

# The Muse

MU CHAPTER OF SIGMA PI FRATERNITY - CORNELL UNIVERSITY

ITHACA, NEW YORK

WINTER 2004-'05

## Sage Reflects On His Tenure, Chapter Improvements

Another semester is upon us at 730 University Ave., and I find myself in the last few weeks of my tenure as the president of the Mu Chapter. In the years that I have been a part of this fraternity, I have witnessed amazing growth, and I myself have grown along with the chapter.

In May, we had 88 active members. And while 12 of them have since graduated, I believe that the chapter may soon exceed 100 men. This has been a goal of mine for quite some time.

I have been a part of a many strong improvements to our chapter. I believe that in the past year we have made important and necessary revisions to our financial status. Additionally, we have begun to utilize the bylaws (adopted in the spring of 2003) more. We have made amendments, removed unnecessary regulations, and adopted new, common-sense rules and policies.

Chairmen are now held more accountable for their positions. We have made important strides with our Chapters of Excellence program. And not only have we begun to make strong use of the program in regard to programming and educational support, but we have also begun to help set a standard for the Greek community as well.

Finally, this semester we have seen the mark of a great many improvement projects to the facility. The pit has been refurnished, and the grotto has been opened as a brotherhood lounge. We now have free laundry machines. Additionally, a number of even more fundamental facility projects have been completed, started, or scheduled. These are expensive steps, but they are necessary to maintain the quality of our

facility—which has continued to be both a sense of pride and a remarkable recruitment tool.

But, there is more work to be done. This year we have set a number of chapter goals that will not be completed overnight. They will take the time and energy of our current leaders, perhaps even after they have left office. We will work to establish a relationship with a service-based organization. We would like to bring back Zoltan to campus. It was a great experience for all involved, and I believe that it will happen based on the buzz that has been created.

In closing, I must appeal to those alumni that have not yet been back recently to visit. I hope that the under-

graduate/alumni relationship will continue to grow; it is an extremely valuable and exciting experience for both sides of the equation. I have seen, in my time here, just how truly vital alumni participation is to the growth of our fraternity. And, I only hope that this participation can continue to flourish and grow.

I hope that Sigma Pi has gained from me at least a fraction of what I have gained from it. My experience as president has been truly the most valuable experience of my life, as has been my entire experience with Sigma Pi.

Fraternally,  
Matt Maloney '05  
Sage



*Alumni Jim Keene '57, VanNess Robinson '57, and Jim Palmer '60 enjoy dinner with a few of the undergraduate brothers.*

## Alumni President Offers His Thoughts On Leadership

For ten years I have served as president of the Mu Chapter's alumni group. During that time I have witnessed, participated in, and—to an extent—influenced the revival of the Greek System at Cornell. Cornell is among the five largest Greek systems in the United States, and I suspect it is the strongest.

Why is the Greek system so strong at Cornell? The answer is two fold—strong guidance and support from the university and strong alumni leadership.

Ten years ago we built a new house (made necessary by a fire) and were the envy of the campus. We had taken a leadership position in deciding to remodel before the fire and had closed the house prior to beginning the renovation, as the house was felt to be unsafe as a residence for students. Since that time, many houses have followed the same path, and more are working on campaigns to make major improvements to their chapter houses. Alumni leadership is stepping forward to get things done. This same alumni leadership is also becoming involved in the life of

the chapters and successfully insisting on behavior changes on the part of the undergraduates, much as we had to do when the drug culture threatened the chapter's existence.

Today, we have an organization of which every alumnus can be truly proud. It is truly considered by all to be a top house at Cornell. It was not created or ordained by the alumni leadership; it is the product of the undergraduates. However, what we have now would not have been possible were it not for the strong support of the alumni—both in terms of guidance and financial support. The fraternity is a crucible where young men can interact with older men who are not their fathers or guardians to solve problems and create and sustain an organization. This strange phenomenon called Sigma Pi becomes important to the young man who has just pledged for all the reasons we remember as undergraduates, but it somehow remains relevant and important to all of us throughout our entire lifetime. Perhaps it represents our first truly adult involve-

ment. For whatever reason, keeping the Mu Chapter strong at Cornell is obviously important to our alumni.

