE: PANDEMIC HORTICULTURE

By R. Wayne Mezitt '64

## The



**Wayne Mezitt**

COVID restrictions that began in March, right at the start of the gardening season, have produced some unexpected results for the nursery/garden center industry. Some developments are actually rather inspiring for those of us involved with horticulture. It turns out that requiring people to stay home has incentivized many to observe their home environment more constructively, prompting some to initiate long overdue improvements. Significantly among these needs has been enhancing the enjoyment potential of their gardens/yard.

Learning new ways to stay in business while meeting the expectations of customers/staff has certainly been “interesting”, and challenging. The constant disinfecting requirements are indeed a new

burden, but it is an awakening to recognize the previously disregarded risks of infection. The whole process has also enabled our company to examine so many aspects of how we do business and move ahead with some changes that will be very helpful going forward. Without a crisis like this, many now-necessitated updates would have required years more to accomplish.

One enhancement is acceleration of our nursery online-business offerings. In past years, customers felt the need to talk one-on-one with staff at our garden center to acquire enough information about plants and how to use them. Now with more restrictions on face-to-face consultation, many customers are figuring out how to do their own research, much of it online. We’ve upgraded our website with weekly-updated availability lists, helpful blogs, and online ordering. Many are now coming to our garden center knowing more about plants and with improved understanding of more precisely what they want.

All public events, including the Boston Flower & Garden Show were affected, most now being conducted “virtually” online, or cancelled. Knowledgeable customers are always easier to deal with, but there’s a limit to learning-without-

doing, so we’re noticing some new opportunities. Our newsletter articles are garnering new readership, and our “Ask the Expert” website feature is increasingly popular.

Fruit trees, vegetable plants, herbs, and colorful annual plants have never sold so quickly. Forced to pay with “plastic,” fewer people are using our in-house credit for their purchases, so our billing department can focus on customer service rather than chasing payments. With nearly zero cash being exchanged, our credit card bank-fees have never been so high (I’m sure the bank appreciates us!), and our sales-tax payments will certainly be a bonus for our Massachusetts treasury.

Homeowners also seem more prone to do their projects themselves, so our wholesale business with professional landscapers has changed. Smaller landscapers tell us they are booking fewer large projects, perhaps due to homeowners doing the work themselves. Or perhaps budgets are more constrained with so many job/career uncertainties, so homeowners are finding that doing it themselves is actually a more appealing option.

Most retailers agree that the way they do business will be permanently altered. Some will not survive the strain and loss of revenue. The initial government payments for retaining staff benefitted many businesses, but unfortunately so many retailers reportedly haven’t qualified or received any support. And the subsidized unemployment benefits mandated by government continue to adversely affect employee attitudes toward returning to work: some of the unemployed can earn more money by not working than any employer can afford to pay them, a distinct disincentive for returning to work!

Being in the business of horticulture, we feel truly fortunate that this crisis has been so affirmative for our business, and for our customers, in ways previously unimagined. In my experience, never has the significance of nature been so widely respected. And it is becoming strikingly clear that so many areas of our lives truly lie beyond our ability to personally control the outcomes.

R. Wayne Mezitt, O-592, is a third-generation nurseryman and a Massachusetts Certified Horticulturist (<https://www.mnla.com/page/mch>). and is now chairman of Weston Nurseries of Hopkinton and Chelmsford, MA (<https://www.westonnurseries.com>), and owner of “Hort-Sense,” a horticultural advisory business (<https://hortsense1.godaddy.com/>). Wayne currently serves as Trustee chairman for the Massachusetts Horticultural Society at The Gardens at Elm Bank in Wellesley MA (<https://masshort.org/>). ❖



# ALUMNI FEATURE: LIVING AND LANDSCAPING DURING COVID TIME

By Jim Sollecito, '76



omfort and Invigoration. We need both.

In my work I get to see lots of properties and catch glimpses of how people live. We talk. We share life experiences. We discuss positive expectations and what the future might hold. This year's different pace allows us to observe, contemplate and enjoy elements that we previously would rush right by. Similar to slipping out of our cars and onto a bicycle: the ride is so much more interactive and invokes our senses.

To plant a colorful landscape, work up the heart rate, and admire the wonderful final product will be good for your heart and your soul. It improves your outlook as well as your view. I have personally found that hard work gives clarity to my mind. Sweat washes away worries. I once read that 40% of things we worry about never happen. Probably an arbitrary number but I believe there's truth that we just waste a lot of effort in unnecessary anguish.



