



The Old House on Burrowes Road

by Jeff Lohr '65

The "old house" or the Big Red Barn, as it was known to some, was home to Alpha Chi Sigs for over 70 years. The house was located at the corner of Burrowes and Pollock Roads, just inside the west entrance to the Penn State campus. Alpha Chi was one of only six fraternities who enjoyed the convenience and other benefits of being within the campus boundaries.

The three-story house was constructed of red brick and mortar and was graced by a large front porch. At some point in its history, the attic was converted to additional living space and became known as the "penthouse." In many years, sophomore pledges resided in the house and bunked together in this space.

The first floor housed the living room, adjacent TV/card room, and dining room. The walls were paneled in a rich wood paneling. The centerpiece of the living room was the large fireplace and wood mantle bearing the Sigma Chi crest. (Thanks to some dedicated brothers, the mantle was saved and now graces the living room of the current house). The living room floor was covered in carpet that could be rolled up for parties. There were two large, overstuffed leather couches, as well as other seating that gave the living room a homey feeling.

The second and third floors contained 15 double-occupancy rooms and one triple. The basement contained the infamous "cave" that housed four brothers with the

willingness to brave its spartan features. The "penthouse" could accommodate up to seven more brothers, bringing the total capacity to 39.

In addition to the "cave", the basement contained the kitchen and party room. There were two community bathrooms, one on the second floor and one on the third. The only shower facilities were located in the third-floor bathroom. The house received its wintertime heat from the university's steam system. To say that the house had seen better days by the time I arrived in 1962 is an understatement. The bedrooms and baths were spartan, the steam pipes could sound like jet airplanes when they rattled, the sewer pipes were prone to backups, and the electrical system could be scary at times. But we kept the basic systems running. More importantly, we kept both the inside and outside spotless.

The following are some of my best memories of my days in the "old house."

We ate dinner together each weekday night. Dinner was served by hired part-time waiters. During rush season, we donned coats and ties for the evening meal. Evening meals on Friday and Saturday were buffet style in the basement party room. There was no meal service on Sundays.

For parties on Friday and Saturday, the living room rugs and furniture were moved to the dining room. The dining room became the "makeout room." No need to explain what went on in there.

Brothers and pledges were required to live in the house unless the membership exceeded the house capacity (39). The only exceptions were members from State College who lived at home and married brothers. Violation of this rule was grounds for loss of membership in Sigma Chi.

Chapter meetings were held every Monday night at 10:00 pm, and attendance was mandatory. Excuses could be granted if requested, but only for academic reasons (blue books or big project deadlines).

All brothers and pledges took part in keeping the house running, but a few duties were assigned to the current pledge class.



- Keeping the living room and card room neat.
- Retrieving the mail from the post office located downtown.
- Wake-up calls for brothers, Monday thru Friday
- Set-up and after-hours clean-up for weekend parties.
- Acting as door keepers during parties to ensure that only members and their dates and invited guests were admitted.
- Acting as bar tenders for parties. Beer kegs were confined to the basement.

In these "good old days," the pledging period was typically 16 weeks. None of these pledge duties were considered hazing, and they helped to build a strong respect for our residence.

Editor's Note: A group of Initiates in November 1970 included James Cooper, Philip Thomas, Richard Cutshall, Gary Pannabecker, R. Steven Lang, Andrew Sperber, John Bauman, Harry Hamilton, and John Rath. These brothers resided in the Big Red Barn as sophomores and juniors. In the summer of 1972, as rising seniors, they received word that our house on Burrowes Road had been physically condemned and arrangements had been made to occupy a new home in State College at 400 East Prospect. This house was owned by the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity that no longer had a presence at the University. The house was, at the time, known as "The Shelter", a hippie commune. ΔΤΔ was more than happy to have us displace those occupants. So, the aforementioned brothers, together with some other underclassmen, enjoyed the distinction of experiencing both the Big Red Barn and our current house.



Four alumni who loved the Big Red Barn:
Tom Sharbaugh '66, John "Tube" Powell
'65, Jeff Lohr '65/66, Larry Seethaler '65.

White Rose Ceremony Honors the Lives of Three Alpha Chis

A well-attended White Rose Ceremony was held on Friday evening of the 2026 Golf Classic weekend. In the Great Hall of the chapter house, **John Knoll '70**, **Steven Lueckel '71**, and **George Dourdounas '72**, were honored and remembered. House Corporation President Jim Lundy organized the well-run event, and Board Member Byron Woodrum presided over the ceremony. Speakers recalling memories of our departed brothers included **James Beam '69**, **Derek Reid '69**, **Dan Eckenrode '72**, and **Jim Cooper '73**. Members of the Knoll and Lueckel families were in attendance. **ALL HONOR TO THEIR NAMES!**



Three Brothers honored at the White Rose Ceremony. Right to left: George Dourdounas '72, Steven Lueckel '71 and John Knoll '70.