In official Cornell meetings, Sigma Pi is often held up as an example of a fraternity with strong alumni leadership. I think that leadership becomes stronger as the years go by. We have recently begun a career forum for our upperclassmen. It is something that we should all hope becomes a Mu Chapter institution. We have an involved building committee that works with the undergraduates to ensure that the physical plant is kept up to par. We have our own Alumni Weekend that encourages brothers to visit and enjoy the fraternity without the conflict of other Cornell events. We have a good newsletter in *The Muse*, and it actually gets published with predictable frequency. We are sponsors of the Cornell Greek life program known as "Chapters of Excellence." We have established a Mu Chapter Educational Foundation (qualified as

*(continued on page four)*

## Chapter House Sees Several Key Renovations

It seems like the Sigma Pi house has been improving in some way each day since last August. After being elected the new house manager last spring and inheriting the reins from former house manager Michael Brandt '05, I have tried to steadily improve the house.

The improvements and changes began with the refurnishing of our entertainment room, the pit. With the help of alumni, we were able to replace our old furniture with four brown leather couches, two leather chairs, two coffee tables, four end tables, and a poker table. To complement the addition of such quality furniture, the Pi brothers decided to change the color of the pit walls. But have no fear, the beloved fire and water paint job of Matt Pens '00 and Morgan Lang '99 has been enshrined in picture frames to be forever remembered.

Additionally, the long-lost and dearly missed grotto—which was hidden by a bookshelf built by the pledge class of 1998—has been restored. What had been a "secret storage closet" for the past six years was reopened during Homecoming and is now complete with a Sigma Pi poker table (built by the 2004 pledge class), a fully func-

tional bar, a refrigerator, and a television.

But, the new furnishings did not stop there. Both the east lounge and the memorial library have been revamped with new couches and chairs in the lounge and an eight-foot oak table in the library. And doing laundry is no longer a chore or an expensive inconvenience thanks to two brand new washers and dryers. Our gratitude and appreciation goes out to all the alumni who have made these additions possible.

Each year new problems arise and new repairs are necessary. With the help of a dedicated and extremely handy assistant house manager, Jeremy Kraker '07, the repairs have continued throughout the semester. With the addition of new commercial toilet paper dispensers, a new fire door in the basement, carbon monoxide detectors in the hallways, new speakers in the basement, and new carpeting on the basement stairwell, the Mu Chapter has become a safer and more comfortable place to live. In addition to having the oriental rugs cleaned, the weeds pulled, the basement floor waxed and buffed, hiring a cleaning man, and having the gutters cleaned



*Undergraduate brothers take a break from manning the phones at the thank-a-thon.*

for the first time since the new house opened, we have scheduled a refinishing of the wood floors to ensure that the Sigma Pi house remains among the most beautiful and coveted on campus.

With the help of the entire brotherhood and our dedicated alumni, the house is as comfortable and beautiful as ever. Still, I hope to continue making improvements as we soon head into Rush.

Giorgio Roccaro '07  
House Manager

## Homecoming A Great Success

The Pi house hosted its annual Homecoming events during the weekend of October 16, and Homecoming was again tremendously enjoyable for everyone who attended.

A few of the alumni joined us for a cocktail hour on Friday evening, as we awaited the unfortunately rained-out Red Sox and Yankees game. Everyone who showed up was relaxed, and it was great to see current brothers and alumni enjoying their time together in the Pi house.

Saturday's events started at 10:00 a.m. with the homecoming tailgate, which we co-hosted with the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. Hamburgers were grilling, girls were yelling, and everyone had a great time. Cornell football followed suit with a disappointing loss to Colgate, but by that point in the day everyone's spirits were so high that it didn't seem to matter much.