**Jim Sollecito**

It is positively invigorating to select landscape plants in exciting new colors, take them home, put them into the ground with your own two hands, and then marvel at how well they perform. This journey, repeated time and time again in our neighborhoods, yields remarkably positive results. Pinned down to select three of my own rewarding favorites, I choose panicle hydrangeas, double play spireas, and any variety of weigelas. Keep in mind that right now is perhaps the easiest time of year to plant in the warm soil. Ample autumn rains do most of the watering. Moderate temperatures are just right for new roots to get established. These hardy flowering shrubs all offer abundant blossoms and hot fall colors that last and last.

This year I did more outdoor grilling than I had in the past five years combined. I found comfort in the ritual of cleaning, igniting, and then charring with my Char Broil. As I waited for my specialties to cook, I sat still and took in the scenery. Usually I'd have been a prisoner to my cell



phone during the mad dinner scramble. (It's appropriate that they are called cells.) Anyway, my backyard landscape at dusk is delightful. The angle of autumn's setting sun casts a brilliant glow among the evolving flowers and changing leaves.

When we plant something in our own yard it gives a boost to our entire neighborhood. An ideal landscape design will enhance your home's look and your personal outlook. It will enhance your own environment and the natural environment. A new landscape design will be enjoyed from the perspective of the property owner as well as everyone who passes by. It will invigorate and comfort. Spiritually and physically. Yin and yang. We need both. Fall is a great time to get going. Can you dig it? ♦

Jim Sollecito (O-1191) is a Lifetime Senior NYS Certified Landscape Professional and the owner of Sollecito Landscaping Nursery LLC (<http://www.sollecito.com/>)

# NEWS FROM ALUMNI

► 1962



**Sandy Gilbert** writes in to update date us on his efforts to help stem the “red tide” that has been plaguing his area of Florida. In his words: It began one morning in 2005 when I went out to our dock on Longboat Key, Florida, to go sailing and the air was foul with a toxic smell and the canal by our dock was filled with dead fish as shown in the accompanying photo. That was my introduction to Florida red tide. Ever since that day, I have been working with Solutions To Avoid Red Tide (START), a nonprofit citizen-based marine environmental organization, to find ways to reduce the environmental and economic impacts of red tide. It is a plague that kills thousands of sea creatures from fish to manatees and dolphins and costs the Florida tourism and restaurant industries millions of dollars while it lingers on our shores.

Red tide is caused by a dinoflagellate form of algae called *Karina brevis* that releases a series of breve toxins that kill its prey and other surrounding sea life. It normally lives in trace amounts in the Gulf of Mexico of a few hundred

to a thousand or so cells per liter. However, when it encounters an unusually large amount of nutrients (largely nitrogen and phosphorus) it expands into a bloom of millions of cells per liter as shown in the photo.

Over the years working with scientists from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute and Mote Marine Laboratory, we have learned a great deal about red tide and what makes it grow into a bloom. The most prevalent nutrient sources that feed red tide are outflows of the Mississippi River into the Gulf with its farm and urban waste from the Midwest and the anthropogenic releases of polluted water with farm runoff from Lake Okeechobee that flow into rivers that empty into the Atlantic Ocean to the east and the Gulf to the west. Other important sources of excess nutrients in our waterways are effluent (untreated sewage) from local wastewater plants, seepage from septic systems, and stormwater runoff.

Now that we have identified some of the human-caused sources that contribute to the excess nutrients that feed red tide, START and other environmental organizations are working with federal, state, and local governments to improve infrastructure such as wastewater plants that too often leak or overflow in rain events and have to release effluent into our waterways

In addition to working with policy makers to improve aging and inefficient infrastructure, START has developed a series of in-water programs to reduce the excess nutrients that feed red tide. Our Gulf Coast Oyster Recycle and Renewal Program (GCORR) in Manatee County saves shell from restaurant diners, keeping it out of landfills as heavy, smelly garbage, and uses it as structure to start new oyster reefs. Oysters are an important keystone species as they filter up to 50 gallons of seawater every day to improve water quality, they help to reduce shoreline erosion, and they are very resistant to red tide. Over the past year, the 11 participating restaurants have kept 80 tons of oyster shell out of our landfills, and volunteers have bagged them to construct new oyster reefs. The fresh shell from the restaurants has attracted 23% more new oyster spat than the fossil shell traditionally used to build new reefs. START has won three environmental awards for this innovative program.

