

The

EDGECLIFF NEWS

SPRING 2002

ZBT MUST RISE TO THE CHALLENGE OF CORNELL'S RESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE

Dear Brother,

We all have powerful memories of our time at Edgecliff. I am sure many of you can only remember a time when ZBT was, *bar none*, the strongest house on Cornell's campus. When I first became aware of ZBT, I did not realize the extent of our legacy. I was part of the group that refounded our fraternity at Cornell in 1988. When I first saw the house at One Edgecliff Place, a sorority occupied it, and our home had fallen into severe disrepair. Together with 35 other great men, we were able to reoccupy the house and begin the process of restoring ZBT to its former glory at Cornell. Over the past 14 years, those brothers who came after me have worked hard to restore the house and to bring back the incredible legacy of ZBT at Cornell. It gives me great pride and satisfaction to return to Ithaca every year for Homecomings and Reunions and see our collective home back in safe hands. The road has not been easy, and there is still a long way to go.

Ensuring the existence of a strong brotherhood at Edgecliff has been my key focus since leaving Cornell. Many alumni have heard about the problems we faced last year. Now that we have comfortably put those problems behind us, I can fully discuss what happened and the steps we took to fix the problem.

In the 2000-2001 school year, the chapter ran a vigorous pledge program, and many "brothers" betrayed their responsibility to keep their brothers safe. An investigation ensued, and KFI and the national fraternity made the proactive decision to expel most of the brothers for behavior contrary to the laws of ZBT and Cornell. The group was stripped of its charter and reduced to colony status. Last summer, KFI and National embarked on a reorganization of the chapter and recruited a small subset of the remaining brothers to turn the situation around.

I am pleased to report after a full year of operations that the reorganization has been successful. Our new undergraduate brothers have rededicated themselves to ZBT's legacy and have achieved major milestones that

we laid out for them. The house and grounds are cleaner and better maintained than I have seen in years. They had a very successful rush this past winter and took the second largest initiate class of any fraternity at Cornell. They have repaired their standing with the university and now enjoy a great relationship with the Greek adviser on campus. They are making solid progress toward regaining their charter, and it is my expectation that they will reclaim it early next year. While they still have a long way to go, they are on the right path. It is heartening to see Edgecliff begin to flourish once again.

The Greek environment has changed dramatically in our years since graduation. The system has had to adapt to a changing and increasingly challenging social and legal environment. Some colleges have gone as far as completely eliminating their Greek community. I firmly believe that fraternities are a vital part of any college experience. Fraternities offer a tremendous leadership and character-building experience. Many of my fondest memories were formed at ZBT, and many of my closest friendships were forged through brotherhood. Fortunately, Cornell continues to be supportive of its Greek system and has improved the system through proactive programming and risk management. Our successful reorganization is evidence of such support.

Unfortunately, our greatest challenge still lies ahead. Anyone who has visited campus lately has seen the beautiful new freshman dorms on North Campus, where all incoming students now reside. As the next phase of its Residential Initiative, Cornell is investing hundreds of millions of dollars to build a state-of-the-art residential college complex on West Campus. Starting in 2004, this complex will provide housing as well as social and academic programming for a large portion of Cornell's sophomores and juniors. This will finally put the university in direct competition with the Greek system. Cornell ultimately hopes the systems will coexist peacefully, with each system serving its target mar-



ket. However, only those fraternities that offer a compelling alternative will survive. The university has thrown down the gauntlet.

ZBT must rise to this challenge. We are blessed with some of Cornell's most successful alumni. We have one of the strongest histories of any house on campus. We certainly have the best property on campus. Unfortunately, our house is nearly 80 years old and has not seen a major renovation in many years. If we do not respond now, I fear that we will be unable to continue to attract a viable brotherhood, and the house will slip away. We cannot afford to let our legacy, and our home, disappear.

Over the coming months, we will launch our first major capital campaign in memory. Our theme is "Restoring Edgecliff." While the house is currently in solid financial shape from an operating standpoint, it lacks the capital base needed to fund major repairs. Other houses have successfully completed multi-million dollar campaigns in the past few years. I have no reason to doubt that ZBT can match their success. With your support, we should be able to build a substantial endowment that will ensure ZBT's existence for many years to come.

We will be reaching out to our alumni for help in organizing the campaign. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I hope I can count on your support for our efforts.

Sincerely,
Matthew J. Rubins '90, President
Kappa Foundation, Inc.
W: 617/345-7261
H: 617/523-4505
mrubins@mcventurepartners.com

EDGECLIFF LOOKS FRESH AFTER RENOVATIONS

This academic year has seen a dramatic improvement in the overall condition of Edgecliff. To update our certificate of compliance from the city of Ithaca, we have been working on a number of renovations, including a complete replastering in the bathrooms and kitchen to repair previous water damage.