Jim Keene '57 took charge at 5:00 pm

with the start of the annual meeting. During the meeting we discussed the events of the past year and the introduction of the Sigma Pi Educational Foundation. The alumni board was elected, and the meeting adjourned so that we could ready ourselves for the Pat's prime rib and cheesecake dinner. Dinner was filled with embarrassing speeches, and when it was all said and done, most made their way to the newly refurbished pit and now open grotto to watch the Yankees route the Red Sox 19-8. Other brothers engaged in a Texas Hold 'em tournament in library.

All in all, it was a great weekend. And if you missed this year's events, we hope that you can make it back for 2005's Homecoming extravaganza.

Alex Ballantine '06  
Alumni Secretary



*Alumni and friends gather for the annual Homecoming dinner.*

## Event Fosters Career Networking

Last year many brothers took an organized trip to New York City for the first Sigma Pi alumni and student career connection.

In New York, we were graciously hosted by Jarett Wait '80, who organized resume-writing and interview-skills workshops for us at Lehman Brothers. This was quickly followed by a great dinner where many local alumni explained their careers and offered guidance to the undergraduate brothers. The next day, the undergraduates further pursued their interests and learned more about the law, financial, and hospitality fields.

The experience was very educational

and turned out to be more enjoyable and helpful than anyone had imagined. This year we hope to extend the networking to include the medical and engineering fields.

The more alumni and careers that are involved the better. If you would like to participate in the career connection, please contact Jarett Wait '80 by e-mail at [jwait@lehman.com](mailto:jwait@lehman.com).

The brothers of Sigma Pi are looking forward to this great event, and we hope that as many people can participate as possible.

Alex Ballantine '06  
Alumni Secretary



## Alumnus Challenges Recently Graduated Classes

Since the beginning of the Heritage Fund Drive over 10 years ago, it has been suggested that every brother who can should make a gift of \$1,000 or more to the fraternity. This level of giving was (and is) identified as a "fair-share gift." The construction of the new house included a new room called the Memorial Library. The focal point of this room is an oak-paneled wall that contains brass plaques acknowledging those who have made such a gift.

Brothers who are just out of school probably have closer memories of their time at the Mu Chapter, and many would like to be a "name on the wall." However, this is financially impossible for many younger brothers, who are not yet able to pledge a fair-share gift. Dick Clark '51, wishing to instill the idea of supporting the fraternity in its young alumni, has made an unusual offer. Any brother who has graduated within the past five years can now make a gift of \$500 and have his contributions matched by Dick. This will qualify the young alum as a "fair-share giver" and his name will be added to the wall.

Brothers who would like to take advantage of this unusual opportunity should mail their \$500 contribution—along with a note indicating that they want to take advantage of Dick's offer—to Jim Keene, 740 S. 75th Street, Omaha, NE 68114.

*(Editor's Note: Dick originally wanted to donate these funds anonymously. But, we prevailed upon him to allow us to reveal the source.)*

## Brothers Bond During European Vacation

Earlier this April, I—over the course of a mere three days—convinced fellow Mu Chapter brother Alex Deyle '06 to accompany me on a 21-day, seven-city tour of western Europe in mid June. Departing from JFK airport, our excitement outweighed our assurance in planning, as we had only secured a place to stay in London, our primary destination. The rest of the plans would be made on the fly.

We were greeted in England by 95-plus degree weather and unbelievable sun that followed us for the entire trip; not once did we see a drop of rain or clouds. London was more crowded, expensive, diverse, and fun than we could have imagined. Our hostel was bustling and filled with colorful characters, who were as enjoyable as the city itself.

After busing ourselves to Amsterdam, we hustled to find living quarters as night fell. Our unusually cheap hostel turned out to be located in the heart of the incredibly bold Red Light District and above a dive bar which featured live

music until 4:00 a.m. A three-night stay turned out to be one night too many, and we welcomed the calming canals and aesthetic grandeur of our next destination—Venice. Once again, our last minute arrangements landed us a hotel off the beaten path. We stayed in the northern, less-touristy area of the city—where we awoke to the smells of a local fish and produce market, boasting the best Venice had to offer.