We also work with the Sarasota Bay Watch, an organization I helped to launch 12 years ago, to seed clams in Sarasota Bay. By the end of this year, a million clams will have been seeded into the Bay. Clams are also good water filterers, they help support seagrass, and they are resistant to red tide.



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The most exciting thing in our arsenal of tools to deal with red tide is a new process created by our partner Progressive Water Resources, a Sarasota based hydrology company. Their Carbon-Life nutrient reduction process uses specially treated wood chips and biochar, a type of porous charcoal produced under pressure without oxygen, to significantly reduce excess nutrients before they even enter our waterways. Initially used on reclaimed water in a pilot test in a local neighborhood, the Carbon-Life process reduced nitrogen in the reclaimed water by 73% and phosphorus by 87%. This process has such potential in helping to clean up our waterways that START is leading a funding drive to bring it to the new Bay Park on the shore of Sarasota Bay that will reduce the nutrients in 8 million gallons of stormwater in every 1-inch rain event before it runs into the Bay.

To learn more about START and our work to deal with red tide and improve our waterways visit our website at <http://www.start1.org>.

When I am not in some meeting about water quality or red tide, I still manage to get in a few rounds of golf, paint with acrylics, and cook some of my favorite recipes for gumbo, Ahi tuna, and chicken Romano. You can find me at [sandem133@aol.com](mailto:sandem133@aol.com) or (941) 217-5151.

## ► 1963



**Bob and Connie Elliott** are pictured with Seton Hall basketball players 6' 11" Sandro Mamukelasvili (between them) and Myles Powell (to the left of them), who is a candidate for national player of the year. Bob says, "Last

fall my 16-yr-old grandson convinced his parents and both sets of grandparents to attend our first Thanksgiving tournament, the Battle 4 Atlantis, on Paradise Island, Bahamas. Competition was great, with 8 teams including 3 preseason top-25 plus North Carolina and Michigan. We were surrounded by many tall people, active and retired players and parents, and enjoyed conversations with players and fans. Our family group of 7 has had season tickets for Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ, for 24 years. This year is most rare in that our Pirates are currently ranked 10th and lead the Big East. It was an easy decision to agree to go to this tournament for our first visit to the Bahamas. The resort and Paradise Island are beautiful; and we had great weather and swimming to go along with 1 game (Connie) to 3 (Bob) for 3 consecutive days. Being retired and beach lovers, Connie and I stayed for 8 nights. Grandson and parents while on a recent tour for a potential college were impressed by Ithaca, our fraternity house, and the CU book store.

## ► 1964



**Robert Ball** retired from full time work as a radiologist about 10 years ago and moved to Steamboat Springs, CO.

He fills us in: "Over the last year, we have decided to downsize to make the transition of the future easier for our children and spouse. This involved selling our home in Amarillo, TX and our home in Steamboat Springs and building a new home in Fort Collins, CO, where we are now finishing the landscaping. Over the last few

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years, my main hobby has been astronomy (I started in Engineering Physics at Cornell), with special trips for solar eclipses. As part of selling the home in Steamboat, we donated an observatory that was part of the house to the local community college. I have attached two photos of the dedication of the gift. We are now settled in Fort Collins and often see Bill Imig '63 and his wife Joyce with trips to Rockies baseball games and other activities (Bill was my big brother at Omicron). My wife Ann and I still continue to work with the piano, reading, and daily walks.

## ► 1965

**Tom Shineman** continues as cofounder and CMO for SalesGenomix, an online service that helps employers evaluate the “sales DNA” of sales candidates. His wife Jan is a marketing exec at IBM. They reside near Boston, wintering at a golf community in Scottsdale, AZ. His daughter (and Cornell grad) Trynka does board work for TripAdvisor and Ally Bank after a number of years as CEO of Vistaprint. Daughter Torrey is a political science professor at the University of Pittsburgh. Daughter Carrie is a financial services recruiter. Son Weylon partners with his wife, who is an elder law attorney in Los Angeles. Tom and Jan have five grandchildren, with one more on the way. However, all are still too young to consider Cornell. Tom plays keyboard with a bunch of geezers in a rock band and bass in his church praise band. He and Jan struggle to break 100 on the golf links but enjoy trying.