Two major renovations are especially worth noting. Over the summer, cook/handyman Jerry Temple headed up a team that remodeled the entranceway and completely rebuilt the banisters and siding on the stairs. New tile floors and light fixtures were installed in the foyer, and the new stairs now have a beautifully stained banister and railing, replacing the aging old one. Other brotherhood improvement projects have included the repainting of the dining room and kitchen areas, which were showing marks of longtime neglect and disrepair. All of these improvements have helped make the main floor of Edgecliff look fresh and much cleaner than the

house used to appear.

The second major project, which was completed recently after two long months of work, was the refurbishing of the downstairs basement area as part of an all-brotherhood project. The bar and booths, which were built by Kappa members over 10 years ago, have been completely repainted, and the bar now has a beautiful wood surface. The walls, which had been showing signs of aging, were completely scraped and restained, and a new stereo system was installed. The true success of this project was that the entire job was organized by the new members of Kappa and executed by the entire brotherhood. The new members' dedication to their project as they worked seven days a week sanding, scraping, painting, and hammering to bring new life to the basement shows their dedication to Kappa and to making Edgecliff a great house again.

The new members have been vital in the maintenance of Edgecliff. They have shown a

dedication not only to the brotherhood, but to the physical house itself. Under the guidance of the executive board and Jerry Temple, they have learned what it takes to maintain a fraternity house and undertake and execute house improvement initiatives. They plan on continuing their work in the basement throughout the semester.

The condition of the house is something that has been taken very seriously by the current executive board. House cleanups occur frequently with full brotherhood participation required. There have been several "house work days" this semester, where the brotherhood will devote a day to work on the house. The benefits are enjoyed by all as our house becomes better and better and more enjoyable to live in. If you're in the area, I encourage you to stop by to see the re-emerging Edgecliff house.

Joshua Vlasto '04
House Manager

WHERE WE'RE GOING, WHERE WE'VE BEEN

For the first time in a while we have a house that truly does believe in itself and has the capability to achieve whatever it desires.

"What a long, strange trip it's been." The words of Jerry Garcia could be the perfect summary of my life in Kappa over the last four years. I came into the house as a wide-eyed freshman in an off year when rush numbers were the smallest in recent history. With 12 in our pledge class four years ago and only one still active today, it is safe to say that I have seen the house go through many changes. In the past four years I have seen the house twice get in trouble for hazing, be put on social probation a number of times, and nevertheless still manage to score the biggest new member classes on campus in the last three years.

It is today, however, that I can truly be proud of the words that we all say at the end of our chapter meeting: "It's great to be in Kappa." After a tumultuous summer in which my brothers and I received harsh sanctions from the university and National, I did not have a lot of confidence that I would again be able to say those words. However, after a successful

rush campaign that landed us 25 amazing freshmen and sophomores in a year when rush numbers were down across campus, it is evident that Zeta Beta Tau will live on at Cornell.

Many of us at Kappa were skeptical that we could not develop a brotherhood in the absence of the pledge program that was taken from us this summer. However, as I looked around during the chapter meeting today, I found the room filled with brothers whose goals for the house exceed anything I could have dreamed of, and I saw that a truly unified brotherhood program is the only option. The new members have rebuilt and decorated the basement area that many of the older Kappas built; they have poured money, time, and effort into the house by buying a new stereo system for downstairs; they have fixed up the basketball court; and they have managed to keep the house respectable throughout the semester. More importantly, however, they are all walking around cam-

pus with their heads high, proud to be a part of Kappa.

As I leave Edgecliff and look back at the last four years, I am certain that Kappa can and will succeed. With our crop of younger brothers who have worked so hard to rebuild our name, our house will inevitably rise to the top. For the first time in a while we have a house that truly does believe in itself and has the capability to achieve whatever it desires. If there is one thing I can say to the alumni who are reading this newsletter, it is to have the confidence in our fraternity that you had when you left, and that I now have as I prepare to depart from Cornell. We are aware of past troubles, but it is time to focus on the future endeavors. I strongly encourage any and all alumni to stop by and visit Edgecliff at Homecoming, Reunion, or at any other time. You, too, will be proud. To all my brothers, present and past, it's great to be in Kappa.

Eric Altfest '02

BROTHERS END SEMESTER WITH CONFIDENCE

The fall semester for Kappa had closed on a high note. After the summer reorganization, ZBT had been able to regain its footing on the Cornell campus with much hard work and persistence.

