

# Mountaineer

# PHI KAPPA PSI

West Virginia Alpha...A strong, rich tradition of Phi Kappa Psi



Zachary L. Mendelson '79, Editor

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## State of WV Alpha

Brothers,

I am pleased to give you a "State of WV Alpha".

The lease that we signed with Sigma Alpha Mu is one year into our agreement. They have two years left and it has been a mutual benefit to both of us. This is not to say we have not had some bumps along the way, but thanks to several brothers we have been able to work through them. The financial arrangement has been very advantageous to us.

Your James Cochran House Association Board has continued to meet and oversee the many facets of the House and re-colonization.

A letter was sent to National asking for guidance as to what we needed to do to re-establish our standing. We have a conference call scheduled to discuss details in addition to the information they provided. Brother Mendelson and I met in June with the new VP of Student Affairs, Bill Schafer. We believe we have established a starting relationship with him and therefore WVU for our return.

Planning is in the works to establish new operating procedures for re-colonizing that will be discussed with the Board on August 20th.

Current dates are to start the pledging process in June of 2016 with a summer rush picnic program in various WV cities, take a pledge class in the fall of 2016 and winter of 2017. We will move back into the house August of 2017. This is a preliminary plan. We believe this is aggressive and will need alumni help and support to make this happen.

Our financials as of this writing are:

Checking - \$127,375

WV Alpha Fund - \$223,226

Irene Huthinson Fund - \$189,890

Mortgage - \$1,718,612

Our financials should continue to grow in the next two years assuming no major events.

We do anticipate some work that we will want to do before we move back into the house such as paving the parking lot. The Board will decide on what other items may be necessary.

Please let Zach and I know what questions you have. Your support of this work is critical to our success. Once our plan is in place we will communicate it to you.

Fraternally,

WC Bird '65

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SAVE THE DATE May 26-29, 2016 | WV ALPHA-PHI KAPPA PSI Alumni



# Updates From Campus and The Nation...

- Dr. Bill Shafer is the new Vice President of Student Life. He comes to WVU by way of Georgia Tech. He is related to brothers **David Hardesty '64** and **Ben Hardesty '69** (cousins). He has been charged by President Gee with the task of re-organizing Greek life at WVU. Several initiatives have already implemented by Shafer-as the start of Rush Week for fraternities and sororities has been pushed back to the sixth week of the Fall semester to allow new WVU students more time to adjust to college life. Change will begin in August when a Greek leadership retreat will be held during the second week of classes focused on expectations. This will be followed by a Greek alumni roundtable discussion with Greek advisors. Last November, Nolan Burch, 18, a WVU freshman from Buffalo, NY died of acute ethanol intoxication following an initiation event for Kappa Sig Fraternity. At least two fraternity members were charged with hazing in connection with Burch's death.
- In July, WVU posted a new position of Greek Life Director. The appointed director will work within the Division of Student Life as an associate dean of students, as well as being the Director of Greek Life, and will report directly to the Dean of Students. The new position will assume the responsibility of providing overall advising to Greek life, training Greek leaders, and supporting the fraternities and sororities on campus.
- Membership in the 74 national and international fraternities that belong to the North-American Interfraternity Conference continues to grow at a steady clip, with 46 percent more students paying dues in 2013-14 than in 2005-6. The conference represents more than 6,000 chapters on about 800 campuses. Total membership grew from 264,956 in 2005-6 to 387,859 in 2013-14, and early projections show continued growth this year.
- Conversely, in just the spring semester of 2015, 133 fraternity and sorority chapters at 55 U.S. colleges were shut down, suspended, or otherwise punished after alleged offenses including excessive partying, hazing, racism, and sexual
- WVU's 40-year old Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system has been closed all summer undergoing \$22 million of renovations and upgrades. There is a Phase II of this project which would target the new design and replacement of the automatic train control system, replacement of substations, and electrical gear and tunnel repairs. Estimated cost is \$53 million.
- University Park Apartments is West Virginia University's newest apartment complex. It is located on the Evansdale Campus and is within walking distance to the WVU Rec Center, Mountaineer Field at Milan Puskar Stadium, Health Sciences Center, Ruby Memorial Hospital and is one PRT stop from the Coliseum and Engineering Sciences. It is located on Oakland Street.
- FallFest, the annual concert which kicks off the Fall semester for WVU students, was moved to Sunday, August 16th. This event has traditionally been held on Monday-first day of classes.
- In April, WVU extended its campus to Beckley, WV when it purchased property previously owned by Mountain State University. The new campus should enhance education regionally and particularly for residents in the southern part of the state.