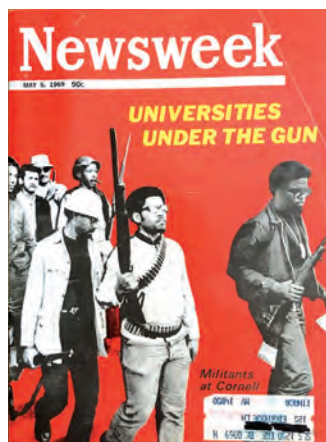


The town of Alassio, in Liguria in northern Italy, has recognized **Alan Fridkin** and his wife Gayle for their decades of loyal



friendship and ardent love for the region. Bro. Fridkin's new book, *A Ligurian Odyssey* ([www.facebook.com/4Ulysses68/](http://www.facebook.com/4Ulysses68/)), celebrates the people and culture of the region and is dedicated to their longtime hosts the Mantellassi and Viglietti families. The occasion received coverage in the local newspaper (<http://www.savonianews.it/2020/02/29/leggi-notizia/argomenti/attualita/articolo/alassio-premia-alan-e-gayle-fridkin-da-boston-turisti-fedeli-da-trentanni-foto.html>). The photos show Alan and Gayle with Egidio Mantellassi and Deputy Mayor Angelo Galtieri and Alan presenting Galtieri with a copy of the book. Italy has been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 coronavirus, and Alan urges that this is a time [written in March 2020] to support Italy and not to fear it.

## ► 1970



**Bill Mihalic** writes, “As Black Lives Matter protests fill the headlines, I imagine all Cornell grads, especially those of us who were students in the spring of 1969, immediately think back to the takeover of Willard Straight Hall. Purely by coincidence, in January I put together a document for our ‘children’ (now in their late 30s) describing

‘the 1960s.’ My ‘retrospective’ was prompted by the upcoming 50th anniversary of the original Earth Day; I wanted to tell our son and daughter about my pro-environment activity, which might have seemed a bit off the wall unless seen in the context of that era: the growing awareness of social issues, the desire to make a difference, and the willingness to confront authority. Of course, one of the events I described was the takeover of the Straight. I included an image that I found on the Internet of the iconic *Newsweek* cover, pictured here. It wasn't until after I completed the document that I noticed the address on the magazine's mailing label! I enjoyed reading the excellent 1999 write-up by Dave Shannon '69 and Henry McNulty '69 about campus activities and Lambda Chi life in the 60s (<https://www.iswza.org/heritage/1960s>). Many Lambda Chis kept well informed of the news of the day, but I wonder if this might have been Henry's subscription, given his added interest in journalism [Ed. Note: Henry says it was not his: “I had the interest, but not the \$\$\$ to subscribe to a magazine!”]. There have been many articles reflecting on the takeover of The Straight, but



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for some reason I found this one from 2019 particularly interesting: <https://quillette.com/2019/06/25/the-fog-of-youth-the-cornell-student-takeover-50-years-on/>."

## ► 1976

For the past 4 years, **Jim Sollecito** has worked at donating and having the Cornell Wrestling Team and the Horticulture Department plant on the CALS campus the largest collection of panicle hydrangeas in



North America. He says, "It appears we have met the goal, and should have verification in the spring. The thought was for every incoming freshman to have a bouquet of hydrangeas greeting them when they entered their dorm room for the first time. This should take place next August. There is also a panicle hydrangea to the left side of the front door at Omicron that I personally planted. I do this for past and future Cornellians, and also in memory of our daughter Hannah '11."

**Frank Sherman** tells us, "I recently met up with my 'Big Brother' Mike LaBate for a hike in Rocky Mountain National Park. Despite my youth advantage, he kicked my ass hiking to Parika Lake (11-mile hike; 11,300-ft altitude). Although he had a distinct advantage living in the Mile High City, I had trouble explaining it. I thoroughly enjoyed the Zoom meetings with Brothers from the early 70's and the second one organized by Bob Shaw for the late 70's. Glad the house is back on good footing; it is a tribute to the alumni who have shown good leadership through these difficult times."

## ► 1977

**Jim Morrow** responded to Bob Shaw's invitation to a late-1970s Zoom call (see below), with the following: "Well, if that wasn't a surprise. How on earth did you find my email? Must be on some alumni data base?

That was the main family account. Here is the address I use for own stuff: jrmorrow8782 at gmail. I missed your Zoom call the other night—things going on. But I will try to join in future if this continues. One of the odd side effects of this COVID thing involves making connections with the past. For me, this has been with a few high school classmates I hadn't heard from in decades. Some great conversations have been had. And now college? Cool. Sad to say, the only guy I have kept up with regularly is my old roommate Hal Adams. I would welcome hearing from others. The basic outline: I live in small town in northeast Iowa. Very rural and I like it that way! The Morrow family farms are just west of here. I have been in banking since college—43 yrs—in a community bank here; am the Chief Credit Officer. I'm not retired yet but it is on the horizon, another year or so. I've been married since 1982, with three kids: two older in their 30s and a caboose kid (long story) who is a senior in high school (keeps you young or so they say). Plus I have a 2½-yr-old grandson, who lives a mere 5-minute walk from my front door. Yay—grandparenting is the best thing ever. We don't get back East very often; travel is mostly north in Minnesota lake country or out West—Colorado, mainly, and skiing (I can still manage the blue runs...for now). Feel free to forward this to any who might have been on that call. Would welcome hearing from Lambda Chi. Thanks for reaching out."