In Florence, we stayed in a converted 13th Century hospital and monastery in the Tuscan mountains—about 10 kilometers outside of the city. The view from the hostel was breathtaking and proved to be the epitome of Italian rural beauty.

Rome followed, as we were welcomed by brothers Vince Curtin '05 and Bill Clausen '05, both of whom were studying there through Cornell-sponsored programs. The familiar faces were welcoming, and it made the wining and dining much more enjoyable. After four days and three nights of the overwhelming sights and priceless attractions, Alex and

I spent three days on the French Riviera in Cannes. After the needed R&R, we traveled north to Paris and enjoyed the city's major attractions—such as the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower—as well as the intricacies of Parisian life.

Our trip was incredible and produced many wild stories, including—to name only a fraction—me almost giving CPR to an elderly man who collapsed on a London bus, having 20 female students from Switzerland as hostel-mates in Florence, random encounters with fellow Cornellians in Amsterdam, free housing in a three-story home in Cannes, and participating in the nightly French end-of-school celebration at the base of the Eiffel Tower. If you have not traveled abroad on your own or with buddies, do so. And if you have, you know what we mean when we say that you'll develop one hell of a story to tell.

Fraternally,  
Craig Dewey '06  
Secretary

## Alumni Leadership

*(continued from page two)*

501c3 under the IRS codes). We hope to enhance the Greek experience through programs that are funded by the foundation.

We can rightfully do a lot of back patting. But leadership is not something that looks backwards at what we have accomplished. If we are to fulfill our obligations as leaders of the Mu Chapter, we must look to the future. We must have enough alumni involved both in the undergraduate business activities and social activities to be able to know that all is well. We must not lose what has been built up over the last 10 years. We must stay vigilant to the condition of the house and ensure that there is never a long period of maintenance neglect—such as occurred in the 1960s, '70s, and '80s. We must ensure that Mu Chapter is very much a part of the Cornell experience. The Chapters of Excellence program is a start in that direction, but we as experienced leaders should be able to find ways to use the fraternity as a tool in the positive experience of a Cornell education. We can and must constantly redefine the fraternity in the light of the current time to ensure that it remains strong—which, because of its positive influence on

young lives, deserves to be remain strong.

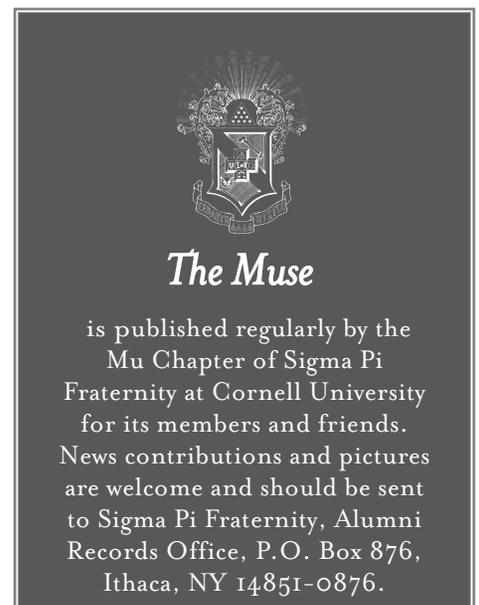
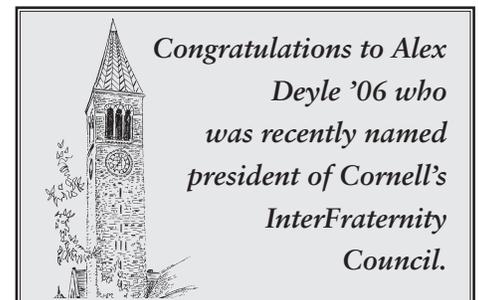
In the next year, your alumni directors and officers will be considering several concepts and programs ranging from how to increase the intellectual life of the fraternity to the concept of owning and operating Collegetown residences for our upperclassmen.