However, the 2002 spring semester began apprehensively with the beginning of rush week. After the summer reorganization, Kappa Colony had been able to rebuild its brotherhood successfully with a small core of dedicated brothers, but would these few be able to attract a sufficient new member class? Would Kappa continue to call Edgecliff its home? Kappa membership was greatly reduced after the reorganization, and the loss of 10 more brothers to study-abroad programs for the spring semester left Kappa beginning rush week with only 20 active members. However, this greatly reduced, greatly motivated brotherhood knew that their success or failure in fielding a large enough new class would determine Edgecliff's continuation. They had worked hard last semester to restart and rebuild our fraternity, and they would work hard again to keep it. Still, anxiety filled every brother's mind.

To remain a viable organization, Kappa needed to have a large new member class. At a minimum we needed to double our present membership.

However, one principle that everyone agreed on was that we would not sacrifice quality for quantity—that we would not accept members into the brotherhood who would only prolong Kappa's existence but not extend its values. After a long and stressful 14-day rush period, we succeeded in initiating 25 new members into our fraternity whose numbers will not only let Edgecliff continue, but whose characters are consistent with the principles of ZBT. A great fear was removed from everyone's shoulders. Edgecliff was here to stay.

With the new member recruitment complete, Kappa turned its energies toward implementing its new brotherhood program, improving the house structure, and reclaiming its reputation in the Greek system and the Cornell community. The key to the brotherhood program was establishing equality between new members and present members. New brothers were immediately placed on committees working within the house, from house management to social planning. They attended weekly chapter meetings and accepted the benefits and responsibility of full brotherhood.

Right away, an all-brotherhood project was begun to improve the aging Edgecliff facility. The new brothers decided that refurbishing

the house basement area should be a priority of the brotherhood and should be the main focus of the improvement plan. Brothers from all classes—freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior—worked together to make the space downstairs more enjoyable for everyone's benefit. They sanded and restained the wood paneling, installed a new stereo system, and mounted a new dart board. Other improvement projects around the house included giving the dining room a new coat of paint and hanging pictures of past Fall Weekends and group photographs around the house that were previously locked away in the archive room.

The new brotherhood program not only included improving the physical Edgecliff structure, but also improving Kappa's standing within the Greek and Cornell communities. Through community service participation and philanthropy events, Kappa has been able to regain a reputation that had once been tarnished by years of irresponsibility. The brothers' achievements this semester include raising over \$21,000 during a Cornell Fund phonathon; helping administer an on-campus blood drive; and giving time to help out at a day of activities and games for local children. Kappa

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FRESHMAN CONSIDERS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE IN ZBT

There are certain things that a first-semester freshman misses when he leaves home for the first time: his close friends, his family, home cooking, the comfort and security of having a place to call his own, or a place to retreat to when school work is overwhelming. My first semester was filled with these feelings, but since late January, all of these feelings have disappeared. In the last three months, I have becoming linked to the Kappa brotherhood, had my dining hall indigestion relieved, and found a comfortable place to go when prelims and labs get to be too much. While I have spent only a short amount of time at Edgecliff, I have participated in, seen, and learned about so many things that I cannot wait until next August when I can finally

move into the house.

Every time I talk to friends from home, I am asked what it's like to be in ZBT, and what I do with the members of Kappa. I tell them about how it is to walk down East Avenue and see friendly faces, and how great it is to go to lunch in the basement of the Statler, knowing that there will be a table full of brothers just sitting around and having fun. In a school the size of Cornell, it is important to have your niche of friends that you can always turn to and always depend on.

After growing up with two sisters and no brothers, having older guys to talk to is one of my favorite parts of the house. Whenever I have a problem with something, I know that there are people down at the house willing

to listen to me and get me through anything that is bothering me. While working on projects such as refinishing the basement and painting the house, I have developed unbreakable bonds not only with the brothers in the freshman class, but also with the older brothers, making me wish that some of them could stay around and go through the next three years with me.

As I look back on the last three months and look forward to the next three years, I am beginning to realize that I am part of something truly special and rare—a group of people who care more for each other than they do for themselves. That's what I see in being a part of Kappa.

Andrew Milano '05

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THE EDGECLIFF NEWS

Published regularly by the Kappa Chapter of Zeta Beta Tau at Cornell University for its members and friends. News items and pictures are welcome at all times and should be sent to Zeta Beta Tau Fraternity at Cornell, Alumni Records Office, P.O. Box 876, Ithaca, NY 14851-0876.

MALCOLM MARLIS '43 reports a new address of 24 Driftwood St., Marina del Rey, CA 90292.