## ► 1978

**Bob Shaw** reports that the Class of 1978 has done three Zoom calls (45th anniversary of their 1 May celebration, 42nd anniversary of college graduation, and "What I did on my summer vacation" recently). He says that of the original 20 brothers in his class, 18 are alive and 17 have attended these Zoom sessions. Some of the attendees include John Sovocool, Eric Jacobs, Scott Katzman, George Kajos, Harry Kaiser, Andre Martecchini, Kevin Miles, Mark Todd, George Lutz, Brian Meagher, and Al Hieger. Jason Cho '98, Bob Bocchino '77, and Bob McKinless '48 joined as well, and on the third call members of 1975–80 were invited and joining in were Jim Sollecito '76, Frank Sherman '76, Fred Fakharzadeh '76, Marcelo Valdez '77, Bill Stasiuk '80, Mark Hallock '79, Rick Meigs '80, Joe Kane '79, Eric Nielsen '80, and others. Jim Morrow '77 connected via e-mail. He says, "we'll do another call for the late 1970s after the New Year. I challenge the other classes to do Zoom calls; they are a hoot!" Bob says he also saw Brian Kelly '78 in person in Marshfield, MA, enroute to his summer home in Newport, RI. Bob hopes that this Covid stuff settles down so we can get together face to face instead of with Zoom.

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## ► 1980

**Rick Meigs** out in Davis, CA, has been enduring the smoke from the wildfires these past few months. He says the direct plumes of late summer were the worst, with the smell and the dirty soot and ash everywhere and the terrible air quality, but things are still not great, even with the more dispersed conditions as of the beginning of fall. He walks the dogs in the morning, but his eyes still smart from the particulates, and he can stare directly at the orange midday sun because the air particles are doing so much scattering of the light. The latter also makes the shadows, both inside his house and out, very diffuse and unnatural in appearance.

## ► 1982

**Doug Skalka** wrote to tell us that “My youngest daughter Abigail is graduating from Cornell in May [2020] with a degree in government and minors in history, religious studies, and law & society. She is much smarter than her father. I am looking forward to spending a few days in Ithaca in May [he wrote in February 2020, blissfully unaware of the imminent arrival of Mr. Covid on the Hill].

## ► 1983



**Brad Friedman** writes, “The plague of 2020 aside, my wife Kim and I are doing quite well. I began winding down my legal practice in 2013, and I am now fully retired and living



down the Jersey shore (Long Beach Island). Kim and I love to travel, and have been to a few far-flung places like Antarctica, South America, Eastern Europe, and Southeast Asia, in addition to more usual spots like Western Europe, Alaska, and up and down the East Coast. We had planned on doing a nearly 5-month long World Cruise beginning in January 2021, but fate, it seems, has taken a hand. During the summers I do quite a bit of beer league sailboat racing in a 19-ft O'Day Mariner, or what I like to call an old man sailboat, at least for racing purposes. I didn't do as much sailing this year, again, because of Covid, but I did get in some. Except for this year, Kim and I have been getting together pretty much every summer since around 1982 with Dave Wurz, Steve Fakharzadeh, Pete Bliss '84, Keith Mullan '81, Winston Jenks, and Steve Putscher and their wives. Dave, Steve, Pete, and I (with wives) often try to catch a Cornell hockey game at Princeton as well. And this spring, just as the virus was starting to be a thing, Kim and I spent an evening with Steve F, Diane, and their daughter Caroline, in Key West, where by pure happenstance we were both vacationing. I am looking forward to the end of this pandemic so we can all get together again soon! I enclose a picture of my crew Ed Hoffman and I at Mariner Nationals a few years back. We won the 'B' fleet, which means that now we have to compete against the real sailors. There is also a picture from Wurzel Weekend 2016 of me skippering a historic Barnegat Bay A Cat for the evening with the gang. They are awesome, but a bit scary to drive, given that each boat is somewhat historic and worth far more than I am... there's a good story about how I ended up at the tiller. From left to right: Pete Bliss, Julie Mullan, Keith Mullan, me, and Steve P. Also onboard were Dave and wife Karen, Steve and Diane F., and Winston and wife Tricia '83. Kim and Terry Putscher stayed behind to cook for the gang.”