Alumni House Manager's Report

by Andy Gildersleeve

Brothers: To those of you who attended the annual Golf Classic this June, you probably agree with the consensus of comments I received, that the house has not looked so good in years. True that we do go through the “spit n polish” exercise in preparation for that event, so not a total surprise. This year I needed to meet with a representative of the State College Zoning Department, so what better time to have her over to visit than on the Friday afternoon of the golf weekend, with the property looking as good as it will all year! Despite our meeting being out on the lawn regarding a future project we are considering, she was very impressed with what she saw.

Now, to dispel any thoughts that there is any self-back patting going on here, I had nothing to do with whipping the place into shape. In fact, I was partially working against the process. The bottom line is that most of the credit for the way the house looked goes to the staff and specifically to Alpha Chi Maintenance and Facility Manager Doug Sampsel, for overseeing the preparation. Despite a full calendar of work to prepare for the golf outing, he took time away from those tasks to assist me with some research I needed for my zoning meeting. I cannot say enough good things about Doug. He does a superb job in his maintenance responsibilities while simultaneously undertaking a more recent role as co-housing director (house dad). Doug's background in the Navy and former maintenance management position at Rockview Penitentiary have developed his people skills and proven to be very effective in helping to mold our young undergraduate men into well rounded adults.

On another note, Tony Warner, an architectural engineer with

extensive knowledge of commercial roof work and contractors, has offered to assist me in verifying the current status of the slate roof and determining the best way to proceed with its repair and/or replacement. To that end, Doug rented us a man-lift, so that Tony and I could safely ascend to the third-floor roof and take photos for both internal use and to share with contractors as we further engage in this effort. We had to dodge some rain and lightning bolts, but got the job done in time for dinner.

Byron Woodrum Receives High Honor from Sigma Chi International



Our own Wil “Byron” Woodrum '86, has earned **Sigma Chi's Seven Lights Award**. The Seven Lights Alumni Award is one of Sigma Chi's highest honors for alumni service, recognizing those who have made a **lasting impact on the fraternity** through dedicated service at the local, provincial, and/or international levels. Byron served on the Alpha Chi Board as vice president from 1998–2008 and president

from 2003–2008. He also served as Alpha Chi's chapter advisor from 2018–2020, following which he rejoined the House Corporation where he presently serves.

Byron has been a “hands on” alumni, completing repairs on the house, organizing the Golf Classic for four years running, and attending Leadership Training Workshops. In 2021, he started supporting regional work as grand praetor for the Eastern Virginia Province. In this role he has provided logistics and support for both spring and fall initiations at Psi, Sigma Sigma, and our own Alpha Chi Chapter; served as magister and advisory board member for the Associate Chapter Sigma Chi Delta at Virginia Commonwealth University; and acted as ritual peer for the province.

It's plain to see that Byron has been extremely dedicated to service for Sigma Chi.

We are proud to call him an Alpha Chi alumnus. He is clearly most deserving of the high honor and recognition conferred by the Seven Lights Award.



Recently, Alpha Chi Alumnus **Phil Thomas '73** appeared on a Sig Talk Podcast. Watch and listen to the interview recounting his memorable 30-year FBI career. Search online: **Sigma Chi Fraternity > Sig Talks > A Sig in the FBI, YouTube.**

Sigma Chi International's Grand Consul Ryan Temby

Grand Consul Ryan Temby (Rutgers '90) gets around. He was installed as our 74th Grand Consul at the biannual Grand Chapter Meeting in June 2025. Since then, he has hardly spent a week at his home in Tampa, Florida. He is a firm believer in getting out where the action is, and in particular, where our active undergraduates reside. In most weeks during the past 12 months, he has been at initiations, new chapter installations, province conferences, or executive-related meetings. Here are some highlights of what he has presented and discussed with undergraduates at province conferences:

A top priority is excellence in execution of our Ritual. This has been supported by unprecedented Ritual Peer Training for undergraduates and raising the standard for Ritual at initiations. There is a proven link between high performance in chapters' Ritual execution and their operational excellence. Consuls: Protect the Ritual. Magisters: Protect the pledges.

Preparation for Brotherhood is the revamped and positively updated version of what used to be known as pledging. Magisters from all chapters will attend mandatory training for the new program at this summer's Krach Transformational Leadership Workshops in Bowling Green, Ohio.

There is, and will continue to be, a zero-tolerance standard for chapter level infractions of hazing and alcohol and drug regulations.

Sigma Chi will continue to promote undergraduate member participation in student/Greek Life government. Brothers are encouraged to get in positions to shape the agenda and outcomes.

Recruitment of high-quality new members and development of new chapters is crucial.

The COVID-19 deficit still exists, and the goal is to establish 10 new chapters in 2026.

Some key data for all of Sigma Chi:

All time Sigma Chi's Initiated: 382,000

Currently Living Alumni: 268,000

Currently Active Undergraduates: 16,400

Currently Active Chapters: 229—down from a peak of 306

Chapters with Houses: 174

2025 Recruitment: 6,095 Pledges and 4,892 Initiates

60% of all chapters are above their all-university men's GPA

Philanthropy Money Raised: 2025: \$4,836,000;
all-time: \$33,000,000

13 Sigs are student body presidents

458 Sigs are interfraternity council officers

325 Sigs are currently in student government

New Parents Association President, Michael Petrucelli



Michael Petrucelli (left), Bricen Petrucelli (center), and Ami Susan Petrucelli (right).