# Fraternity Needs Even More Tradition

*(This article, which was passed along to me, reminds me of the values so many of us learned at the PKP House Is this not what we aspire to get back to?)*

**I love tradition.** I love the spark it can provide an organization. In my Kiwanis Club, we have lots of traditions, and I'd be upset to see them go. We sing at the start of every meeting – terribly – but we sing. It feels good. I don't want my Kiwanis meeting to feel like a business meeting at the office. I want something that touches my emotions and lifts my heart.

Fraternities and sororities certainly are guilty of being tradition-bound organizations. Tradition imprints almost all aspects of our identity, from the Greek names and letters we wear to the creeds we state loudly and proudly.

But there is a compelling reason for us to embrace our nature as tradition-bound organizations. The origin of the word tradition is from the Latin traditio, which refers to something being transmitted, carried forth, and passed from one person to the next for safekeeping. Organizations that have a great deal of tradition tend to last, because they inherently care about the safe passage of their organization from one generation to the next.

On occasion, there are calls for fraternities and sororities to change or get rid of some of their traditions. This isn't unusual for any institution, and neither is the typical negative response and reaction. Churches come to mind as another organization that deals constantly with the push and shove of keeping or discarding traditions.

Why do we bristle so much when we our traditions are challenged? It's because we believe that losing them would mean losing a part of our identity. And in some cases, it would.

The origins of the word tradition and standard definitions for it may not be enough for us to work with. I believe in a five-point test to determine if something is indeed a tradition worth celebrating and keeping:

- Does it offer unique value to our organization and our members?
- Is it a longstanding practice that bridges the past with the present?
- Does it raise spirits and breathe life into our organization?
- Does it honor our organization, its members, and our legacy?
- Is it current with societal views on human relationships?

Thus, it is not the new theme party you started last year that you now believe you can't live without.

It's not a practice that includes hazing, harmful and destructive behavior, for that saps life from your organization and doesn't honor your legacy. Sorry – your alcohol-fueled big brother hunts or your pledge hell week is not a tradition.

It can include the fact that your fraternity sings or chants (I love fraternities that sing), but not songs that disparage others or would be considered racist or homophobic.

It can include awards you give each other, even some that are intentionally humorous or sarcastic. Humor can certainly breathe life into your organization. But there are ways to be humorous and honorable at the same time.

Sometimes a tradition to someone else can seem puny and dumb, but even those should not be casually dismissed. My fraternity held a Senior Wills event each year, in which graduating seniors could pass down wisdom or items to younger members. I saw men brought to tears over receiving an ugly, tattered, sweat-stained hat from an older member – because it was a piece of them. Other traditions can have no other purpose except to be fun or just produce fond memories. Fine with me – as long as they can meet the test above.

Here is an exercise for you. Besides Ritual – which is absolutely your most cherished tradition – what other traditions are sacred to your fraternity or sorority? Use the test above as an evaluation tool. Are there any that fall away?

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Founder's Day 2015



*Zach Mendelson '79 and Frank Fumich '87 at Founder's Day*



*50-Year Honorees recognized include (from L to R): Andy Wilkins '65, Charlie Shoemaker '65, W.C. Bird '65, and Bill Hartwig '65. Brother Steve Ulrey '65 (not pictured) attended a reception on February 20th for honorees.*



*David Woodrum '61, former SWGP, and Yale Mendelson '09 share a moment following the luncheon*