We will be re-energizing the Heritage Fund Drive. We will work to eliminate our mortgage. We will be working to develop the notion that support of the fraternity is not a once-in-a-lifetime gift but a continuing commitment. We will be working to encourage every brother to take advantage of the opportunity to become involved both with his own classmates and with the undergraduates. The Career Forum doesn't have to be limited to New York City.

I would like to define an alumni leader, not just as a member of the alumni board, but also as any brother who cares enough to do something that makes a difference.

As alumni leadership in the Greek system at Cornell grows, we the members of the Mu Chapter should work to see that we continue as pathfinders in this work!

By Jim Keene '57  
Alumni President



## Alumni Board Members Announced

For more than 10 years, the Mu Chapter has had an active board of directors. Although the chapter has always had a board, it has not always actively guided and supported the fraternity. The active board concept came about when it was evident that the old fraternity house was on its last legs. Something needed to be done if the chapter was to continue at Cornell.

Now, the Mu Chapter board is one of a few at Cornell that are the envy of the Greek system, and the Cornell administration continues to encourage alumni to step in and become important in the life of the chapter. There are some houses on the Hill that have no alumni involvement, and many of them are not expected to survive.

We will soon celebrate our 90th year as a part of Cornell student life. We must be doing something right! We have a huge core of supportive alumni, and they span all the decades of our existence. The alumni board works to represent our alumni and serve as a vehicle for them to have a positive influence on the work of the chapter. At the Homecoming annual meeting, the following directors and officers were selected.

### **James H. Keene III '57** *President*

Jim served as sage, first counselor, and house manager. He is currently a trustee of the Mu Chapter Educational Foundation. Jim owns and serves as president of Humboldt Specialty Manufacturing, Co. He is retired from Peter Kiewit Sons, Inc., where he served as a director, vice president of the parent company, and president of several subsidiaries. He lives in Omaha, Nebraska.

### **Jarett F. Wait '80** *Vice President*

Jarett also serves as a trustee of the Mu Chapter Educational Foundation. He is managing partner of Lehman Brothers, Investment Banking. Jarett is the initiator of the new Sigma Pi career forum and a resident of New York City.

### **James W. Palmer '60** *Treasurer*

Jim is active in the firm of RBC Dain Rauscher (Formerly Tucker Anthony Sutro, Inc.) He lives in Durham, North Carolina.

### **VanNess D. Robinson '57** *Secretary*

Van served as sage. He is chairman of New York Central Mutual Fire Insurance, Co., and lives in Edmeston, New York.

### **Richard G. Clark '51**

Dick is retired from the oil distribution business. He has been active in alumni board affairs over a long span of years. Dick lives in Cazenovia, New York.

### **James E. Garr '84**

Jim is active in the financial services business with AXA Advisors in Pittsburgh. He lives in Wexford, Pennsylvania.

### **Steven A. Hobbs '80**

Steve is with Hearst-Argyle Television, Inc. He also serves as a Trustee of the Mu Chapter Educational Foundation. Steve lives in Darien, Connecticut.

### **Larry J. Keane '99**

Larry served as herald; he currently serves as chapter director (where he works as a liaison between the active chapter and national fraternity) and alumni representative for the Chapters of Excellence Project. Larry was with Pepsi Co. and is currently a student in the Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell. He lives in Ithaca, New York.

### **Dennis P. McNamara '83**

Dennis served as alumni secretary. He is currently senior vice president of Oppenheimer & Co., and lives in Manhasset, New York.

### **Robert A. Nafis '49**

Bob served as treasurer. He is retired from Grumman Aerospace where he served as president of Grumman Electronics and Grumman Data Systems. Bob lives in Ithaca, New York.

### **Thomas J. Owens '83**

Tom served as house manager. Tom is currently colonel, NYANG, Operations Group Commander-174th Fighter Wing. Tom resides in Syracuse, New York.