## ► 1984



**Jim Morrill** says, “Growth and change have dominated the Morrill family over the last 5 years, and quite possibly since graduation in 1984. Starting in July 2015, Mary and I became grandparents with the



# NEWS FROM ALUMNI

arrival of twin boys to our son in Georgia. Since then, we've added seven more, some of whom are shown in the picture. New grandbabies became the norm, but in 2019, one of our precious ones—18-month-old Nora—died suddenly of an unknown but aggressive brain tumor. In the last month, we learned of two more twins on the way. They will bring us to double digits. Meanwhile on the business side of life: Mary has led her own business for over 30 years, working with her sister, Cornell class of 1980. I spent 34 years in the HR field. In 2018, I traded the office/e-mail/meetings world for a world of beer. (Kind of a back to my LXA roots!) We purchased a retail/wholesale beer store in Delmar (suburb of Albany, NY) where we've lived since 1988. My son John was the manager in that store for 4 years prior to the owner's desire to sell, giving me a grand opportunity to work with family in a business of my own. We celebrated our 2-yr anniversary a few months ago, and recently we landed on the local paper's top-5 beer stores in the Capital Region. (The Delmar



Beverage team picture was for an ad to celebrate the achievement.) My days now consist of schlepping beer, driving a 30-yr-old forklift, and counting bottle/can returns. It sure is different from sitting in meetings and sending e-mails. And, of course, playing with little ones."

## ► 1985

**Hans Herrmann** admits to a life as a Ski Patrolter practicing physics on the side to feed the family. He is bummed out about his class missing their 35th Reunion this past spring after having such a great time at their 30th. He sends along a matched set of photos from Dunbars circa 1985 and then 2015. The leftmost person is Terry Hussey '85 (GDI), then Hans, Narciso "Cito" Alvarez, Scott Weaver, John Tansey '84 [replaced by Mark Blythe '85 (GDI) in the newer picture], and Bill "Veg" Noon (nominally '84). On the front of the table



is Tom Brewer in the older picture and Paul Nahra '86 in the 2015 picture.

## ► 1998

Jason Cho, our High Pi (alumni advisor to the undergraduates) and a member of the Omicron Alumni Association Board, has continued his efforts to hold occasional regional alumni get-togethers. In January, he met in Pittsburgh with Ken Huber '73, Dwight Dietrich '81, Matt Clardy '14, and Richie Ibsen '16 (with regrets from Bob Bocchino '79 and Todd Oravitz '88, who could not make it) to catch them up on all that has happened over the last few years and the progress that the house has recently made. He stressed the importance strong alumni involvement with the undergrads to keep the momentum going and also the desirability of ISWZA taking over its mortgage from the bank to give us some buffering from the vagaries of the Cornell enforcement world. This message seemed to be well received, and he encouraged them to share it with their classmates. Matt Clardy also reported very positively about his experience at Reunion in 2019, and the group also wanted contact info to stay in touch. They spent about 2½ hours at the restaurant, then Clardy, Richie, and Jason went to a bar to get caught up on that generation's whereabouts. In late February, he held another brunch in downtown San



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Francisco. He reports that attendees were heavily weighted to brothers near his generation who already knew him personally (he says, "if anything, one would have expected the opposite"). In attendance were Rick Meigs '80, John Kenney '87, Mark Piretti '95, Chris Grubb '00, Jonathan Harriman '03, and Scott Shapiro '05. Jason was able to meet up later with Ryan Yuan Chen '96. Jason also provided this group with chapter and verse about the house's difficulties over the last several years and mentioned the research into buying out the mortgage. Brothers who are interested in investing or have an opinion in how it should be done are encouraged to contact ISWZA board member Mike Coggins (mikecoggins at gmail). Jason told the attendees that the house is in a strong position to weather the current storms.

## ► 2007



The new book by investor and commentator **Dan "Dano" Takahashi** (*Practices Through Which the Global Rich Increase Their Wealth*), is the number one business book on iTunes Japan. So don't hesitate to let him pick up the tab the next time you're out.



## ► Other News

In May, we joined Cornell to mourn the passing of Prof. Tom Rutledge, Chemistry and Chemical Biology.