Keynote address by **Frank Fumich '87**. The 1992 business marketing graduate is the owner of Express Catering, Inc, an airline catering company, which he started 15-years ago. With 70 employees, Frank has built an infra-structure that services 700 flights daily in three cities—Washington, DC, Philadelphia, PA, and Charlotte, NC. Many of you may have read about Frank as he has become an avid marathoner, ultra-runner, mountain climber, triathlete, stand up paddler, and all around adventure athlete. While he did not take up running until age 30, he has completed many of the toughest races and adventures around the world. For example, in early October, Frank finished a Quintuple (5X) Ironman (12-mile swim, 560 mile bike ride, and 131 mile run non-stop) in 105 hours. By the way...he finished in **FIRST PLACE!**

In June, Frank embarked upon his greatest challenge of his athletic career, as he participated in a cycling journey across the United States-Race Across America. The northern Virginia native raised over \$100,000 (the James Cochran House Association donated \$1,000) for former WVU student, Ryan Diviney, who lives in a vegetative state following an assault in Morgantown five years ago.” We’re both from northern Virginia. There’s just so many similarities between his life and mine. We both came from close families. We both went to WVU. I haven’t forgotten those days. And, I realize how easily something like that could happen to me, “ explained Fumich. While Frank fell short of his goal of finishing the bike race, Ken Diviney, Ryan’s father said it best. “Fumich didn’t complete the race, but he had the perfect finish!”

Accompanying Frank was his lively and spry 101-year old grandma, Genevieve Musci, who resides in Clarksburg, WV.

Brothers, you will note **Lou Corson’s** portrait is the backdrop for several of our pictures.



*With the backdrop of the portrait of Brother Louis D Corson '34, brothers posed for a group picture following our luncheon*

# Changes In Works for WVU's Greek System

By *Shauna Johnson of Metronews*  
{this is a re-print of an article that ran in May}

The new vice president of student life at West Virginia University is calling on student leaders to help change a campus party culture.

"I believe we have a lot of student leaders that are tired of the issue and they want to move it forward," said Dr. William Shafer, "noting that "WVU is clearly not the only institution working their way through this." While WVU's spring semester has come to a close, several Greek policy changes will be implemented before the start of the fall semester in August. "I think there are several measures, touch points, that we need to have to continue to move this in the right direction," according to Shafer.

Those changes include the following:

- The start of Rush Week for fraternities and sororities will be pushed back to the sixth week this fall to allow new WVU students more time to adjust to college life.
- A Greek leadership retreat will be held during the second week of classes focused on expectations for fraternities and sororities, a week after a WVU Greek alumni roundtable discussion with Greek advisers.
- A new medical amnesty program is being developed that will potentially let students seek medical attention for themselves or other students without fear of punishments for violations of the Student Code of Conduct.

Additionally, Shafer said a national search would be conducted to find a director of Greek life for WVU.

His goal is to make a hire by the start of the fall semester in August.

Shafer first announced the policy changes during a WVU Faculty Senate meeting earlier this week. "We take it very seriously. I take it very seriously. I believe we have a lot of work to do here. We do have sense of urgency about this issue so we are working hard at this," he said.

"I don't think there is a magic bullet here or anywhere around the nation regarding these issues." WVU's commencement ceremonies will be held this weekend (May) in Morgantown. This past school year included riots, expulsions for bad behavior, arrests, a student's death and, at one point, the suspension of Greek life at WVU. Last November, Nolan Burch, 18, a WVU freshman from Buffalo, N.Y., died of acute ethanol intoxication following an initiation event for Kappa Sigma fraternity. At least two fraternity members were charged with hazing in connection with Burch's death.

Editor's Note: On July 15th Brothers **W.C. Bird '65** and **Zach Mendelson '79** met privately with Dr. William Shafer to discuss many of the topics noted above, along with the standing of WV Alpha. At this time, we are awaiting confirmation of our standing with WVU and timeline for our return to campus.



After 30+ years, shirt fits better than ever. The trip was one of the best things I did in 2015.  
- Mike Robinson '81

SAVE THE DATE May 26-29, 2016 | WV ALPHA-PHI KAPPA PSI Alumni



In the Spring, brothers gathered a local 'watering hole' for an afternoon of food, fun, and friendship.