### **Michael R. Sfat '43**

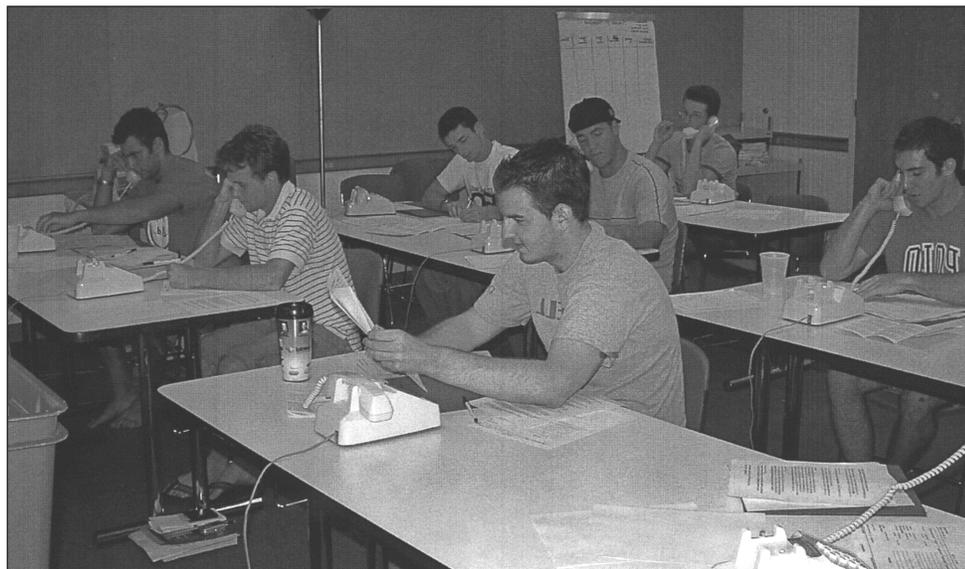
Mike is retired from Bio-Technical Resources, of which he was the founder and president. Mike lives in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

### **Michael Quaid '75**

Mike is with Forcier, Aldrich, and Associates. He is a former member of the Vermont House of Representatives. Mike lives in Williston, Vermont.

### **Alan Rosen '91**

Alan served as alumni secretary and is current owner of Junior's Restaurant in Brooklyn, New York. He lives in Harrison, New York.



*Mu Chapter undergraduates call their alumni brothers during the Sigma Pi thank-a-thon. See related picture, page two.*

# ALUMNI MAILBAG



DAVID K. FELBECK '48 retired from teaching mechanical engineering at the University of Michigan in 1996. Since then, David reports, he has maintained an active private engineering practice. Write to him at 2060 Scottwood, Ann Arbor, MI 48104; felbeck@umich.edu.

M. DUDLEY SMITH JR. '48 reports that he retired from Merrill Lynch in July of 2000. "My wife, Carolyne, is still running her advertising, marketing, and public relations business, but we still find time to travel and enjoy our friends." Write to "Dud" at 608 Race St., Harrisburg, PA 17104. Send him e-mail at mdjr@comcast.net.

MICHAEL T. LEIGH '53 writes, "I am still thoroughly enjoying Colorado, where we are living in the Eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains and appreciating the joy of seeing our near-by grandchildren grow up. The recent edition of *The Muse* was the best ever! My congratulations to the brothers who have worked so hard to bring such a favorable recognition to the Mu Chapter." Write to Mike at 7692 Estate Cir., Longmont, CO 80503.

CARL E. FABIAN '56 lives at 5001 London Walk, Miami, FL 33138. E-mail him at cefclf@aol.com.

CHARLES H. HILL '59 reports that he retired from the practice of plastic surgery in 2000 and since has enjoyed traveling the world. Write to Chuck at 1332 S. Lakeshore Dr., Sarasota, FL 34321; chil12@comcast.net.

Write to H. LAURANCE FULLER '60 at 1111 E. Warrenville Rd., #257, Naperville, IL 60563. E-mail him at nlhencke@earthlink.net.

JOHN R. RUMBLE JR. '64 writes, "After 24 years at the National Institute of Standards and Technology, I got tired of being upstairs and not doing any scientific work. So, I took a buyout and became technical director of Information International Associates. At the very least, my golf game is improving. E-mail me at jumbleusa@earthlink.net." Write to John at 11 Montgomery Ave., Gaithersburg, MD 20877.