The Penn State Sigma Chi Parents Association exists to support and enhance the experiences of the undergraduate brothers by strengthening communication between parents and the chapter. In addition to providing parents with timely reminders of important items such as dues, house documents, and upcoming events, the parents association coordinates parents' weekend events, fundraisers, and facilitates

other ways for Sigma Chi parents to get and stay involved in the health and welfare of the chapter. Also, the association can share important campus news with parents and provide logistical details for adults attending Sigma Chi events at Penn State.

Current Penn State Sigma Chi Parents Association President Michael Petrucelli commented, "The parents association is a tremendous resource for Sigma Chi parents, particularly the parents of new members. No matter how organized any group of undergraduates is, having a backstop of more seasoned perspectives is important." Petrucelli went on to say, "I think we all owe a debt of gratitude to past President Allison Hayden. She really set a firm foundation for this group, and I particularly appreciate her sharing all her files with me. Her advice has been invaluable!"

Michael Petrucelli is the father of Bricen Petrucelli (Alpha Chi 2025). He was a three-term undergraduate president of his fraternity, Delta Psi, at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. As a graduate, Michael served for ten years on the St. Anthony Trust of Hartford, the corporation which owns and operates the building and property of the Epsilon Chapter of Delta Psi, also serving three terms as president. Michael has also served as a national officer for the Fraternity of Delta Psi. His wife Ami Susan Petrucelli is a member of the Delta Gamma sorority (the Alpha Tau Chapter at Butler University) and is active in Delta Gamma mentoring activities in the Washington, DC, area.

Alumni News

Daniel M. Johnston '61: Retired. Spending winters in Venice, Florida.

David A. Kline '64: Brother's David Kline (AX '64), and Larry Seethaler '65 were on an Alaska wilderness fishing trip in the summer of 2025. Another trip is planned for 2026 if any brothers are interested. Call Larry (who lives in Alaska) at 907-223-7983 for details. (For additional info and pics, you can call me at 814-360-8387).

George D. Cascino '66: My son Dylan, Alpha Chi/Sigma Chi, PSU class of 2012, got married in January to Joselyn Delgado of Elizabeth, New Jersey.

David L. Shields '67: May 2025, Attended WRC in Warren, Pennsylvania, for past Grand Consul Murray McComas, who was our grand praetor when brother Dave Kline was there.

Fall 2025, had WRC for founder Cooper and helped raise \$5000 for Monument's Perpetual Care. Currently treasurer and past president for Pittsburgh alumni chapter; current president is Andy Gildersleeve (AX 1968).

James L. Cooper '73: Married Jeannette Fernandez on March 28. Recently became a member of the Sigma Chi International Engagement Committee.

Frank David Chernuta '78: Jackie and I are enjoying retirement in Lewes, Delaware. Beach living is pretty good, so try to stop by if you are in the area. Looking forward to the annual golf tournament as always. Cheers!

Richard O. Nenstiel '78: Had a nice visit with **Bill Wells '79** and his lovely wife Sally at their home in Fayetteville, West Virginia, last fall. Also had a great meal at their restaurant, The Gaines Estate! We finally finished our new house in Orange Beach, Alabama. Please look me up if you are in the Gulf Coast area.

Alpha Chi Golf Classic 2026

Alpha Chi Golf Classic 2026 team and individual award recipients

TEAM SCRAMBLE

Low net (tacky jackets)

1st Penn-Pitt: Jim Solomon, Patrick Solomon, Joel Maxy, Tim Loomis

2nd Young Guns : Collin Conaty, John Danielle, Matt Kutz, Matt McGraw

3rd Shudixskins: Anarew Dixon, Bob Shuster, John Shuster, Grove Dixon

Low Gross

1st Beagel's Boyz: Dan Schlegel, Kurt Imdorf, Merrel Ashley, Scott Fozard

2nd Threesome: Dave Menigoz, Dick Anthony, Al Morgan

3rd Beamer: Jim Beam, Ron Boraten, Mike Manning, Tom Strohm

Yellowball - Blue Course

Team: Fly Boys: Jim Beam, Ron Boraten, Jim Cooper, Phil Thomas

Low Net Individual: Bruce Karper

Low Gross Individual: Jim Beam

Yellowball - White Course

Team: Dan Schlegel, Kurt Imdorf, Merrel Ashley, Scott Fozard

Low Net Individual: Dan Schlegel

Low Gross Individual: Eric Merrell

SKILL CONTESTS

Saturday

Closest to Pin #4: Sean Gilberti

Closest to Pin #14: Dan Schlegel

Closest to Pin (senior): Jim Beam

Longest Drive : Matt Kutz

Straightest Drive: Joe Conaty

Friday

Blue Course Closest to Pin: Rob Ball

Blue Course Longest Drive: Jim Beam

White Course Longest Drive (senior):

Tom Walsh

White Course Longest Drive: Dan Schlegel