Professor Rutledge was a gifted science communicator popular for his storytelling and sartorial flair, and we were privileged to have him as our Cornell faculty fellow for a brief time. He is seen in the accompanying photo having a conversation with Matt Wicker's hair in September 2009.



Frank H.T. Rhodes, who served Cornell University as president longer than any other save Andrew Dickson White himself, passed away on February 3, 2020. A forceful advocate and exemplary scholar, he was known for his eloquence and graciousness, and brothers of many generations feel his loss. Among them is **Mike Rapolas '94**, who took this photo with President Emeritus and Mrs. Rhodes at the 2019 Reunion. Cornell's highest recognition for alumni volunteers is named the Frank H.T. Rhodes Exemplary Alumni Service Award in his honor, an accolade that has been bestowed upon four Omicrons to date: Dick Brown '46, Bob McKinless '48, Steve Ashley '62, and Randy Rosenberg '74.



## OBITUARIES

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

### **Willard R. Bliss '49 (O-577)**

*June 9, 2018*

### **Robert K. Milkey '52 (Vet School)**

*September 12, 2018*

Dr. Milkey served in the Marine Corps during World War II. After leaving Cornell, he moved to Granby, CT, and established a veterinary practice, which is now known as the Salmon Brook Veterinary Hospital.

### **Louis "Chess" C. Getsinger III '48 (O-605)**

*September 17, 2018*

### **L. Richard Gons '53**

*October 29, 2018*

Richard served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War, delaying his graduation by a year, and was an engineer for New Jersey Bell Telephone, which later became Verizon. He lived in South Brunswick, NJ, where he was a member of the Planning Commission. He enjoyed sharing his love of New Hampshire, hiking with his family, and he loved playing bridge with his friends.

### **Keith M. Rosser Jr '47 (O-643)**

*November 28, 2018*

### **William L. Mitchell '53 (Vet School)**

*December 30, 2018*

"Bill" (later "Doc") Mitchell served in the military for 3 years during World War II before returning to Cornell to get his veterinary degree and serving for over 50 years as Potter County, PA, 's vet to large and small animals, both domesticated and wild. He died in Florida on his 94th birthday. A full description of his accomplishments, service to community, and interests can be found at <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/bradfordera/obituary.aspx?pid=191195662>. Doc was an accomplished pilot in both single- and multi-engine aircraft. He rebuilt a 1942 World War II Fairchild Primary Trainer (PT-19-B), winning Grand Champion in the Warbird Category with his #28 fixed wing at the annual Oshkosh, WI, air shows in 1984 and 1985. He began judging at Oshkosh in 1983 and held the record as the longest serving Warbirds judge at 32 years. For 22 years,

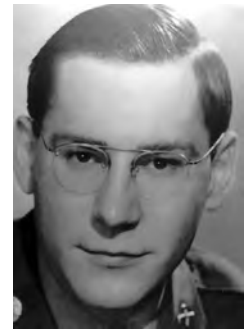


Doc traveled to and from Oshkosh in his Studebaker Conestoga and spent 2 weeks prior to the show teaching 12-18-year-olds at the Air Academy.

### **George H. Getman '44**

*February 20, 2019*

George (O-542), last of the great Getman brothers and a High Alpha, was a one-time editor of the *Omicron Oracle* and before that was news editor for the *Cornell Daily Sun*, the hallowed pages of which he once made himself, when he and Ralph Kelley '47 almost drowned on Cayuga Lake when their dinghy capsized in a squall. He enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Forces immediately after Pearl Harbor, serving in the Japanese Military Intelligence Branch, and after the war completed graduate work at Yale, Michigan, and Cornell Law before embarking on a successful legal career in the Utica, NY, area. He served with and was recognized by innumerable community, charitable, and fraternal organizations but always made time for his large family of 9 children, 24 grandchildren, and 24 great-grandchildren.



### **Charles R. "Bob" Cox '47**

*March 18, 2019*

Bob Cox (O-616) played goalkeeper for the Cornell varsity soccer team, making All-American, and, bored during the offseason, also played varsity basketball for the Big Red. His favorite Cornell story, though, was attempting to drive his car down an icy Edgemoor Lane (and not entirely succeeding). After a long career as an executive with shipbuilders Dravo Corp. in his native Pittsburgh, PA, he retired with his wife Nancy (Lain) '48 to Vero Beach, FL, where they continued to entertain in entertaining fashion.