C. EDWARD KEMP '68 writes, "My wife, Carol, and I recently took what was supposed to be a 10-day vacation to Italy. However, I experienced respiratory difficulty due to a chronic bronchial problem upon arrival in Florence and ended up in the hospital on oxygen, antibiotics, and steroids. Now, back in the states, I am finally addressing my smoking addiction. This June, I celebrated nine years of sobriety, so hopefully I can put down the cigarettes successfully. I'd welcome any correspondence from any Sigma Pi brothers who have battled addiction." Write to Ed at 3 Kinghorn Dr., Falmouth, MA 02540. Send him e-mail at eds330@aol.com.

FRED M. PETERSON '71 reports that he enjoyed a visit by JOEL S. WILLIAMS '71 and his wife, Alex, in April when they used Fred's South Carolina home to escape the snow of Saratoga Springs, NY. Fred writes, "I keep busy managing an investment portfolio, playing golf, and serving as president of the Kiawah Island Community Association." Write to Fred at 131 Scalybark Rd., Summerville, SC 29485; kiawahtime@aol.com.

WILLIAM H. AHRENS '76 writes, "I've been in China for eight years now. I work at the Shenyang Chemical Research Institute doing research with herbicides and surfactants. No plans to return to the U.S. soon, some come visit Shenyang!" Write to Bill c/o Eileen Appel at 1718 12th St. S., Moorhead, MN 56560. Keep in touch with him by e-mail at chucuo@softhome.net.

GLENN A. MAZZAMARO '77 writes, "I can't believe my daughter is going to be a Cornell hotelier! Ashley will enter the hotel school in January 2005 (not enough rooms for everyone to start in September 2004). Watch out Pi men! She already has her sights set on the house sweetheart title. Looks like you'll be seeing more of the Mazz's over the next few years." Write to Glenn at 125 Indian Cave Rd., Ridgefield, CT 06877; mazzamaro@aol.com.

ROBERT NAWOJCHIK '79 reports that after three years in Texas, he moved back to Vermont. Write to Rob

at P.O. Box 109, Fairlee, VT 05045. E-mail him at rnawojchik@aol.com.

ROBERT W. RENE '79 still serves as CEO of Hartwell Industries. "Kathy and I have three-year-old twin girls and a boy on the way." Write to "Boomer" at 235 N. Carmelina Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90049; r.rene@verizon.net.

JONATHAN R. ZIRN '81 works as a dermatologist in Connecticut. Jon, who transferred from Cornell to Stanford, is married and has three children—10-year-old twins, Nicholas and Juliet, and a seven-year-old, Micah. Write to Jon at 47 Steep Hill Rd., Weston, CT 06663; jzirn@msn.com.

When he wrote to us in July, TIMOTHY M. HAWES '82 reported that he and JAMES E. GARR '82 were planning a golf trip to Scotland in August. "We plan on personally testing the theory that scotch is underrated as a breakfast beverage." Write to Tim at 8157 Seven Mile Dr., Ponte Verde Beach, FL 32082; hawesom@comcast.net.

MARK D. LONSKI '93 writes, "I am pursuing my entrepreneurial dream and running my own landscape and irrigation company in the beautiful U.S. Virgin Islands with my wife Julie (Cornell class of '93)." Write to Mark at 5000-4A Estate Enighed #420, St. John, USVA 00830. E-mail him at darkstarfish@earthlink.net.

JAMES HULVAT '99 writes, "I always enjoy hearing what my fellow Sigma Pi brothers are up to in *The Muse*. My wife (Sigma Pi sweetheart, class of '99) and I just celebrated our five-year anniversary. She is now a surgery resident at Loyola Medical Center in Chicago. After completing my Ph.D. in material sciences this year, I was hired as an assistant professor and am involved in starting a new bioengineering institute at Northwest University's medical school." Write to James at 21 W. Chestnut St., #804, Chicago, IL 60610; Send him e-mail at j-hulvat@northwestern.edu.