The president and owner of Anytime Anywhere Travel in Chappaqua, New York, HUBERT M. ARONSON '44 makes his home at 12 Brookview Dr., Pleasantville, NY 10570.

"I ran into STEVE SONNABEND '53 while vacationing in Key Biscayne, Florida, this winter," writes MARVIN E. BRAVE '54 (10 E. Lee St., #1106, Baltimore, MD 21202; may24@aol.com). "He and his brother, PAUL SONNABEND '50, were ZBTs at Cornell. Steve left Cornell after his freshman year and continued at Harvard. Paul remained at Cornell. Steve is a year-round resident of Key Biscayne."

SAMUEL W. SALUS II '55 can be reached by e-mail at katesalus@earthlink.net and by "snail mail" at Place One, #820, 777 W. Germantown Rd., Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462.

ROBERT J. EPSTEIN '63 resides at 70 Riverside Dr., Apt. 2F, New York, NY 10024, and his e-mail address is vaeho@aol.com.

Write to WILLIAM D. WEINBERGER '63 at billy@vegas.com or at 3754 Mesa Linda Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89120.

The president of Unico Alloys, Inc., I. HOWARD SCHLEZINGER

'64 lives at 1640 Coppertree Rd., Columbus, OH 43232. Send e-mail to Howard at hschlesh@aol.com.

Drop a line to ERIC D. SIEGEL '72 at eds9@cornell.edu or at 3368 La Mesa Dr., Apt. 8, San Carlos, CA 94070.

MARK R. WINDT '72 writes, "I'd like to thank the brothers for taking care of the daughter of DON ROSENTHAL '72, who died recently of melanoma. Jessica Rosenthal is a freshman at Cornell." Contact Mark at 21 Pickpocket Rd., Exeter, NH 03833, or at mwindt@caard.com.

Mail reaches GEOFFREY TRAVIS '90 at 808 Brickell Key Dr., Apt. 3305, Miami, FL 33131 (gtravis@shutts-law.com).

ROBERT J. SILVER '92 works at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital in Philadelphia and lives at 2616 Berwyn Court, Voorhees, NJ 08043. His e-mail address is rjs36@cornell.edu.

Foreign service officer JONATHAN K. WEBSTER '92 resides at 7930 Church Neck Rd., St. Michaels, MD 21663.

MICHAEL FREEDMAN '94 writes that he and Rachel Aron, widow of JOSH ARON '94, would like to thank the brotherhood of ZBT for all of their support during the difficult days following Josh's death on September

11. "It was a true showing of brotherhood to hear from so many of you and to see such an amazing turnout at Josh's memorial service. Thank you for helping to honor his memory and for being great Kappas." Michael's address is 219 E. 81st St., #6D, New York, NY 10028; mfree94@aol.com.

EVAN GOLDSTEIN '97 is currently in his second year of dental school at Tufts School of Dental Medicine. Write to him at 269 Beacon St., Apt. 3, Boston, MA 02116 or at evan.goldstein@tufts.edu.

"After getting married on September 9, 2001, to Marina (Wencelblat), we moved back to Ithaca in January 2002," writes DAVID M. FRIED '98. "I've started my PhD in electrical engineering. Marina is working for the 'Office of the Councils' at Cornell." Send best wishes to the newlyweds at 201 Maple Ave., Apt. B2, Ithaca, NY 14850 (friedd_76@yahoo.com).

Please note this new address for BRIAN GERSHENGORN '00: 150 E. 18th St., Apt. 6N, New York, NY 10003.

Employed by Salomon Smith Barney-Citigroup, IRA NOBLE '00 lives at 301 E. 61st St., #2C, New York, NY 10021.

BROTHERS END SEMESTER WITH CONFIDENCE

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also gained the prestigious recognition of having the fifth highest fraternal GPA out of the more than 40 fraternities on the Cornell campus.

Things are certainly looking up for Edgecliff from where they were over a year ago. The new brotherhood program has successfully made Kappa a more unified brotherhood that has come together to improve Edgecliff and elevate the reputation of the fraternity to past

heights. This academic year is definitely closing on a high note for Edgecliff, with still more improvement projects on the way. From January to May, from anxiety to confidence, Kappa has been through a lot this spring semester, but with a strong and pro-active new member class, the future looks bright.

Jason Schechter '04
President

DECEASED

We regret to report the death of the following alumni:

HAROLD W. BANK '65

WILLIAM W. HINMAN '67
July 27, 2001

ADAM F. LEVY '85
August 26, 2001

DONALD L. ROSENTHAL '72
September 2001

JAMES M. TRONO '74