**From L to R: Matt Herrick '79, Mark Vasilko '78, Tom Morse '79, Zach Mendel son '79, Jon Rupert '79, Abe Key '78, Jeff Heddaeus '79, Chris Gillette '80, Greg Valant '79, and Bob Burkhardt '78**

WV Alpha was well represented at the 2015 W&J-PA Alpha Founder's Day. The National Fraternity was represented by SWGP Scott Noble, along with Jerry Nelson, who made the trip from Cabo, MX. Special honoree was **Abe Key '78**, who was recognized as their Man of The Year. Brother Key has been involved as an advisor to this chapter for many years. **Front row, L to R: Yale Mendelson '09, Abe Key '78, Mark Vasilko '78.** Back row, L to R: **Zach Mendelson '79, Phil Compton '79, Bob Burkhardt '78, Greg Valant '79, and Lee Piles '77.**



Brother **Greg Valant '79 (far left)** attended the recent PGA Greenbrier Classic Golf Tournament in White Sulpher Springs, WV to support his nephew, PGA Golfer-Justin Thomas (**middle**). A friendship developed between Thomas and Jerry West- #44 (**far right**) two years ago whenever Thomas played at The Greenbrier on a sponsor's exemption. Thomas is currently ranked among the tour's best players this year as he is ranked (37th in FedX points. Earnings this year-\$1.8M).

[submitted by Jim Lorenze]

**Front row: William "sky" King '74, Jim Lorenze '74**  
**Back row (L-R) Larry "Goss" Goff '74; Gary "Bo" Waters '74; Jeff "Dr. Va" Tennant '74, Doug "Pebbles" Hall '74, Dave Pill '74, D.B. Teter '74, and Kim Craig '74.**

**Not pictured but attended Friday: Junior Russell Taylor '74, Jr. and Dave "Fuzz" Morris '73.**

The May 15th weekend started as a surprise birthday party for Jeff Tennant (I will not reveal his age) who grew up in Morgantown but has not been back in eight years. Jeff's wife Kim wanted to do something special for Jeff so why not a trip back "home" and a reunion with all his Morgantown pledge brothers and their wives ( except Kim Craig, Clarksburg and Dave Morris, New Martinsville). The Friday night get together started at Gene's to rekindle some brotherhood and tell some embellished stories of our past.

Saturday afternoon was a trip to the new baseball park to watch WVU vs. Texas Tech. After the game everyone came over to our house for a catered dinner, cocktails and more war stories. I believe I can speak for everyone that a memorable weekend was had by all..



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# RETURN MAILER

## Chapter Eternal

{Editor's Note: A couple of these passings have just been reported}

**George E. Hall '44** passed on June 15, 2014

**James Murphy '44**, passed on January 1, 2013

**Kenneth Kincaid '47**, passed on December 15, 2014

**Stephen G. Wolbourn '60** and **Wm DeForest Thompson '61**, passed on March 8, 2015

Elma Letterman, widow of the grandson of Phi Kappa Psi co-founder William Henry Letterman and mother of the great-grandson, died March 18, at age 95. She is the mother of **Gordon Letterman '72**, WV Alpha.

(Continued from page 3)

## Fraternity Needs Even More Tradition

Even our traditions that seem old-fashioned can be given new and remarkable life. Consider lavaliering or pinning, which has been challenged as being hetero-centric and old-fashioned. Forget the fact that it can be beautiful and symbolic. Consider this story from Denison University in Ohio about a pinning ceremony that spoke volumes about the women involved and all those surrounding them.

As long as traditions meet the standards above, there's plenty of room for more. Let's continue to find ways to take the best of what we are and who we are, and share that with others. After all, that's our finest tradition.



**Mountaineer**

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Hanging out with brothers I have not seen in over 30 years was amazing. These true friendships "live ever, die never"!  
- Tim Muscaro '79

 **SAVE THE DATE** May 26-29, 2016 | WV ALPHA-PHI KAPPA PSI *Alumni* 

While 50 brothers attended our Alumni Event last year, we fully expect to sell out this event in 2016. Especially since we have added fishing for those "non-golfing" brothers. To guarantee your spot, send in your deposit check today in the amount of \$250. Send it along with the RETURN MAILER and your annual subscription to the Mountaineer Phi Psi. Full details will be coming to you very soon.