### **Charles A. "Bud" White '45**

*October 28, 2019*

"Bud" White (O-560) was a pioneer in television engineering, starting when the word "electronics" was scarcely to be found in the average American's vocabulary. After wartime service in the U.S. Navy in the Pacific, he joined the Allen B. DuMont Laboratories in Paterson, N.J., inventors of the cathode ray tube, and had a hand in some of the earliest consumer television sets to be sold. In his retirement from Westinghouse he enjoyed sailing, fishing, and ice boating — and his ham radio set, always waiting after he returned to shore.

**William W. "Bill" Mendenhall, Jr. '49**  
*February 19, 2020*

It is hard to capture Bill's life in a capsule description, as one might expect from somebody who, at the time, graduated from Cornell with the highest GPA in the history of the Engineering College. His full story can be found at <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/newsminer/obituary.aspx?n=william-w-mendenhall-bill&pid=195522855>. Our chapter historian Jason Cho, in nominating Bill for our International Fraternity's Order of Achievement, attempted the job when he wrote: "Bill Mendenhall is a legendary professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, an outstanding teacher, advisor, surveyor, and community leader—the kind who no longer wins awards, because he has already won all the old ones and all the new ones are named after him. He is proof that success in life does not come in a straight line, and the winding one does not always go through big companies or big cities. A civil engineering student at the outbreak of World War II, he did not expect to find himself as a photo intelligence officer. After the war, scrambling to finish his degree, he did not expect to travel to Fairbanks, less to take a job teaching at the university for half a century. A native of Indianapolis, he did not expect to become an award-winning pioneer of high-latitude mapping, and to have so many surveying and Alaska honors awarded him. Diving into professional life as a professor, surveyor, and pilot, he did not expect to be leading the effort to rebuild the community hospital, destroyed by a flood. And at age 95, having buried his wife of 65 years, he perhaps did not expect still to be advisor for the Tau Beta Pi honor society. At every twist and turn, however, he has been a model of service and professionalism who has brought pride to Lambda Chi Alpha from the farthest reaches of the country. We heartily nominate Bro. Mendenhall for the Order of Achievement, only the latest unexpected turn in a fully-lived life."



**Dr. Harry W. Daniell '49**  
*March 26, 2020*

Harry (O-665), was a consummate athlete and scholar and beloved physician. A native of New England, he ran varsity cross country and track, but he could not run all the way to Idaho for his summer jobs with



the U.S. Forest Service, and so he hitchhiked there. After service with the U.S. Army, he returned to the West and enjoyed a long and highly respected medical career. Unusual for a solo practitioner, he published more than 130 peer-reviewed articles, including nationally recognized research associating cigarette smoking with premature aging and with osteoporosis. He never gave up running, though; and finished 64 marathons and completed a competitive run up Mount Shasta in 2019, before the race of his life ended after a short illness in March.

**Craig TenBroeck '56**  
*April 21, 2020*

Craig (O-804) passed away of the COVID-19 illness. He served as High Beta and High Kappa while studying electrical engineering at Cornell but is more fondly remembered for his fine voice and love of music. He performed with the Savoy Company and with his church choir for many decades, and after retirement from GE he took the same passion to genealogy, electronics, and travel. Our condolences go to Mrs. TenBroeck, his children and stepchildren, and their families.



**James Newkirk '67**  
*May 17, 2020*

As High Epsilon, Jim Newkirk (O-1006) once imported twice as many William Smith College girls as there were brothers for a party, but his numerical acumen improved over time and a long career with the U.S. Department of Transportation and as founder of several transportation-related businesses. His late wife, Barbara, was an award-winning high school and special education teacher, and they enjoyed serving their community. In 2005 he completed a Certificate in Addictions Counseling at Harvard Medical School, after which he volunteered at Emerson Hospital, but he could never shake his love of the N.Y. Yankees and Giants, even after three and a half decades in Massachusetts.



**Thomas E. Sanford '55**  
*July 12, 2020*

Tom's daughter Susan tells us that "he was proud to be affiliated with Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity and remained close to many from his class."



**John R. Lutz '63**

*July 22, 2020*

John (O-939) left this earth peacefully at home of complications from Alzheimer's disease. In undergraduate days he kept busy as Omicron's High Tau and with the Naval ROTC while studying civil engineering, later serving with the "Seabees" in far-flung Vietnam, Cuba, and Antarctica. His interests outside of work were diverse, including world travel, a lifelong love of skiing—he met his beloved wife of

51 years Tracy on a ski lift at Stowe—and sailing, which he had picked up while stationed in Newport, RI. After retirement, he became an avid model railroader, reconnecting in a way with his distinguished career as a civil engineer and project manager across the Northeast.





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